

NEW YORK

Dear Friends:

It's early May and although it seems as if I only just got back from California I'm almost all set to take off again, this time for Athens where I'll spend part of the summer revising my book, "Greece On \$5 a Day." This, together with a similar book on Japan (to be revised next) provide my only guaranteed income. I still have hopes that OTHER SCENES will eventually become an international newspaper if I can ever settle down in one place for long enough to get it organized. But meanwhile I'm caught in the bind of having to travel to have enough money to stay at home between trips.

Meanwhile, newsletters proliferate from all kinds of sources. I've always thought of this means of communication as being essentially a one-man type of operation, but more and more big organizations seem to have discovered what an easy way it is to make money (which it is IF you have the resources behind you to back it.) Insider's Newsletter, for example, is backed by LOOK magazine and with their mailing list to work on quickly reached a circulation of around 180,000 (at about 20 bux per); now PLAYBOY (I hear) is scouting the market, and there are rumors of others.

In the past newsletters have tended to be not only one-man operations but also one subject ones -- political or specialized -- and even today there are very few doing what I'm trying to do: cover everything and present it attractively in newspaper or magazine format. Mostly though I'm doing it on the run (heaven only knows what I'll do in Europe) which accounts for the wild fluctuations in content and appearance. I can't even spend time on publishing it properly because I won't be around here to process any new subs that come in, so for the time being you're all members of an exclusive group of 600 which I'm making no attempt to enlarge until later in the year.

NO ADDRESS CHANGES

One thing I afraid I can't cope with yet and that's address changes. I get them all the time, but usually I have to ignore them and trust that when you move you give your post office a forwarding card. The reason I can't cope with it is that the only set of subscription stencils I have is in California, and before I left there I ran off sets of labels which I despatched to various parts of the world. I can't carry address changes with me everywhere I go and then sort through all the labels; there just isn't time. If you feel that this is a sloppy way to run a business you're right, but the fact is that OTHER SCENES isn't a business, it's just me.

The last issue of OS, the one about the underground press conference, was well received in some quarters, totally ignored in most. I was a little surprised because I figured that it was pretty well the definitive word up to that date on the subject. Then I picked up EVO and saw that publisher Walter Bowart had been up to his usual tricks, i.e., absorbing everybody else's ideas and presenting them as his own. I've been in this business a long time but I have met few bigger egos than Bowart. He's charming, he's handsome, and he's brilliant, but he's utterly incapable of giving credit to anybody but himself and totally incapable of working with anybody who won't be a yesman to him.

BIG SUCCESS STORY

Underground publishing continues to be one of the success stories of the year. Hardly a day goes by without new papers proliferating. There is a vast reservoir of material and an even vaster audience in virtually every town and city in this country that presently offers no alternative to the establishment press.

What you will be receiving next, is a copy of Jerry Agel's lively publication BOOKS. It will count as a mailing but will also be a solicitation for subscriptions should you be interested enough to want to read it regularly.

