

# Inside the House for Homeless Hippies

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**IN RAGTIME MAYBE?**—A quartet of hippies plays the sounds of love on Haight Street in San Francisco. Times photos by Steve Fontanini

## A 'TRIP' TO SAN FRANCISCO

# Inside the House for Homeless Hippies

BY DAVE FELTON  
Times Staff Writer

(The scene opens in front of a typical two-story Victorian home in a quieter section of San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury district. An ordinary, lazy afternoon in what soon could be any American neighborhood of young people. Around the corner, two teen-agers in flowing tribal robes are smoking pot. A Hell's Angel sits swaying and silent in his backyard overstuffed chair, studying, as he has for an hour, a rose. From inside, the electronic, amplified din of the Grateful Dead's new album filters through the sweet smell of freshly home-baked banana peels. On the front steps, dressed in motorcycle boots, tight gold pants and tailored-to-the-skin zippered leather jacket, is Little Wolf Com-pina—hippie, digger, Widowermaker and our guide.)

**LITTLE WOLF:** The name of the district is Haight-Ashbury, San Francisco—just south of the Golden Gate Park panhandle; longitude 122 degrees, 25 minutes; latitude 37 degrees, 47 minutes. Named after two streets, Haight and Ashbury, that intersect in the center of the district.

It's a nice place, you know—quiet and peaceful except on weekends when the tourists drive in and clutter up the streets. Last couple of weekends we had some trouble and they had to close the area. But like I say, most of the time it's real peaceful.

### Our Narrator Identified

Reckon I better introduce myself —Little Wolf, 27 years old and half Cherokee. I'm originally from Oklahoma, but, well, I ran away from home when I was 12. Actually, my last name is Com-pina, which means bell. Little Wolf Bell.

What else? Oh yes, I'm president of the local Widowermakers bike club and a digger.

You folks probably want to know what a digger is. Kind of hard to explain. Being a digger is more of a spirit anyway—just a person who, like, tries to help his fellow man.

I do some of the cooking for the kids here. My wife and I can't have any children of our own and, I don't know, I just try helping out where I can. The kids call me Dad, they come to me with their problems. I seem to have a way of talking to them.

### Touring Hippie Haven

Well, guess that's enough about me; now I'll show you where I live. (Little Wolf turns and walks inside. On the main living room floor, some 20 young men and women in various costumes and positions are passing the time. Some are reading, some are staring, some are "crashing"—falling into narcotic stupors after particularly strenuous "trips"—some are making love and some are painting the walls. In charge of the paint crew is Big John, a powerful, booming Negro in T-

shirt and jeans. He yells at a goofy-eyed cowboy wearing a blue raincoat and painting woodwork.)

**BIG JOHN:** Hey man, don't paint the woodwork. Stay on the wall, stay on the wall.

(But the cowboy only smiles lovingly and stays on the woodwork.)

**BIG JOHN:** Hey man, put down that roller. You don't know what you're doing.

(A teen-ager with blond ringlets finishes his section, stands back and throws up his arms in praise of the Great White Wall. "Wow!" he shouts, genuflecting. "Wow!" Little Wolf starts upstairs.)

**LITTLE WOLF:** This here's 848 Clayton St., the main digger house. We sleep maybe 200 kids here a

night. For free. Never turn a person away—long as he's over 18.

The mayor's kind of down on us right now. Yesterday the health department had an inspection and we got five days to get the plumbing fixed and the place cleaned up.

What I'd like to get is some of those bunk beds. The health department says we gotta have 100 square feet per person. Hell, military installations don't have that, or the Salvation Army.

I mean of course we got too many people here, but where else can they go? The city won't do anything.

### Handwriting on the Wall

(Upstairs the walls obviously have yet to be repainted. They are gray with psychedelic graffiti of a density that begs the angel-pinhead question. Three keen examples: "Jesus is God's atom bomb," "Love the police as much as you love yourself," and "Make sure tank is full before flushing.")

(All four bedrooms are littered with wall-to-wall mattresses. In the largest, an audience of eight hippies watches eagerly an athletic, bare-chested man slowly pierce his left nipple with a sewing needle. "He's going to hang an earring in it," explains an admirer.)

