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The Autobiography of John Lynch

Julian Langer

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At this point I don't know why I sat here preparing to write down my life story. I am terrified by what I have seen and hope that these words harm no one. I've flaked off so much and am so much a downer that Poppy and Jules are the only people that I'm really close to, like family. Dad will probably want to learn what has happened to his only child and he will find this horrifying and unreal to read. I'm still going to write this, even though I don't know why. Maybe the story of my life may be useful to someone who like me is a flake or sees the same way out of shit that I have and is unable to tune it out.

I was born in 1951. My mother was 12 when she arrived in London, I think, and have a memory of Dad saying it was 1937. Her family came over from Hungary, like many Jews, trying to get away from what was going on in Europe. Dad told me once that she always remembered that when she arrived, there was thick mist. Remembering this leaves me feeling uneasy, given events over the course of my life. My old man's folks were of Irish stock, coming from Cork originally, but had come to England during the last cen-

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tury, as many Irish people did during the famine. This always mattered to Dad and always came up when he would complain about England, the monarchy and the empire. They met and married in 1943, which I always remember because Dad would talk about it in the same sentence as the Labour Party's victory in 1945. Dad supported the Labour

Party, though the Bolsheviks were more his bag - probably still does. While Dad's family lived in Kilburn, they moved to Greenwich, though I don't know why. There are plenty of Jews in Greenwich, but I can't remember speaking to them ever, unless Dad was talking to them about politics. During the first few years of their marriage they tried to get pregnant, but after years of no success assumed Mum was barren. They must have freaked out when she got pregnant with me. I was born March 20th 1951, with both of them terrified that I'd be stillborn and not prepared to try and get pregnant again. I think Dad told me that it was a misty day, which is way out considering my situation now. I don't remember much of my early childhood, but no one really does. Mum died when I was 5. Her lungs were weakened by the 1952 smog in London, so she was often ill. Living close to the coal station in Greenwich, we were among the worst affected by the smog.

She seemed to do alright for a while though. She got cancer and there was nothing they could do. It's unreal, but the only thing I can remember of her funeral was seeing a white hare on the other side of the graveyard. After that, most of what I remember from my childhood is Dad's politics. He was always tuned into to USSR's news and supported the IRA. Marx's revolution, turning England socialist and Irish independence were his bag. I found it a bummer and as I got older it bugged me more and more. I haven't seen him since 1966, when I took the train from London to Totnes, though we did write to each other when I was there.

I went to Totnes to become part of The Divine Light Society and live at the meditation centre. I just wanted to get away from London and politics and be somewhere that was less of a drag. I

knew of meditation classes happening in London, but a friend was really turned on by this centre after he stayed, and I thought "I've got nothing better to do". When I arrived I could barely see where I was going, as it was so misty and night. As way out as this will sound, I saw another white hare, like the one at Mum's funeral, and felt fear, which I tuned out by trying to find the centre. The centre is easy enough to find in the light. There's a stone that they think came from Troy in Totnes and the route is easy to walk, if you can use that as your starting point. Between the dark and the mist, finding the stone was going to be impossible. I asked this guy how to get there. He asked me if I was a grockle and after I said that I didn't know he walked me there. He had lived around there his whole life and found it funny that people from London travelled to Totnes to study the religions of people who lived in Asia. I didn't say much back. He didn't seem nasty or intolerant or anything, but didn't get why people were tuning in to that stuff.

I lived and worked at the centre until 1970. My work involved cleaning the centre, which I mostly did alone, and preparing food, which everyone did in silent meditation. We studied the teachings of Sivananda Saraswati and Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, mixing transcendental meditation with vedanta. I kept to myself, focusing on my work and meditating. I enjoyed preparing food, as a lot of it was grown in the garden of the centre, and no meat was consumed there. Hearing animals being hunted nearby on the moors was always a downer and I would get ticked off when I saw hare carcasses being carried by men with guns, but I would tune out and meditate. I wrote to Dad, telling him about what I was learning and practicing and he wrote back telling me about the work he'd been doing for his politics and his thoughts on what needed to happen in this country to get it more like the USSR. We wrote less and less in each letter, and were not as fast at responding as the years went by.