Cheers,

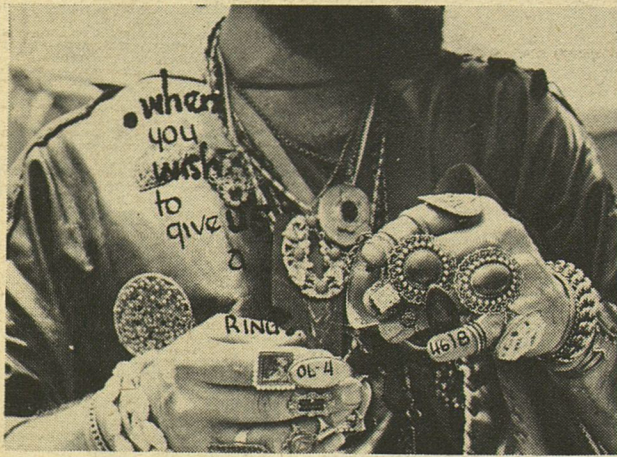
John Wilcock

to send for

The NO DEATH TOYS people, who already publish a newsletter and sell groovy buttons of a smiling face (25¢ from P.O. Box 69683, Los Angeles Calif. 90069) have now produced a magnificent poster (\$2) publicizing their projected sand castle, to be built at Venice Beach, Calif., for two weeks from July 23... New underground paper in Seattle: The Helix (20¢ from 4526 Roosevelt Way N.E., Seattle, Wash. 98105)... Lisa Bieberman's Psychedelic Information Center (26 Boylston St., Cambridge, Mass. 02138) will send you as many copies of future newsletters as you send stamped, addressed envelopes to put them in... Sunset House's catalog (193 Sunset Bldg., Beverly Hills, Calif. 90213) lists a lot of useless (but interesting) items... Gut-siest little paper in America is the farm-workers' tabloid, El Malcriado (25¢ from P.O. Box 1060, Delano, Calif. 93215) which is full of bullying sheriffs, crooked state officials, evil vineyard owners, vicious strikebreakers and exploited farmworkers. It sounds like a morality play but it's all sadly true. For ten bucks you can buy a share in the paper; when did you last get a chance like that?... Ocean Freedom is the name of a newsletter which will deal with pirate radio stations and related subjects. Send \$1 for six issues to Kerry Thornley, Box 2116, Ocean Park P.O., Santa Monica, Calif. 90405... The most prolific poetry publisher in America, d.a. levy, operates out of Cleveland, from which he just put out an excellent anthology of poets. And I mean, excellent. Send 50¢ for a copy of "465" to The Asphodel Book Shop, 306 Superior Ave., Cleveland, Ohio 44113... Concentration camps sit idle in various parts of America just waiting for some trigger-fingered despot to give the word for mass arrests. If you don't believe this to be true read the evidence in Charles Allen's "Concentration Camps, USA" (70¢ from Marzani & Munsell, 100 West 23rd St., NYC 10011)... Lighter reading -- and more practical -- is "The Hashish Cookbook" (\$1.65 from City Lights, Broadway & Columbus, SF) with a score of groovy recipes plus an "antidote" for paranoia (cold fresh lemonade with plenty of sugar, vitamin C, bed with blankets).

OTHER SCENES

to the Editor



HUNTER THOMPSON

You asked me for an article on whatever I wanted to write about and since you don't pay I figure that gives me carte blanche. I started out tonight on an incoherent bitch about the record business... I was looking at the jacket copy on the "Blues Project" album and I noticed that none of the musicians' names were mentioned anywhere on the album... but the "producer's" name was in huge script on the back, and underneath it were four or five other names... punks and narks and other ten-percenters who apparently had more leverage than the musicians who made the album, and so managed to get their names on the record jacket.

I was brooding about this -- which I'll write about sometime later -- when I picked up the latest Free Press and read an obituary for a three-year-old kid named "Godot"... which was nice, but as I read it I was reminded again of Lionel Olay and how the Free Press commemorated his death with a small block of unsold advertising space that had to be used anyway, so why not for Lionel? I'm also reminded that I've asked you twice for a copy of his article on Lenny Bruce (in which Lionel wrote his own obituary), and that you've disregarded both queries. Maybe there's no connection between this and the fact that the Blues Project people were fucked out of any mention except photos on their own album, but I think there is. I see it as two more good examples of the cheap, mean, grinning-hippie capitalism that pervades the whole New Scene... a scene which provides the Underground Press Syndicate with most of its copy and income. Frank Zappa's comments on rock joints and light shows (FP 12/30) was a welcome piece of heresy in an atmosphere that is already rigid with pre-pubic senility. The concept of the UPS is too right to argue with, but the reality is something else. As Frank Zappa indicated, if only in a roundabout way, there are a lot of people trying to stay alive and working WITHIN the UPS spectrum, and not on the ten-percent fringes. That's where TIME magazine lives... way out there on the puzzled, masturbating edge, peering through the keyhole and selling what they see to the big wide world of Chamber of Commerce voyeurs who support the public prints.

