

The Society Page

By Gene Mahoney

Russian Hill Upholstery and Décor is still located in Nob Hill, not Russian Hill.

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From 1993 to 1997 I spent most of my days walking around San Francisco talking to business owners. I was trying to talk them into advertising in whatever publication I happened to be working for. In 1998 I started my own newspaper, the Herald (it used to be a bona fide newspaper, not this piddly little newsletter you're reading) and tried to sell ads for that, until it folded in 2008.

I met many people, some who experienced sad endings. Like the guy in his mid-thirties who was excited about being part owner of a new business, who suddenly developed a brain tumor and died shortly thereafter. Or another guy around the same age who part owned a thriving business then got into a motorcycle accident and became brain dead. One woman turned me down for an ad and a week later a man walked into her business and shot her in the eye. If memory serves correctly, her boyfriend later confessed to hiring the assassin. There was this one business owner who would always politely turn me down for an ad, claiming he had no money. Apparently his money was being spent on a lifestyle of drugs and prostitutes, and things went seriously wrong one night - he ended up getting brutally murdered.

As tragic as these stories are, at least the family and friends of the deceased knew what happened to them. It must be much more painful for those who were close to people that went missing.

Like those who knew Maura Murray. Maura was a 21 year old nursing student at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, who disappeared on February 9, 2004.

About three months before she disappeared, Maura confessed to using a stolen credit card number to order food at some restaurants. The charge was to be dismissed after three months of good behavior. (Earlier, she had been dismissed from the West Point Military Academy for shoplifting \$5 worth of lipstick.)

A few days before her disappearance, Maura spoke to her sister while working at her campus security job. Later, still at work, Maura broke into tears and later became so disoriented that her boss had to escort her to her dorm room. Asked what was wrong, she replied, "My sister." Maura's sister had been discharged from alcohol rehab that evening and on the way

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home her fiancé took her to a liquor store, which caused the emotional breakdown.

Two days before Maura vanished, her father visited her in Amherst, where they went car shopping and then to dinner with a friend of Maura's. Maura dropped her father off at his motel room, then borrowed his car to attend a dorm party, arriving at 10:30 PM and leaving at 2:30 AM. At 3:30 AM, on her way to her father's motel, she hit a guardrail, causing about \$8,000 worth of damage to the car. The police report didn't indicate any field sobriety tests were conducted. Maura was driven to her father's motel room and stayed over. At 4:49 AM a call was placed to her boyfriend on her father's cell phone.



MauraMurray.com/Wikipedia/Fair Use

That day, February 8th, the day before Maura disappeared, her father learned the damage to his car would be covered by his insurance. He rented a car, dropped his daughter off at the university, and headed to Connecticut. That night the father

called Maura and told her to get accident report forms from the DMV. They decided to talk the next night over the phone to discuss the forms and insurance.

On February 9, 2004, Maura emailed her professors and boss, informing them she was taking a week off due to a death in the family. Her father later said there hadn't been any death. She had also emailed her boyfriend, telling him she loved him but didn't feel like responding to his messages, or talking to anyone, but she would call him later. She also made a call asking about renting a condo in New Hampshire in the same association where her family had vacationed before. Another call was made to a number providing info about hotels in Vermont. Maura packed clothing, toiletries, college textbooks, and birth control pills into her car and left campus. Classes at the college had been canceled that day due to a snowstorm. Her dorm room was searched later - most of her stuff had been packed in boxes and all art was taken down from the walls. There was also a printed email to her boyfriend which indicated their relationship was in trouble.

Shortly after leaving, Maura withdrew all her money (about \$280) from an ATM (video showed she was alone) then purchased \$40 worth of alcohol at a liquor store (alone again). Sometime that day she picked up accident report forms from the DMV. She left Amherst between 4 and 5 PM. The last time she used her cell phone was at 4:37 PM when she checked her voicemail.