Sometimes, on days when I could hear lots of gun shots and it would become a drag, I cut out from work. This would bug the others, who would get uptight around me. They would lay it on me

that this was a chance to strengthen my meditation practice and for a while I tried this. I got shot down when I would say that I couldn't tune it out, which ticked me off worse. I'd gone there to live a peaceful life, but could often hear gunshots out in the countryside. When I'd take a walk on Dartmoor, the barren desolation was often peaceful, but at the same time unnerving and I'd often turn off. It was like the peace of a dead person. It was like the peace that I imagine happens after a battle or some other extreme violence, and you're just standing there in the quiet. I enjoyed the forests, when I would go there. One guy who stayed at the centre for a while told me that Dartmoor had once been all forest and I wondered if it could be haunted by the ghosts of the trees and animals.

When I was at the centre the mist that came off the moors and the sight of hares, alive in the fields nearby or dead in the hands of huntsmen, only got me more uptight over the years. I would wake up in the night, dripping with sweat, from dreams filled with gun shots, the sounds of wild animals dying and not being able to find and help them. It was like the ghosts of Dartmoor and the surrounding countryside were haunting me in my sleep. My unconscious mind was full of the ghosts of the animals and trees that had been, and I just couldn't tune it out. When I started hearing voices as I was doing my work I knew I needed to drop out. I could never make out what they were saying, as it was always whispers, but it was terrifying and I was done. I cut out for good in 1970 with a group of hippies who had stayed for a week, on their way to The Isle of White Festival.

When we got to The Isle of White the first thing that I noticed was the mist coming off the sea. This didn't bother me, like the mist that would come off of Dartmoor. This was just the sea and felt easy. I wanted to flake, but helped the group that had brought me set up our camp. That first night I was gone, blitzed. LSD and beer had me totally on fire, and like I was flying and swimming all at once. I ended up joining with the group who I've been with since, who may be the only people to read this, unless I gave one

is found. They probably won't believe most of what is written here. Dad wouldn't either.

To Jules, if you read this, remember those words by Henri Zisly: "We must abandon civilization, that idiotic regime of Science and Chemistry, Artificiality, Luxury, modern gods and goddesses, and live a simple life, the lives of our ancestors that we should never have had to give up, and fight this over-heated, steam-laden life that the Civilized lead much to their detriment!" Good luck and stay safe. I hope that nothing I have written here gets used against you or any of our friends by the state.

I am now finished and going to drop out again. The fear is intense. I don't know what is going to happen to me.

mal passion. Around us we seemed to be being visited by creatures of the night and ghosts who were coming in celebration of what we were doing. With each thrust I felt something within me changing and as we orgasmed and moaned without a care for who might hear us, it was as if there was no civilization, no war, no culling, no politicians, nothing of any of it. There was just this wild and untamed joyous and horrifying love that we had found. We lay there a while, neither of us saying a word. I then remembered the bodies, with a feeling of terror. I started to get dressed, but as I did noticed that Poppy was nowhere to be seen. I did see 4 hares moving away from me and had the strange and uneasy feeling that one of them was Poppy.

Today has been a waking nightmare, unreal and heavy. I've not told anyone what I'd seen in the river and have heard nothing of any bodies being found. After this autobiography is found tomorrow maybe whoever reads it will find them and do more than I have done today. I swear that I didn't kill them. I don't even know that Poppy did it. I don't know if those men deserved to die for what they did or if they didn't. Maybe it wasn't about punishment, but Poppy, or whoever else did it, trying to defend those who these men might have killed, or were going to kill. I don't know. I just don't know and this shit is impossible to tune out. I'm sorry whoever finds this and reads it, and I know that this is way out there, but it is all true. The mist is thick tonight, heavy and what I'm going to do is turn off almost anyone who reads this. But its the only option that feels solid anymore and I know its what I'm going to choose. When I'm done writing this I'm going to go step out from the village in the direction that those hares were travelling in yesterday. I write this with an uneasy sureness that I shall never return to civilization and civilized life, unless I am shot and taken back as game, by a hunter. I know this

is mad and unreal, but it is true. I do not believe the pigs will find me or Poppy, if they come looking for us after this autobiography

of them Dad's address and they sent him this. We bonded over being all drop outs, but they had a bus and had come over on the ferry. When the festival was over, I decided to travel with these guys. Inspired by a group in the USA who were called The Merry Pranksters, the bus collective was named The Naughty Kids. For the past 3 years the collective has mostly been trying to spread a pacifist message around the country, hooking up with pirate radio stations to talk about the troubles (one of the other members had been part of the riots in Belfast in 1969 and my Irish family gave weight to our words), and we sold weed to keep money coming in.