WALKING PROOF

Which brings us back to Lionel, who lived and died as walking proof that all heads exist alone and at their own risk. Maybe I'm wrong; maybe his funeral procession on the Sunset Strip was enough to bring even cops to their knees... but since I didn't hear anything about that action, I have to doubt it. I suspect Lionel died pretty much as he lived: as a freelance writer, promoter, grass-runner and general free spirit. I'm sure a lot of people knew him better than I did, but I think I knew him pretty well. I first met

him in Big Sur in 1960, when we were both broke and grubbing for rent money. After that we did a lot of writing back and forth, but we'd only meet (usually at the Hot Springs in Big Sur) after long months of different action in very different worlds (he was broke somewhere in New England when I was in Peru, and later in Rio I got a letter from him with a Chicago postmark... when I got back to New York he wrote from L.A., saying he'd decided to settle there because it was the "only home we had.")

I've never been sure if he included me in that definition, but I know he was talking about a lot of people beyond himself and his wife, Beverly. Lionel saw the West Coast of the 1960's as Malcolm Cowley saw New York after World War One -- as "the homeland of the uprooted." He saw his own orbit as something that included Topanga, Big Sur, Tijuana, the Strip and occasional runs up north to the Bay Area. He wrote for Cavalier, the Free Press, and anyone who would send him a check. When the checks didn't come he ran grass to New York and paid his rent with LSD. And when he had something that needed a long run of writing time he would take off in his Porsche or his Plymouth or any one of a dozen other cars that came his way, and cadge a room from Mike Murphy at the Hot Springs, or in brother Dennis' house across the canyon. Lionel and Dennis were old friends, but Lionel knew too much -- and insisted on saying it -- to use that friendly leverage as a wedge to the screen-writing business, where Dennis Murphy was making it big. Lionel had already published two novels and he was a far better plot-maker than most of the Hollywood hacks, but every time he got a shot at the big cop-out money he blew it with a vengeance. Now and then one of the New York editors would give him enough leeway to write what he wanted, and a few of his articles are gems. He did one for Cavalier on the soul of San Francisco that is probably the best thing ever written on that lovely, gutless town. Later he wrote a profile on Lenny Bruce (for the Free Press) that -- if I ran a newspaper -- I'd reprint every year in boldface type, as an epitaph for freelancers everywhere.

HIS OWN TERMS

Lionel was the ultimate free-lancer. In the nearly ten years I knew him, the only steady work he did was as a columnist for the Monterey Herald... and even then he wrote on his own terms, on his own subjects, and was inevitably fired. Less than a year before he died his wilful ignorance of literary politics led him to blow a very rich assignment from LIFE magazine, which asked him for a profile on Marty Ransahoff, a big-name Hollywood producer then fresh from a gold-plated bomb called "The Sandpiper." Lionel went to London with Ransahoff ("first-cabin all the way," as he wrote me from the S.S. United States) and after two months in the great man's company he went back to Topanga and wrote a piece that resembled nothing so much as Mencken's brutal obituary on William Jennings Bryan. Ransahoff was described as a "pompous toad" -- which was not exactly what LIFE was looking for. The article naturally bombed, and Lionel was back on the bricks where he'd spent the last half of his forty-odd years. I'm not sure how old he was when he died, but it wasn't much over forty... according to Beverly he suffered a mild stroke that sent him to the hospital, and then a serious stroke that finished him.

Word of his death was a shock to me, but not particularly surprising since I'd called him a week or so before and heard from Beverly that he was right on the

edge. More than anything else, it came as a harsh confirmation of the ethic that Lionel had always lived but never talked about... the dead-end loneliness of a man who makes his own rules. Like his anarchist father in Chicago, he died without making much of a dent. I don't even know where he's buried, but what the hell? The important thing is where he lived.