### Humanitarian Spirit

(A young couple in the next room are making moccasins. They have hitchhiked from their separate homes in San Diego and, as soon as the moccasins are finished, will hitchhike to a hippy community starting up in Seattle. "These are good people," says the girl. "Everybody helps you out." Somewhere else upstairs a man is coughing badly and a woman is crying and packing to leave. Little Wolf sniffs the air and picks up something he doesn't like. He yells an order downstairs.)

**LITTLE WOLF:** Tell those kids baking banana peels in the kitchen

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**CONTEMPLATING**—San Francisco hippies meditate at Little Wolf's digger pad at 848 Clayton St. in the heart of Haight-Ashbury district.



**WEARY TRAVELERS** — Sleeping off in Little Wolf Compino's "sitting room" are assortment of

hippies, journeymen and apprentices. Hostel holds 200 transients, but lawmen say that it is cramped. Times photos by Steve Fantant



**SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY** — Hippie takes a trip in park at the end of Haight St. When hippie takes a trip, only his mind travels, usually with the aid of drugs and, lately by smoking banana peels.

snake vision after reading the Book of Hopi.

And this here (points to truck) is the Magic Geeze Machine. I made it myself, last summer, out of a bunch of old Life magazines I'd been saving. Took about 40 hours. It was really a beautiful truck until I rolled it in Echo Park.

Collage is the greatest thing. I collage everything, man. Buttons, chairs. I collage'd my whole bathroom. I started with the toilet and it just grew and grew and grew.

Anyway, we all just travel around in the truck —Mexico, Tujunga, anywhere we want to go.

There's no goals, man, we're having a ball just getting there. You just have to live for right now.

And what's so beautiful —the truck will always break down and there'll never be enough money. (Laughs.) God takes care of us, man. God always takes care of the gypsies.

I don't know what's gonna happen. Right now I'm married. (Looks over at the girl and smiles.) I was just skippin' down the street and all of a sudden I met the most beautiful girl in the world! Wow! I don't know what's gonna happen and I don't care!

Oh, we're gonna build a bus. Gonna build it and take it to India. Can you imagine? Twenty or 30 of the most cosmic people in the world, riding to India in a school bus. Too much! Just play music and love and make all the babies we can! (He throws up his hands and makes a noise like an atomic bomb explosion with his mouth.)

**LITTLE WOLF:** Well, I guess that's about it. I've been round the world 10 or 12 times and I haven't found anything quite like Haight-Ashbury. I do like Japan quite a bit. Has a beautiful atmosphere. So does Sweden.

But, you know, now that I'm getting a little older, I sort of want to settle down. Some of the diggers are thinking of opening a ghost town in Nevada, up above Nevada City. Kind of a hippie village where there won't be all this hassle. I might help with that.

Or I might go back to modeling. I've done physique modeling, clothing and whatever. It's money. I'll be making money.

But I would like to find a place and settle down. Sit back and watch the world go by instead of whirling around it.

**Next: Officials and other community leaders take a troubled look at the hippies and their growing effect on young people.**



**FASHION PLATE**—Clad in Haight-Ashbury boutique special, 17-year-old Susan Douglas awaits bus.

## HIPPIES' HOME

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to stop it. I want that stopped right now.

**LITTLE WOLF:** Prepares to leave. He tightens his boots and tugs at the diamond ring in his pierced left ear. He checks all the zippers before taking off.

**LITTLE WOLF:** You know, we only got three main rules of the house—no minors, no dope, and, "Do your thing as long as you don't get on the other man." We don't mind if you get high outside the house and come in high, but you can't get high inside. I mean if we were ever caught with anything, you know, why the nars would shut this place down in a minute.

I've tried LSD and all that, and acid did help me find out who I was. Used to think I was a real tough ruffian sort of a person; now I know I'm not so tough.

**Capable of Violence**

On the other hand, you know a lot of these hippies won't fight, but I'm one of the few that will. Myself, I'm nonviolent to an extent, but if things get bad enough . . .