The past three years have been a blast and the best of my life, but have also been the hardest. They've been the hardest because of how close to Poppy and Jules I have gotten. It's been gnarly and unreal getting tuned in to them both and them tuning in to me. Right now, the consequences of this are terrifying. Jules Dubois is French, Parisian, and has been the closest thing I've ever had to a brother. He crossed the channel after participating in the riots in Paris in 1968 and was known to the police to have been responsible for the destruction of a great deal of property.

Jules could read and speak English as well as any of the rest of us and had brought with him books and pamphlets, in both English and French, by Henri Zisly, Albert Libertad, Edward Carpenter, Han Ryder, Henry David Thoreau, Jack London and Renzo Novatore. We would often read these together and discuss the thought shared by these writers, as well as our own, but the others would bug out earlier than Jules and me. Jules would call himself a Ludite, which I always found strange, given that he is French. When I told him that I was raised by a Marxist but didn't really like politics, he laughed and told me that I am just as big a threat to Marxist civilization as I am to Capitalist, just as big a threat to USSR and China as to Western Europe and the USA. He was obviously taking the piss, but I appreciated it. We are different from most of the others in the group, who think that the revolution is coming and that civilizations will come together in harmony. The only other person

in the collective who was tuning out of flower power was Poppy, but she's never really been that political. Our conversations were heavy, but I didn't tune out. Over the past three years we have destroyed civilization and built utopias, in words and in our minds and it's all felt so solid, so real. That our words and ideas have not been made real is a bummer, but, until now, I have talked to Jules every night, basically. I could probably have spent the rest of my life travelling and talking to Jules, if what happened last night hadn't. I don't know where to start with writing about Poppy. This frightens me and I can see my handwriting is getting worse as I'm shaking more.

Poppy is beautiful and I have thought this ever since I first saw her at The Isle of White. She's always got this way of seeming to be here and of being really far out and away. Poppy, Poppy Spargo, is from Cornwall and is as strange as any story of the county, which I've heard her tell many of, as well as heard her sing songs in the Cornish language. We've travelled here, upon Poppy's request, as she'd heard from folks over here about wildlife being gassed, and she wanted to return. Most of the others didn't get it and asked why we should stop what we were doing, spreading anti-war propaganda and talking to people about what is going on in Ireland, to go see if badgers were being killed. Me and Jules, who are more of the same mind as Poppy, helped convince the others, and so we've come to Cornwall. This is our fifth night here and the longer we stay the more terrified I am.

I have loved Poppy for a while and on our second night, we made love in woods close to the village we've parked up in, which was the second time we have done this (our first time was at The Isle of White). As we lay there surrounded by trees and under the light of stars, mist crept over us like a blanket of uncertainty, and I was so scared, terrified, while yet also full of joy and awe at the sight of her on top of me and the feeling of our bodies writhing together in this exquisite, primal, animal pleasure. The wildness of the woods and the mist began to appear to emanate from her body,

as if she was and had always been some wild pagan spirit, with the intention of drawing me into the wild. I was terrified and in awe. This is something I could never tune out with meditation.

During the days I've been with people who are part of The Hunt Saboteurs Association, who the collective are joining during the day, to try and protect the badgers. The days have been gnarly and fun, and we've managed to sabotage several attempts to gas the animals. The third night I barely slept. I had gone to try and find Poppy, who had cut out after we'd eaten, and when I found her saw that she was talking to three hares, one white, one brown and one that was so black that I could have not seen it, if it had not been in front of Poppy. I watched with a strange feeling of unease and longing to join, as I watched her turn and follow the hares, into the darkness. When I got in my tent and lay down, I had maddening nightmares until morning.

The fourth night, last night, was so unreal and I'm just freaked out. The group had decided during the day to not look for Poppy, assuming that she'd just gone to see someone she knew, and to get back on with what we have been doing. In the evening I said that I was going to look for her. Jules could tell that something was up and went to cut out with me, but I asked to go at it alone. I walked to the woods where Poppy and I had been together and when there saw three hares. I was sure that they were the three from the previous night and followed them, as they seemed to want to guide me somewhere. A cold feeling of fear struck me as I saw them moving into mist rising off of the river, but I kept on. Then, beside the river, there was Poppy naked and covered with blood. Beautiful and terrifying, she took my hand and placed it on her bosom, kissing me softly and with a tenderness that was utterly loving. As she pulled off my clothes, I looked into the river and saw the bodies of men, with the immediate realization that these must have been men involved in the slaughtering of badgers and other wild animals. We took to the ground again, this time with her back against the earth. She bit me and clenched her nails into my skin, with wild and ani-