Shortly after 7 PM, a woman in New Hampshire heard a loud thud outside her home. She saw a car pointed west on the eastbound side of Route 112. A man stopped and saw the driver, Maura, was apparently all right - just shivering from the cold. Maura asked the man not to call the police (one police report said "pleaded") and said she had already called AAA, though AAA have no record of that call. The man left but called the police because he knew there was no cell phone reception in that area. Official records have the police arriving at 7:46 PM and reporting no one was around the car, which was inoperable, had a cracked windshield on the driver's side, deployed airbags, and was locked. The report indicated stains that appeared to be red wine inside and outside the car. Inside there was an empty beer bottle and a damaged box of wine on the back seat. Maura had left behind some items, including driving directions to Burlington, Vermont. Taken were some bottles of booze she had bought, as well as credit cards, a debit card, and a cell phone - none of which were used or located since.

There were some reported possible sightings of her, and her boyfriend received a voicemail that he thinks sounded like her crying (the call was

traced to a calling card issued to the American Red Cross).

Some think Maura committed suicide. Some think she's in hiding, or has assumed a new identity. Her father thinks it was murder by a "local dirtbag."

But no one knows. And that's got to be murder.

Eight years to the day she vanished, a video was posted on YouTube of a man laughing fiendishly, followed by the words "Happy Anniversary." The man referred to himself as Mr112dirtbag, a reference to Route 112 where Maura's car crashed and the name Maura's father called her alleged killer.

Police identified the man, interviewed him, and concluded he had nothing to do with Maura's disappearance.

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This month marks the five year anniversary of the death of Robert B. Edgerton, author of the 1993 book *Sick Societies: Challenging the Myth of Primitive Harmony*.

I'm 56 years old, raised not on the Gospel, but on *Godspell* - and grew up taught to be skeptical of western civilization but worshipful of primitive (or "folk") societies. In the 20th Century anthropologists like Margaret Mead preached cultural relativism and the theory that these folk societies were more in touch with nature than those of us in the west. This notion influenced academia (to this day) and entertainment (American Indians depicted in Hollywood went from one extreme to the other - savages in the old westerns to wise, peace loving, enlightened hippies in later fare, such as *Little Big Man*, *Soldier Blue*, and *Dances with Wolves*).

Edgerton pointed out that the people actually living in folk societies may not be as enthusiastic about them as the average college professor or "woke" celebrity over here. (Immigration patterns speak for themselves.) For example, until recently the average life expectancy in the South Pacific was thirty years. (On a side note, the ten most obese nations on Earth are all there).

Feminists are constantly decrying the treatment of women in the west, yet remain mum about the common abuse of women in these folk societies (wife beating and institutional gang rape are shared among the Cheyenne of North America and the Gusii of western Kenya). In some folk societies, women eat human flesh because they are denied animal protein. A common saying among Pokot

women of Kenya is: "We cannot rule men, we can only hate them."

The Inuit Eskimos have a homicide rate that ranks up there with any inner city ghetto. In Papua, New Guinea between twenty to thirty percent of all deaths are due to war. The Zulus were conquering African nations long before the European colonialists got there. Slavery supplied most of the labor in the West African Asante empire.

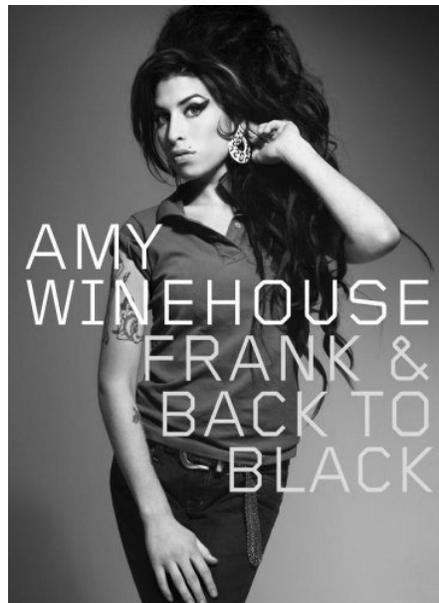
Margaret Mead showed those of us in the west that people in folk societies were actual human beings.

Robert B. Edgerton did the same thing.