Like if these 100,000 kids come here this summer like they're supposed to and the cops get tough, I'll fight to protect the kids.

Well, I'd better show you how our town lies. (Little Wolf leaves 848 Clayton and walks toward Haight St.)

**LITTLE WOLF:** Over to the left in Golden Gate Park—you can't see it—we have Hippie Hill. Lot of the kids go there on weekends and just lay around and dance and be together.

Me and my wife, Kat, was married on Hippie Hill a while back. Couple of diggers made an arch with their arms and said, "Everybody here who says Little Wolf and Kat are married, walk underneath." And that was it—a real nice ceremony.

**Feeding the Hippies**

We use the park a lot. In the afternoons, about 4, the diggers hand out free food—that is, on the days they have any food to hand out.

And in January, you know, they had this 'big Human Be-In, must have been 30,000 kids there. All the cops were screaming we'd leave the park in a mess, but afterwards the hippies picked up all the papers and food before they left. Some folks said they never seen the park so clean.

(Little Wolf has reached Haight St. which as usual on Tuesday afternoons is quietly teeming. Busy, happy insects, workers and drones together, their wings covered with beads,

buttons, flowers, ankhs (Egyptian symbols for life) and crosses, the hippies stream endlessly along the narrow sidewalk trails, flit into shops and out to rejoin the merry stream. They wear rings on their fingers and belts on their toes, and everywhere they go there is music. Electric rock from the cafes and coffee houses, Hindu ragas from the incense and water pipe stores, live, lone guitars from apartment house windows.

**Flute and Bongo Bite**

(Four men, one of them shaved bald, sit down cross-legged on the sidewalk to give a concert of flutes and bongos. "I play for everybody," says the bald man. "I am Bobo, I play God's music.")

(Something there is about falling in love that makes one forget how to walk. Hand in hand, couples are skipping—skipping along the sidewalks, skipping across the crosswalks, jay-skipping between the bumpers of the tourist cars and buses.)

(Families are strolling too, the parents arm in arm, the children on their shoulders, giggling and holding firm to their bearded fathers' long brown locks.)

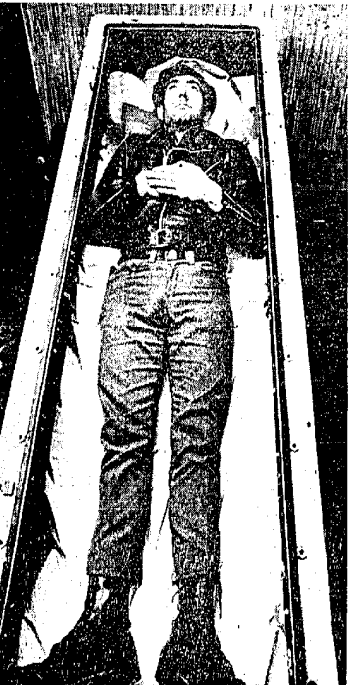
**LITTLE WOLF:** As you can see, this is where most of the kids hang out. Over there we have the Drugstore Cafe and across the street the Phoenix. And down that way there's Tracy's Doughnut Shop, the Print Mint, the I and Thoo Coffee Shop and the Psychedelic Shop.

**Free Clothing**

One place you ought to visit if you have the chance is the Free Store up at dot Cole. The diggers run it and people donate clothes and books and stuff and then they just give it away. You can go in there and take anything, as much as you want.

Just then a jungling 1930 Willys milk truck that must have escaped from a nearby circus pulls up and parks at the curb. It is covered inside and out with a psychedelic art collage, and out pop four laughing, exploding hippies—three men and a girl. They look something like suffer conversers, with stringy, light blond hair dangling on their shoulders. One man is reading a book entitled "Story of the Gypsies." Dressed in green beads and Navy pea jacket, the driver introduces himself.

**DRIVER:** I'm Patton Parks, I'm 25, from Tujunga. These here are members of the Rattlesnake Clan. We got the name after Jimmie went and had a rattlesnake vision. He had a rattle-



**GRAVELY SERIOUS** — Hippie patron Little Wolf Compino meditates in coffin at his Haight hostel.