

what's the story, Morning Glory ?

by andycox@T WCDC.com, 1997

what's the story, Morning Glory ?

What's the story morning glory

Well?

Need a little time to wake up

Well?

Oasis, from the album (What's the Story) Morning Glory?

If you eat 100 morning glory seeds, you will go to morning glory heaven.
Heavenly Blues, Pearly Gates, and Flying Saucers will do the trick.¹

Herb Caen, c. 1958

beforewords: morning glory history

Chroniclers of the Spanish invasion of the Americas observed that the Aztecs consumed psychoactive seeds called *ololiuqui* for religious and medicinal purposes. *Ololiuqui* came from the vine known in the Náhuatl language as *coaxihuitl* (snakeplant), the modern name for which is *Rivea (or Turbina) corymbosa*, a member of the *Convolvulaceae*, or Morning Glory family².

In 1959, ethnobotanist Richard Evans Schultes sent samples of *Rivea corymbosa*, to Hoffmann for analysis³. Schultes obtained the seeds from a Zapotec shaman in Oaxaca. On analysis the seeds were found to contain ergot alkaloids. This was surprising because previously ergot alkaloids, which were used by Hoffman to synthesize LSD, had only been found in the rye fungus, *Claviceps purpurea*. Hoffmann found that the principle psychoactive alkaloid in the seeds was *d*-lysergic acid amide (also known as ergine and LA-111). This differs from LSD-25 by the substitution of two hydrogens in the amide group for two ethyl amides. This makes LSD about 50 to 100 times more active than *d*-lysergic acid amide.

However, although *Rivea corymbosa* is related to the species of Morning Glory available in the USA, it is not the same plant. The species usually found in the USA is *Ipomoea violacea*, also known as *Ipomoea tricolor*, and sold commercially as Heavenly Blue, Pearly Gates, Flying Saucers, Blue Star, Summer Skies and Wedding Bells. As the two plants are in the same family it would seem likely that they both contained ergot alkaloids.

In 1960, Don Thomas MacDougall observed that the seeds of the *Ipomoea violacea* were being used by the Zapotec, who called them *badoh negro*. Analysis showed that these seeds did in fact contain similar psychoactive amides to those found in *Rivea corymbosa*. Some believe that *badoh negro* is another seed, *tlitliltzin* (the Náhuatl word for black slightly altered by a reverential prefix), also referred to in early Spanish records. It is therefore likely that today's users of *Ipomoea* (and LSD for that matter) are partaking of an experience that goes back hundreds, perhaps even thousands of years in the New World.

preparation: morning glory seeds

Each seed of the *Ipomoea* morning glory is about the equivalent of 1 microgram (mcg) of LSD. The usual dose is therefore in the region from 100 to 300 seeds.

I've heard stories of people simply munching on the seeds, or doing things like crushing them and eating them in peanut butter sandwiches. The accepted internet-wisdom, however, advocates using one of two methods to extract the psychoactive constituents from the potentially irritating fraction which resides in the seed husk.

The easiest method of extraction is to grind the seeds to a fine powder and then soak them in water for a couple of hours. The water-soluble psychoactive compounds dissolve in the water and the seed bits containing the irritants can be filtered out. You drink the liquid.

A more complicated, and apparently more effective method involves using a solvent extraction process. I have no experience of this method, but there are favorable net reports. Check out the frequently asked questions (faq) at www.hyperreal.com.

health information: morning glory seeds

1. There is no record of overdose resulting in coma from consuming these seeds, but you might suffer nausea and/or vomiting due to irritants that reside in the seed husks.
2. Morning glory seeds contain ergometrine, a strong uterotonic, and should not therefore be taken by pregnant women.
3. Many commercial seeds are coated with captan, a purple-colored fungicide, that is poisonous. US law requires that coated seeds carry a warning label. Either thoroughly wash the seeds first, or better, find some uncoated seeds.
4. When taking psychedelics the importance of good [mind] set and [physical] setting to ensure a positive psychological experience cannot be overemphasized.

some artistic justifications: the morning glory experience ⁴

Janiger set about his study [of LSD] in 1955. His third subject was an artist who claimed the experience was the equivalent of "four years in art school", and entreated Janiger to give to other artists.