STUPID TEXAS THUG

Now, what? While the new wave flowered, Lenny Bruce was hounded to death by the cops. For "obscenity". Thirty thousand people (according to Paul Krassner) are serving time in the jails of this vast democracy on marijuana charges, and the world we have to live in is controlled by a stupid thug from Texas. A vicious liar, with the ugliest family in Christendom... mean Okies feeling honored by the cheap indulgence of a George Hamilton, a stinking animal ridiculed even in Hollywood. And California, "the most progressive state", elects a governor straight out of a George Grosz painting, a political freak in every sense of the word except California politics... Ronnie Reagan, the White Hope of the West.

Jesus, no wonder Lionel had a stroke. What a nightmare it must have been for him to see the honest rebellion that came out of World War Two taken over by a witless phoney like Warhol... the Exploding Plastic Inevitable, Lights, Noise, Love the Bomb! And then to see a bedrock madman like Ginsberg copping out with tolerance poems and the same sort of swill that normally comes from the Vatican. Kerouac hiding out with his "mere" on Long Island or maybe St. Petersburg... Kennedy with his head blown off and Nixon back from the dead, running wild in the power vacuum of Lyndon's hopeless bullshit... and of course Reagan, the new dean of Berkeley. Progress Marches On, courtesy, as always, of General Electric... with sporadic assists from Ford, GM, ATT, Lockheed and Hoover's FBI.

THE CHILL OF IT

And there's the chill of it. Lionel was one of the original anarchist-head-beatnik-freelancers of the 1950's... a bruised fore-runner of Leary's would-be "drop-out generation" of the 1960's. The Head Generation... a loud, cannibalistic gig where the best are fucked for the worst reasons, and the worst make a pile by feeding off the best. Promoters, hustlers, narks, con men -- all selling the New Scene to Time magazine and the Elks Club. The handlers get rich while the animals either get busted or screwed to the floor with bad contracts. Who's making money off the Blues Project? Is it Verve (a division of MGM), or the five ignorant bastards who thought they were getting a break when Verve said they'd make them a record? And who the fuck is "Tom Wilson", the "producer" whose name rides so high on the record jacket? By any other name he's a vicious ten-percenter who sold "Army Surplus commodities" in the late 1940's, "Special-Guaranteed Used Cars" in the 1950's, and 29 cent thumb-prints of John Kennedy in the 1960's... until he figured out that the really big money was in drop-out revolution. Ride the big wave: Folk-rock, pot symbols, long hair, and \$2.50 minimum at the door. Light shows! Tim Leary! Warhol! NOW!

John Wilcock's OTHER SCENES, ostensibly a fortnightly gazette, appears 20 times each year but not necessarily in this shape and form. Subscription costs \$5 annually (\$4 for the remainder of 1967) with no single copies or back issues available. Foreign subscriptions run from Sept. 1967 to December 1968 and cost \$10 or the equivalent local currency. This issue, #7, written, printed and published at NYC, NY, April 1967.

CALL



BAD NEWS DEPT.: America's attitude towards the Berlin Wall is that it is totally inhuman to keep Germans penned into a section of their own country without letting them roam freely. And yet we allow Premier ("I love Hitler") Ky to dig a deep trench across Vietnam to keep Northerners "infiltrating" into the South...Objections to the war have the administration so riled that they are striking out in all directions. First it became a jailable offense to burn a useless bit of paper called a draft card, now they're trying to introduce heavy penalties for burning the flag. (Not a word about it being illegal to burn people as long as they're not Americans.) What an indefensible moral position to claim that symbols are sacred objects and people aren't...And is there no end to the inhumane, crimes against nature that are justified in the name of "science". Now the Department of California is sponsoring experiments in fruit picking by giving orange trees a severe jolt of electricity so that the fruit falls off faster. How about giving a few scientists a jolt of electricity and see if their empty heads fall off?... New York reports that slugs in the city's parking meters in the past year deprived the city of \$300,000 worth of income. May the figure increase annually...And a NY congressman, Seymour Halpern, is introducing legislation to outlaw the use of phony credit cards in interstate commerce. He's a Republican, of course. How about a law to make all Congressmen's credit cards available to people who can't afford their standard of living?

