

MK-ULTRA

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*They move it through Miami, sell it in LA
They hide it up in Telluride, I mean it's here to stay
It's propping up the governments in Mexico, Cuba, Columbia, Venezuela, and Peru
But when it comes down to it, there must be something we can do*

Abstract: An allegory of modern science.

“Ironic, isn’t it? Blasting Venezuelan drug boats out of the water, and now, somehow, MAHA’s convinced Trump to sign an executive order making clinical experimentation with psychedelics legal again. But our problem isn’t with Trump...it’s with the drugs.”

“That’s putting it mildly. Forty-five patients with marked improvement...but five suicides? Five suicides! Now that’s totally unacceptable—and you know it!”

“At least there haven’t been any heart attacks. I think you’re overreacting.”

“Another body in the river and I’m overreacting? (slapping his forehead) How in the world did we let this happen? Our research is supposed to reduce—not increase—the suicide rate in veterans with post traumatic stress and anxiety disorders. If this goes on...”

“C’mon, man, you know how many manic depressives are in this group. You know as well as I do that nothing, not a single drug out there, has the potential of this one.”

“But it’s killing them, for God’s sake. Five people have taken their lives!”

“You mean five loonies who had suicidal tendencies before you even put them on the drug. There’s nothing in the studies that...”

“But you’re writing the studies, and you’re sweeping every death under the rug!”

“Relax. The CIA is keeping the trials under wraps. And just think, in a couple of years, when this stuff hits the market, we’ll have reduced the risk factor to acceptable levels.”

“And it will go on to kill how many more people? Acceptable to whom? Who’s gonna be the next guinea pig? Would you let your son or daughter take this deadly concoction?”

“Spare me the theatrics and sob stories. This is what we were hired to do. Get real. You gonna give them back all that money? What about your little hideaway in Costa Rica? And who knows, this drug could actually go on to do a heck of a lotta people a lottta good.”

“You kidding me? You been drinking your own Kool-Aid? You’re not buying Grof’s line—that LSD is the key to opening up the mind, get to the core, and locate the root of all mental disorders, the elusive ‘Toxin X’? Remember how angry ol’ Stanislov got when they made LSD illegal and put the kibosh on his ‘research’? I can still picture him putting on the jazz, dark glasses, kicking back in his recliner, taking a little trip...all in the name of science.”

“Ah, to be a Freudian psychoanalyst back in Prague behind the Iron Curtain.

Those were the days! None of those silly ethical restrictions on research involving human subjects, like that pesky Declaration of Helsinki. Nothing to hold back scientific progress!”

“I hear they’ve been using psychedelics on political prisoners in Venezuela.”

“I guess they’re not satisfied with the classics—the ol’ tried-and-true electroshock, sensory deprivation, isolation, physical abuse, and medieval torture like the rack. But it makes perfect sense: drug dealers torturing people with drugs—their weapon of choice.”

“Indeed. The new existential threat: The Latin punch. Drug lords and fentanyl wars? Who needs an A-bomb when you can murder indiscriminately, and terrorize and conquer the world with drugs. Okay, so the jumper...he was a John Doe? That makes it easy. We’ll just have to find another one and give him the same patient number. We need fifty patients to come through this test—fifty living patients. So let’s find ourselves another John Doe!”

At this point, a psych ward assistant runs into the room (breathlessly) exclaiming, “Doctors, doctors, we’ve got another jumper!” (Everyone scrambles through the door.)

Desperately Seeking John Doe?

***Picture yourself in a boat on a river With tangerine trees and marmalade skies
Somebody calls you, you answer quite slowly A girl with kaleidoscope eyes...***



I had such plans...such dreams. The hero’s journey? I was going to be a professor. Maybe go to Harvard. Now I’m lucky to get day labor: plastering right now. Yeah, I can still tell a hawk from a handsaw. So, how’d everything go sideways? Well, it all started that fateful day I saw the ad posted at the student union:

“Volunteers needed for a clinical trial.” Seemed innocent enough. It paid good money, and I was a little short on cash at the time.

When I went in to talk to them, they said all I had to do was drink some “juice,” and then lie back and relax. Afterwards, I was to describe my experience, and draw a picture of what I had seen, any dreams. They put two paper cups on the table and said there was a fifty-fifty chance I’d get the placebo. (Cool, I thought; like the Princess Bride.) So I signed the consent form, made my choice, and naively drank from their cup. Big mistake. I guess there’s no one to blame but myself. No going back, now. Shanghai surprise? Manchurian Candidate? One drink and my life changed forever—I’ve never been the same again.

Alas, the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune!

MK-ULTRA? Politics in bed with Big Pharma? Lawlessness of the bio-lab?

All those dreams and talents shattered! But perhaps my story will prevent any more lives from being destroyed. There’s always hope!