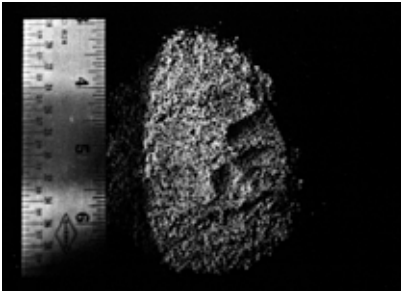
In 1955, Berlin, Guthrie, Wieder, Gooddell and Wolff reported on four prominent graphic artists who made paintings during an LSD experience. A panel of art critics judged the paintings as having greater value than the artists' usual work...

Of the 180 artists surveyed, 114 said that their psychedelic experiences had affected the content of their work... Fully 131 responded that there had been "a noticeable improvement in their artistic technique".

(some results of a survey undertaken by Stanley Krippner in 1969)

I felt I was acting in the spirit of a kind of reverse psychedelic Thor Heyerdahl⁵, looking to prove that psychoactive substances were present in the New World before Timothy Leary.

(Andy Cox, February 1997)



the morning glory experience

December 1996: I ordered half a pound of *Ipomoea Tricolor* seeds, Heavenly Blue variety, from the Redwood City Seed Company at a cost of \$15. I estimate that there were approximately 5000 seeds.

mid-January 1997: The seeds arrive.

1st February, 1997: Morning: Counted out 500 seeds and ground them in a coffee grinder to a fine powder.

2:00 Divided the ground seeds into two equal piles and set them to soak, each in about 1 cup of water.

3:30 Ate half a loaf of French bread and two slices of cheese.

4:30 Inspected the liquid - now a greeny, brown liquid that smells mushroomy.

5:30 My friend, B arrives and we both take one Dramamine tablet to help ward off nausea, as recommended in some alt.drug newsgroup postings.

6:00 I drank the now, very brown liquid and all the seeds powder goop (I had read someone's newsgroup recommendation to also consume the seeds). I thought it tasted OK. B. however thought it was revolting and after ten minutes trying to strain the goop through her teeth, I went to look for some coffee filters. Couldn't find any. She had to keep straining through her teeth.

6:30 I'm feeling nauseous and clammy. I'm fiddling with the video player. I'm feeling irritable.

6:50 I'm spacey and feel like tidying up, which I do. B is "nauseous, cold, a little shaky, mentally alert, physically tired."

7:00 We start watching "Slacker", but it's driving me crazy, all those nihilistic monologues - its so un-psychedelic. I get my camera and start taking pictures of the TV screen.

7:30 Still nauseous, and have that tight feeling in the chest, like coming on to acid.

7:40 Time is moving very slowly. The TV is very glary. We haven't watched much of "Slacker" yet, because of technical difficulties. We turn it off and just watch the noise.

7:50 Starting to after-image. Euphoria, nausea, table-curl effect. I start doing clichéd psychedelic dancing, waving my hands in the air, waving my body. Shaky, tingling, numb.

7:55 B's having problems hearing me. Perhaps I'm not really talking. Put on the Cure. "The color of the music's too loud.... The way the rain comes down hard, that's how I feel inside." Noise can be visual, as on TV.



8:35 Fixed food. Feeling quite out there. Remind me not to look in the mirror again. Is that how I look to other people? Horror.

8:45 Prismatic after-image. I feel like I'm falling into a cliché. The candle has many lumens. Food laid as a picnic tastes good. Australian wine is turning me upside down.

8:55 linguistics: insect -> ant -> aunt -> tante -> tantric -> Nirvana.

9:15 Image-after-image.

B's magazine idea: Penumbra. On the edge and all around. I draw out a section through a total eclipse of the sun (Pink Floyd).