Just a reminder before you "woke" off: Many, many more American Indians were killed and had their land taken away by other American Indians than by the U.S. Calvary. (Tribes used to fight each other.) And Columbus may have done enough bad things to have the holiday named after him revoked, but the Indigenous Peoples in the Americas practiced slavery, cannibalism, and human sacrifice. So should we name a holiday after them? Just a thought.

I tell ya, you just can't trust anybody.

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Amy Winehouse died ten years ago. Time flies. Actually, her career kind of flew by, too. The first time I heard of her was on an NPR segment about this new singer from England who had a retro sound like Eartha Kitt, Shirley Bassey, and those 1960s girl groups. Then a few years later she drank herself to death at age 27. Talk about retro - it was kind of like an old episode of *Dragnet* where Jack Webb and Harry Morgan watch a rising star burn out before she could fade away, with the last scene having them shake their heads in pity and

disgust, and then the music and credits proceed.

I liked "You Know I'm No Good" and "Back to Black." I never thought much of "Rehab," especially after her death. And remember those cruel jokes that were all too easy to make: "*She should have tried to go to rehab/ I said yes, yes, yes.*"

Not long after she died I saw a makeshift memorial for her on the street in Haight Ashbury. Whether her music will live on or be forgotten, that's more than the rest of us will ever get.

R.I.P. Amy.

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Mean Girls, 7/27 - 8/22, Golden Gate Theatre... Musiq Soulchild, 8/1 - 2, Yoshi's... Jenny Zigrino, 8/4 - 7, Punch Line Comedy Club... String Cheese Incident, 8/6, Greek Theatre, U.C. Berkeley... Modest Mouse, 9/16, Nob Hill Masonic Auditorium... Dance Gavin Dance, 9/10, The Warfield... Gili Yalo, 8/11, The Chapel ... Biscuit & Blues (401 Mason) plans to reopen this summer.

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Nob Hill. Russian Hill. North Beach. Inner Mission. Lower Haight.

You Deserve a Quality Newsletter.

(Too bad you're stuck with the Herald.)

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Acid Heroes: John Lennon

By Ace Backwards

(Part Two)

Let Me Take You Down . . .

Right from the beginning there were problems with boy John. Lennon was expelled from the kindergarten for attacking his classmates (a pattern he would continue all of his life). His Mother and Father split up when he was 5, and Lennon was forced to choose between Father and Mother, a choice that was so agonizing it left him with a life-

long hatred of having to make decisions ("To this day I hate having to make decisions. I get a headache when confronted with a choice," said John). This trait would be the root cause of much of Lennon's blundering, reckless stupidity over the years. For Lennon would quickly and rashly decide on a course of action, without ever -- EVER -- weighing the consequences (it gave him a headache). Ironically, this was a trait much admired by his fans. For it gave Lennon's impulsive actions the aura of fearlessness and courage. Intimates of Lennon would often remark at the strange contradiction between the "cocky and self-assured" public John Lennon and the "frightened and insecure" private John Lennon.

All of his life, Lennon had this side of him -- how to describe it? -- he was a nasty, vicious prick. Though his great charm and charisma often counter-balanced this equally nasty side of his personality (are you noticing an enigmatic pattern?). "He was a terrible person but I liked him," summed up a former classmate of Lennon's.

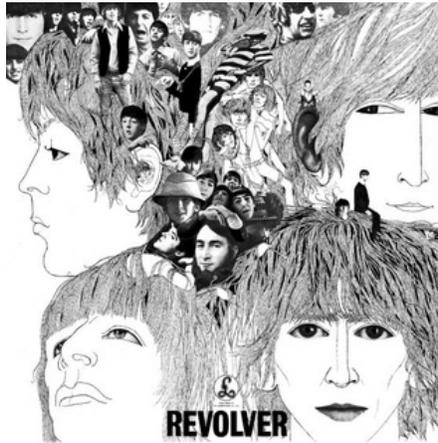
Lennon as a teenager was famous for going up to cripples and people with physical deformities -- he had a powerful phobia about cripples -- and reducing them to tears with his sharp tongue; mocking and degrading and humiliating them for sport. Lennon was the classic Cool Kid in High School who mocked all the Uncool Kids in the class. Lennon was greatly feared by all in his orbit (even his own wife Cynthia admitted she was "scared of John half the time."). For he could, and did, hurt you, both verbally and physically. And few who knew him survived his wrath for very long. Or, as Lennon put it: "One thing you can't hide, is when you're crippled inside."