* * *

DO you ever feel that there's some kind of psychic significance in the fact that at this particular era in history, when we're quite capable of blowing up whole countries and covering the entire earth with a pall of suffocating, all-embracing radioactivity -- that at this particular time is exactly when we're on the verge of being able to leave this world altogether and going out into space to colonise new planets? And has it ever occurred to you that if a bunch of mad rulers, of whatever country or countries, decide that nuclear war is not so unthinkable after all that they're exactly the people who'll be able to get away after blowing up the world behind them? Let's face it, it's going to be decades before we have enough inter-galactic transport to remove the likes of you and I from the earth. In other words it may not be too long before they'll split (colloquially speaking) and we'll split (literally).

FOR ARMS!

BANTAM Books spawned a big money-maker with its pirated version of Mao Tse-tung's "Quotations" and doesn't pay royalties on the copout theory that China (and Russia) aren't signatories to the international copyright laws. That's okay except that the reverse of the coin is that when Russia and Formosa don't pay royalties on their versions of U.S. works we invariably scream blue murder and despatch delegations to Moscow to complain. Personally, I'm for community property and I don't really see why everybody isn't free to reprint anything from some other country if they feel like it (and as long as the author gets paid for the original)...And apropos paying for things, Insiders' Newsletter says that Senators and Congressmen so rarely pay their bills that many firms won't even send them things on approval unless they have a good credit rating. It figures... The Berkeley Barb says that some hippies in Haight-Ashbury, finding themselves to be free extras in a shoddy commercial movie called "Riot on Haight Street", staged a fight and "accidentally" crashed into the camera, wrecking it. Good tactics. Other residents of the area started to ambush the new Grey Line tour buses in the area by pelting them with ripe tomatoes...There's no guarantee that the Andy Warhol you shot questions at when he came to present his movies at your college was the real one and not an officially-approved impersonator... Thinking of buying property in the Bahamas? Don't. Or, if you do, write for a copy of the February issue of the British Consumer Association magazine, "Which" (14 Buckingham Street, London W.C. 2), which deals with cost of living, land values, snags etc... The first mass-

media hippie guru is California's Peter Bergman whose mystical, Indian and incense-filled radio show over LA's Radio Free Oz (KRLA & KPFK) should -- and will -- be on national television one of these days. More about Bergman in "The Flash" (15¢ from 128 Valley Street, Pasadena, Calif. 91105).

YOU can join a bunch of English teenyboppers and hippies on a red double-decker bus in the South of France for a mere \$50 (from London) if you're under 25 "and don't mind mucking in" (that means sharing the work). Write Double Decker Club, 1 Arlington Road, Tickenham, Middlesex, England... Starting next fall the "National" Hockey League will contain six more U.S. clubs (making 10 in all) and only two Canadian clubs (Toronto and Montreal), which is ironic seeing that Canada not only practically invented the game but still supplies 90 per cent of all players... Canada's National Film Board have produced scores of three-minute educational film loops which can be played continuously over a TV set for as long as the class needs the lesson repeating... The address of the famous geodesic dome community, Drop City in Colorado, is Route 1, Box 125, Trinidad, Colo. 91082... Straus Broadcasting (WMCA in NY) is about to produce a portable telephone, leasable for \$50 per month... Canadian candy firm of Neilson's is giving away \$50,000 in solid gold bars, should your solid chocolate one contain a lucky coupon...

GRAFFITI



The new London?

Two men were acquitted at the Old Bailey after Albert Hofmann who discovered the Big Hawk and a Nobel Prize winner EBChain disagreed on a definition of the drug. The cats pleaded not guilty to conspiring to contravene the Poisons Rules but this rules are now effectively replaced by the Home Secretary new Misuse of Poisons Act 66 which defines it as "Lysergamide and its derivatives". Cheery whiskey drinker Judge Graham Rogers remarked to a riotous court including at least one tripper in flight that "It is important that it is known that this acquittal is not a license to use this drug."

Pot smoke smelt in the corridors of the LSE Social Psychology Department and seems to be replacing tea breaks for senior staff.