The Philip Morris crest on a Marlboro packet: A very imperial looking crest, with two rearing beasts, a shield and furlly things, and the motto: "Veni Vidi Vici". Get the fuck out, you gotta be kidding! Now that's postmodernism for you - so fucking self-referential! I came I saw I conquered -> cowboy -> manifest destiny -> British Empire (fancy crests) -> Julius Caesar -> old style colonialism -> neo-colonialism -> cigarette business.

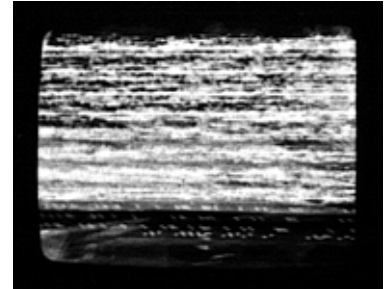
Idea to make a huge blow-up of the Marlboro crest and display it somewhere. But I remember that the artist Hans Haacke has already done something like that. And why does it say "Unlimited - 5 miles" on the side of the Marlboro packet. All I want to do now is smoke.

Penumbra will have "fake" advertisements that look just like the real thing, and advertising exposés on things like the Marlboro crest. The essays will relate to the advertisements and the readers will have to figure out how. We could run a series on Citibank.

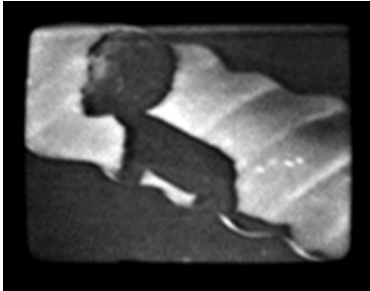
9:45 B: easily distracted, keeps looking at her "Redwoods 1972-1992" glass. Says she sees horses moving amongst the trees. The wall is moving in and out. B has remarked several times on the exceedingly sharp angle of the table. She says it is like a Cezanne painting: ultimate proof to me that in the 19th century, the French already knew how to extract LSD from the ergot alkaloids from the fungus that grows on the rye plant. Those weren't corn fields that Van Gogh was painting.

"Redwoods 1972-1992" on the wine glass. The forest-green words arch in a circle around the matching forest-green trees, which appear to be redwoods. The font is Tolkeinesque - its hard to tell if the words are upper or lower case. The artist has made one tree smaller than the other which gives a hint of perspective, which is emphasized by the darker "rear" tree.

What can it possibly mean? Were those particularly good years of growth? Were these the golden years of the Redwoods that I had missed? Was it the celebration of someone's twenty years of visiting the Redwoods? Or were the "Redwoods" husband and wife and this was their twentieth anniversary? In that case what were the glasses doing in a thrift store? It made me sad to think these glasses were remembering better times.



Another look at the glass reveals that the design has been transferred to the glass by a mass-production technique, indicating that the glass is probably one of many. Given that, it appears that the glass was probably manufactured by a institution to celebrate some anniversary. My mind leaps to the Forestry Commission, but the lack of official crest or motto, weighs against that idea. Redwoods-> tourists->hotels. It could be a hotel celebrating twenty years of operation, but unless that green smudge in the background is a hotel, it seems unlikely that a hotel would celebrate itself on a glass without showing itself.



For now, The Redwoods keep their secret. I have some other glasses with "Mike and Juli, June 8th, 1991" written on them.

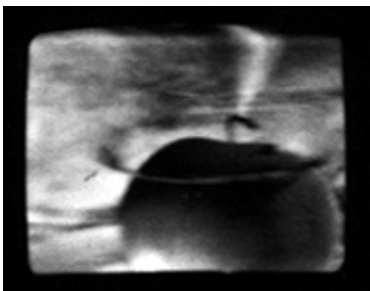
B is feeling strangely in touch with the body, but feeling outside of it. She has a weird feeling in the lower abdomen. We think it might be the uterine-stimulating effect of the drug.