In Hamburg, Germany one night in 1961, Lennon went berserk after a week-long binge on alcohol and speed (prellys, his favorite) and kicked the living shit out of his good pal, little Stu Sutcliffe, knocking him unconscious. This, too would be a life-long pattern with our boy John; violently physically attacking someone much smaller than himself (though it's possible that future Lennon scholars will un-earth an account of Lennon picking on someone his own size, or larger).

At Paul McCartney's 21st birthday party, Lennon went berserk again, and attacked little Bob Wooler with a shovel, cracking his ribs and sending him to the hospital. Lennon very well might have killed the prone and defenseless Wooler as he pummeled him with the shovel, if not for being dragged off the body by some of the other party-goers. People in Liverpool were horrified. It's one thing to get in a fistfight. It's quite another to bash a defenseless figure practically to death with a shovel. Lennon was an explosive person in more ways than three. The Beatles story might very well have ended right there that night if Wooler had died, and perhaps history would have turned out much differently. But Wooler recovered from his injuries, and the Beatles manager, Brian Epstein, hushed it all up with a big cash payoff to him. And The Beatles bandwagon marched on.

Lennon, later in his life, would often speculate that if not for the success of The Beatles, he very well might have ended up "a drunken derelict like my dad," or maybe even a "serial killer." For there was an all-or-nothing quality about John Lennon. And Lennon himself was all too aware of the extremely nasty, destructive and murderous side that had taken root in his soul.

John Lennon -- the father-less, mother-less son (he was mostly raised by his nut-cutting aunt) -- would spend his whole life looking for a father-figure, a "guru." (He felt he had *found* his mother-figure in Yoko Ono, a woman he literally referred to by the name "Mother." And yet Yoko Ono was a woman who admitted she completely "lacked the maternal instinct," and didn't even bother to raise her own children. Which shows you the kind of judgment Lennon had in the mother-figure department.)



Lennon's first father-figure, his first guru, was Elvis Presley. And Lennon patterned himself after Elvis's image: black leather jacket, slicked back DA, and surly teen-rebel pose. The stated goal of The Beatles, of course, was to be "bigger than Elvis." And be careful what you wish for because you just might get it. And Lennon got it. For it was here that John Lennon made one of the biggest mistakes of his tragic life.

In order to achieve riches and fame, the nasty and vicious prick that was the real John Lennon, adopted the pose of the smiling, friendly, happy-go-lucky Beatle John. Fab John. The lad. In other words, the exact opposite of who he *really* was. Apparently Lennon assumed that he could adopt the Fab John pose, make millions off the teenybopper market, and then return to his real self. Only there was an unexpected consequence to the bargain (as there so often is). Millions of screaming Beatles' fans now assumed that the smiling Fab Beatle John was real. And every time Lennon tried to pull the smiling mask off his face, millions of screaming fans would push it right back on his ever-lovin' head and DEMAND the smiling John Beatles act.

Or as he put it: "Though I laugh and I act like a clown, beneath this mask I am wearing a frown. I'm a loser and I'm not what I appear to be." Lennon sang his "loser" song at the height of Beatlemania "success." For our boy John had blown it and blown it badly. He had