British plan for a new deal for the registered hard addicts having a hard time. The scheme was to take prescription out of the hands of the Health Service GPs and put it in regional centres which would act to prevent over-prescribing and ensure adequate follow up. The Junkies Doctors (the British GPs who were listed in the Brain Report, quite unjustly as being the main source of illegal Health Service) are still under heavy pressure from bules (ie English for Fuzz from Constables)

Big smash in the British Student Union NUS go on and comes to a head at 28th 29th National Founding Convention of the Radical Student Alliance which might be at long last the foundation of a British SDS of the RSA Manifesto circulated widely through English colleges to Port Huron Declaration. Keele the big Northern Student Union has just walked out of NUS and others are expected to do the same disgusted with lack of militancy on Vietnam, racialism and student support problems. RSA a key meeting of university militants for 8 years in Britain and is causing a great deal of pants wetting in the Establishment who have struggled to keep NUS as an effective buffer on student militancy. NALSO the national labour student organisation has just been taken over by extreme left Trotskyist students and may well be thrown out of the evil Labour Party.

The far east beats with Mick Glory and Snakehips in Nepal have moved to Katmandu and the Nepalese authorities are taking a hate to them. No more visas and no more bread so they may all be broken up and taken home by Her Majesty's Gov as Distressed British Subjects.

Max Bygraves, old time music hall type filth comedian walked out of BBC Ladies Happy Family Housewife's Choice Record show because the BBC daren't let him ad lib. The BBC bosses claimed this was due to Bygraves' remarks about his car lubrication which mentioned a commercial brand. More likely is that they didn't like Max's sexy bits and one remark (anti) about the Vietnam War.

British student leader from Pakistan sent LBJ a ghoulish and expensive postcard with ugly LBJ rubbing shoulders with the skeleton of Ky. Ever keen to please, Loony Bins Johnson sends back card: "Thank you for your holiday remembrance and best wishes for happiness in the New Year."

Another BBC master crime is the refusal to screen an Albert Ayler concert which was recorded for TV at LSE in the Jazz goes to College series. LSE spent the money on organising their walkout over student freedom and the new hack Director they've been lumbered with from Rhodesia. But BBC fixed the programme.

New rave British chart success is by Jimi Hendrix and the Experience. H. is from Seattle and was the usual penniless rock band in Village but now with British band. Plays the Saville Theatre with the Who, the autodestructive group who intend to burn the Theatre down in their new act. Townshend, the lead guitar, is for real that is a fairly staged psychopath who breaks, that is, smashes to bits on the drums and audience, 5 guitars in one set and will end in clouds of smoke destroying his half-blown amplifiers. Singer uses the mike hard against drums. Who leave for US on April 16th. Move set light to a '59 auto and smashed two TV faces of Hitler incidentally(?) ruining their new audio strobe at Leicester. The group were only 18 months ago an ordinary boring Brum village ahll group called Carl Wayne and the Vikings, now top freakers...

McCartney has written a score for new film of Bill Naughton (Alfie-) story, "The Family Way", lots of big brass band sound. McCartney's underground movie made in France is full of trees, broken pot, corrugated iron, strobes and fizzing red exhaust pipes. McCartney told a Sunday paper that he was deeply worried about the war in Vietnam and wished next time he was on a Royal Variety Command performance they could introduce a song and then start to tell everyone about Vietnam. "But everyone would laugh at us."

Donovan, who was fined 200 pounds on cannabis charges, held whole Albert Hall concert. In audience were GHarrison in sari, McCartney, Marianne Faithful, Judy Felix and the Small Faces. Concert included jazzmen, dancers, sad video back projections.