10:00 Why is there a camel and pyramids on a US cigarette box?

10:30 James and the Giant Peach. This is the type of movie to watch. The colors are out of this world. They cannot be contained by the screen and flood the room. We are captivated. Couch peaches. More photos of the TV screen.

11:50 Psychedelic experience -> James and the Giant Peach -> computer graphics -> Pixar -> Steve Jobs -> Apple (and the Beatles on another trajectory) -> the computer for the rest of us -> hippies-> freedom -> psychedelic experience. Or, psychedelic experience -> James and the Giant peach -> computer graphics -> Pixar -> Steve Jobs -> Big Business -> every man [sic] for himself -> entrepreneurs -> freedom -> psychedelic experience.

Its all connected, man.



The Giant Peach from the old world in search of the Big Apple. The American Dream. Peachy, perfect sailing through a heavenly blue sky. A place where everyone is free, but some are not as free as others, like the gulls that were tricked into dragging the flaccid fruit 5000 miles, in the wake of the slave ships.

12:00 What shall we do now? Go on the Internet? Or sleep? We slept. (One of the good things about Morning Glory seeds compared to LSD is that they don't keep you up all night.)

afterwords: what's the story, morning glory?

The next day (Sunday) B and I took a walk down Haight Street from my apartment on Fillmore and Haight.

The heavenly blue days of the summer of love of '67 seem such a long time ago. To those of us who were too young to experience them (or weren't even born) it seems eons away; a loony toon of a time memorialized in the tie-dye and head shops on Haight Street. Yet, apparently there really was a time when anything seemed possible, when people believed that positive social change could occur virtually overnight, if only people could *escape their narrow social conditioning*⁶. All we had to do was give peace a chance, and love. We even had the psychedelic experience to help us *to plug into the empathy circuits of the brain...*⁷ Nirvana.

Things seem so different now, no more easy fixes. Where have all the hippies gone?

We walked into Golden Gate Park. It was a beautiful day. Through Sharon Meadow where 30 or so members of the drum circle were pounding out their binary beat, as they do every Sunday, and probably have since the 60's. Were these the last surviving hippies from the 1967 Be-In?

There are no more big be-ins in the Park. Granted there is the occasional event like "Free Tibet", that probably bears some resemblance to a "be-in", but more often than not the Park plays host to expensive rock concerts or to some mega-advertising spectacle like Absolut À la Carte À la park. Perhaps the Park is the wrong place to be looking for the legacy of the 60's.

Perhaps the hippies are plugged into something else.

Back in 1966 Timothy Leary met Marshall McLuhan, guru of the global village, and seeded the idea in Leary's mind that *a conflict between the old industrial society and the new information society was to be played out in the new arena of power--the media. Those who understood this would create the future*⁸. Leary, and other members of the psychedelic movement, aimed to be among those who would create this future. Consequently, during the 70's the new future's epicenter consequently shifted from the Haight/Ashbury district in San Francisco to Silicon Valley, some fifty miles to the south, as the hippie creators of the future got in on the ground floor of the computer (information) revolution. The hippies weren't the only group to realize the potential of new information technologies. Entrepreneurial yuppies smelled profits, and were in on the ground floor too. What appears to have emerged from the intersection of these two groups is a *yippie* mentality that combines the ideology of both; the notion of *a digital utopia [where] everybody would be both hip and rich*⁹ (and everyone works for a heavenly blue chip company).

So now we plug into the electronic circuits of the "global brain", the information super-highway, where again apparently anything is possible, and the Digital Be-In has replaced the Be-In in the Park. Perhaps the world wide web is the foundation of a new type of democratic system in which we are all free to speak, and all will be heard. Timothy Leary referred to the 1967 Be-In as the *dawning of the Psychedelic-Cybernetic Age*; a post-political movement whose message is freedom and whose medium is electronic information¹⁰.