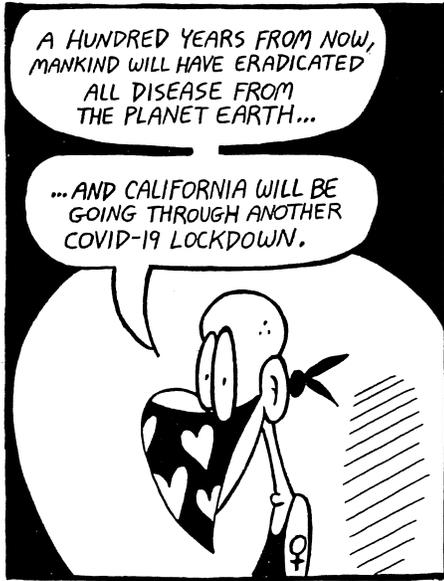
literally "sold his soul for success." It's the oldest story in the book. "For a man can gain the entire world and yet lose his soul." And John Lennon would spend the rest of his life trying to get his soul back. But one's soul is easier given away than re-captured once it's gone. Lennon would spend the rest of his life adopting one mask, one image, one pose, after another. Perhaps in an unconscious attempt to reclaim his real self (whatever that was) which he had lost a long time ago. This series of false masks, of false images -- always presented by Lennon as the New Improved Real John Lennon (only to be debunked next week as bullshit) -- would be the source of endless confusion between Lennon and his fans, who struggled in vain to find the real John amidst the endless mirrors. And digging beneath the cracks of Lennon's facade would become a great party sport amongst Beatlemaniacs.

And this too: It was Lennon's great need for a father-figure himself which gave him such an uncanny sense of the psychology of his fans -- many of whom were exactly like him and also looking for father-figures. And looking to JOHN LENNON as that father-figure. Lennon was able to pattern many of his media images as exact replicas of the Great Leader that the Beatles fans were looking for. Only to be debunked later by Lennon when his fans actually asked him to lead them somewhere.

So John Lennon as '60s leader was actually a man desperate to be led (can you say "enigma"?). So we truly had a case of the-blind-leading-the-blind. Or in other words, a big fucking mess, most of all for all the hapless Beatle fans stupid enough to take Lennon's big Leader act seriously (hi). Just as we -- the Lennon followers -- looked to John Lennon to tell us what to do, so too Lennon himself (the man who hated to make decisions) looked to Yoko Ono to tell *him* what to do. By all accounts John Lennon was truly the most pussy-whipped of rock stars. Behind his rebel, nonconformist, anti-authoritarian act was a Mama's Boy who craved to submit and conform to stern Mother's authority. By all accounts, Yoko Ono dominated virtually every facet of Lennon's private life. So we had the-blind-leading-the-blind-being-led-by-Yoko-Ono. Which was even worse.

So by around 1966 the mind of John Lennon was already a convoluted mess of madness, contradictions, and unhappiness. He had sought fame and fortune as a possible answer to his misery. But fame had turned out to be nothing more than a bad, ironic joke. Fame changed nothing. Beatlemania -- millions of screaming, adoring fans -- had added nothing in terms of inner peace and contentment (which Lennon craved all of his life). Fame only added endless waves of mind-fuck. The spectacular level of The Beatles "success" was mind-boggling and incomprehensible and merely added another level of madness to his already convoluted soul. And so, as a way out of this spiritual mess, John Lennon suddenly discovered -- you guessed it -- the Answer. The Next Big Thing (later to be debunked, of course): LSD.

-To be continued-



GOOD CLEAN FUN
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GENE MAHONEY

"COVID
ANONYMOUS"
OR
"ONE DAY OF GETTING
PAID TO SIT ON MY
ASS ALL DAY INSTEAD
OF WORKING AT A JOB
AT A TIME"



IN THIS HOUSE WE BELIEVE
BLACK LIVES MATTER
(EVEN THOUGH NO BLACK PEOPLE LIVE AROUND HERE)
NO HUMAN IS ILLEGAL
(BREAK INTO MY HOUSE, I WON'T CALL THE COPS)
WOMEN'S RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS
(THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS GENDER, YET WOMEN EXIST)
SCIENCE IS REAL
(SO MAKE SURE YOU WEAR A MASK WHEN YOU DRIVE ALONE
WITH THE CAR WINDOWS UP—DON'T GIVE YOURSELF COVID)