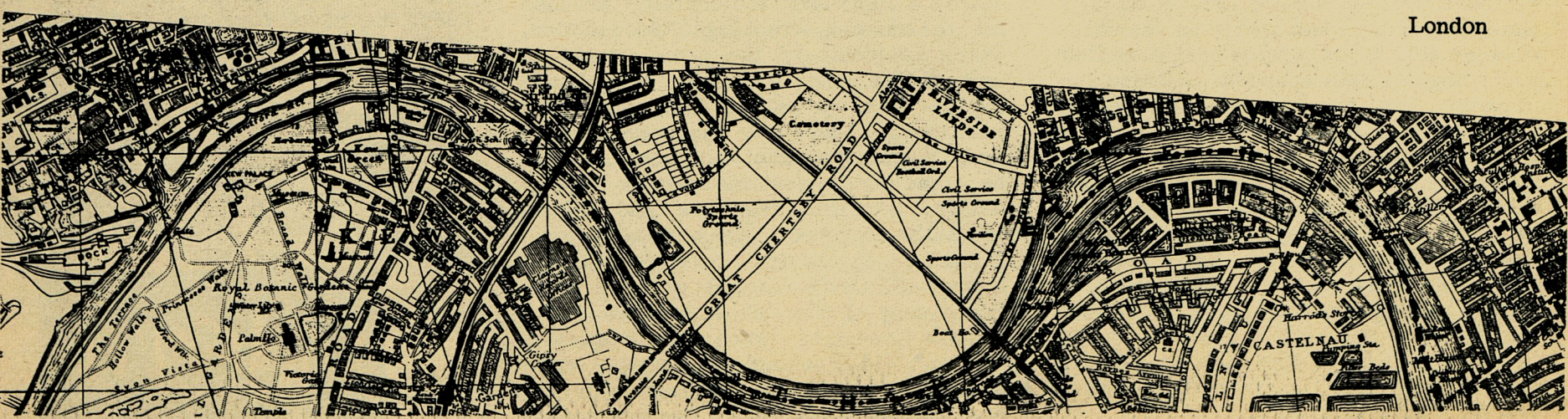
The top British Light Sound group, the Pink Floyd, are developing fast and are now running full length happening concerts with really good soundies and smellies. Lead uses hair dryer on one set of oil slides to give great tumescent enfoldings and bubblings. Told Town that the light man on front line was even for important than the group. Drummer is real fast. Other good groupings are the Sunflower Trolley, which is run from out of the Hornsey School of Art and works with the Olfactory Studio...

Two Red Guards are staying in International Students Hall in London, and wear smooth red tunics with Mao badge which faces to the right...CIA spies.

The London gear is still old military and everyone is wearing epaulettes and medals, very good for the hips and looks fine in scarlet. People are also wearing a lot of sexy but unnecessary fur and go around in igloos looking like Nanook of the North. The Mini skirts and undressed look are still very go and now include matching crotch pieces for underneath. A large number of Londoners walk around trying hard to conceal huge erections, especially noticeable in the Police.

DAVID WIDGERY

London



ITEM: John Wilcock's OTHER SCENES, Issue #5, April 1967

Notes: Contains original printing of "The Ultimate Freelancer", Hunter S. Thompson's eulogy for Lionel Olay. (This article is often mis-attributed to The Distant Drummer, which used the Underground Press Syndicate to reprint the letter seven months later) -- The opening paragraph: "You asked me for an article on whatever I wanted to write about and since you don't pay I figure that gives me carte blanche." is a note from HST to John Wilcock, who opted (with humor) to include it as the introduction. A depiction of their meeting is found in "Hunter Thompson Knocks On John's Door" in the John Wilcock Comic book.

This issue of Other Scenes also includes early rock reporting/ rare rock piece: "The New London?" that describes a rising talent in UK clubs in need of more media exposure, Jimi Hendrix.

From the OTHER SCENES INVENTORY REPORT
an archive of John Wilcock's Other Scenes

"The International Newspaper!"
"John Wilcock Takes Trips!"

See all available issues at: <http://www.ep.tc/otherscenes>

Support the archive by purchasing the comic book biography of John Wilcock, by Ethan Persoff and Scott Marshall, titled: "John Wilcock, New York Years, 1954-1971" (link below for that)

Buy that book: <http://www.ep.tc/book>

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Additional information on John Wilcock is being added posthumously by friends of John at <https://johnwilcock.net/>

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