Perhaps we might even dream of new information technologies helping to realize the kind of non-centralized, non-market system envisioned by Robert Michael and Robert Hahnel: *a society organized to maximize the participatory rather than antagonistic relation of its*

members¹¹. The “good” thing about capitalism is that it provides easy measures of “progress”, such as GNP and inflation. How the “progress” of a society, not based on a market system, would be measured is unclear. It would require an entire rethink of our priorities. I currently see little sign of such a rethinking, and until there is, I fear that cyberspace will merely be a new territory for capitalist expansion, resulting in a *new social and geopolitical stratification based on immediacy of access to transmitted data*¹² - a new dialectic of capitalism marching to the binary drumbeat of the digital.

disclaimer

Nothing written here should be taken as advocating the use of Morning Glory seeds, electronic communication devices, any other psycho-active agent. I do, however, believe that we have the right to do what we want with our neuronal system--what Timothy Leary refers to as *The Fifth Freedom - The Right to Get High*¹³.

Notes and References

¹ Quoted in:

Message-ID: <143302Z01061994@anon.penet.fi>
Newsgroups: alt.drugs
From: an100369@anon.penet.fi (TrakMan.Du)
Date: Wed, 1 Jun 1994 14:25:06 UTC
Subject: Morning Glory FAQ Part 1
A copy of this message is available at www.hyperreal.com

² This history of the use of psychoactive seeds in the New World is synthesized from Peter Stafford, *The Psychedelics Encyclopedia*, Ronin Publishing Inc., Berkeley, 1992, and from:

Newsgroups: alt.drugs
From: dale@unislc.slc.unisys.com (Dale Clark)
Subject: Morning Glory Seeds & Nutmeg
Message-ID: <1993May11.152805.16193@unislc.slc.unisys.com>
Date: Tue, 11 May 1993 15:28:05 GMT
A copy of this message is available at www.hyperreal.com.

³ In 1943, Albert Hoffman, a researcher at Sandoz Pharmaceuticals in Basel, Switzerland, became the first person to synthesize d-lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD-25) and experience its effects.

⁴ These quotations, apart from the last one, are from Stafford, op cit.

⁵ Thor Heyedahl, Norwegian anthropologist. In 1947 he demonstrated that the Polynesians could originally have been migrants from South America, by sailing from Peru to the Pacific Islands of Tuamotu in the *Kon-Tiki*, a raft made of balsa wood. (*Collins English Dictionary*, 1983)

⁶ Timothy Leary, *Flashbacks - An Autobiography*, Tarcher, Los Angeles, 1983, p. 50.

⁷ Leary, *Flashbacks*, p. 50.

⁸ Leary, *Flashbacks*, p. 253.

⁹ Richard Barbrook and Andy Cameron, *The California Ideology*. The authors are members of the Hypermedia Research Centre of the University of Westminster, London. For the theory and practice of the Hypermedia Research Centre, see: <http://www.hrc.wmin.ac.uk/>

¹⁰ See Timothy Leary, “Politics of Ecstasy: The Youth Revolutions of the 20th Century”, in *The Politics of Ecstasy*, Ronin, Berkeley, 1990.

¹¹ See Robert Heilbroner, *21st Century Capitalism*, Norton, 1993, pp 151-156.

¹² Jonathon Crary, “Eclipse of the Spectacle”, in Brian Wallis ed., *Art After Modernism - Rethinking Representation*, The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, 1984.

¹³ See Timothy Leary, "The Fifth Freedom - The Right to Get High, and Neurological Politics", in Leary, *The Politics of Ecstasy*, op cit.

Sources of Images

Citybank advertisement. The image of Timothy Leary was copied from the cover of *Psychedelic Island Views*, Volume 2, No. 2, Island Group, Santa Cruz. www.island.org. The background pattern is from the Mandelbrot Set, a fractal made by iterating complex numbers, and was produced in Photoshop using Kai's Power Tools.

Inscription by Timothy Leary from the San Francisco State University library copy of *Flashbacks*.