

Penny Rimbaud

**The Last Of The Hippies
— An Hysterical Romance**

1982

In this cell that is ours, there is no pity, no sunrise on the cold plain that is our soul, no beckoning to a warm horizon.

All beauty eludes us and we wait.

‘No answer is in itself an answer.’

Oriental proverb.

On the third of September 1975, Phil Russell, alias Phil Hope, alias Wally Hope, alias Wally, choked to death on his own vomit; blackberry, custard, bile, lodged finally and tragically in the windpipe. Blackberry, custard, bile, running from his gaping mouth onto the delicate patterns of the ornamental carpet.

He died a frightened, weak and tired man; six months earlier he had been determine, happy and exceptionally healthy; it had taken only that, short time for Her Majesty’s Government’s Heath Department to reduce Phil to a puke covered corpse.

“The first dream that I remember is of myself holding the hand of an older man, looking over a beautiful and peaceful valley — suddenly a fox broke cover followed by hounds and strong horses ridden by red-coated huntsmen. The man pointed into the valley and said, “That, my son, is where you’re heading.” I soon found that out, I am the fox!’

Phil Russell, 1974.

Phil’s death marked, for us, the end of an era. Along with him died the last grain of trust that we, naively, had had in the ‘system’, the last seeds of hope that, if we lived a decent life based on respect rather than abuse, our example might be followed by those in authority. Of course it was a dream, but reality is based on a thousand dreams of the past; was it so silly that we should want to add ours to the future? If the power or protest had dwindled, the power of rock was showing no such faint heart. By the mid sixties, rock’n’ roll ruled and no party conference was going to bring it down. Youth had found its voice and increasingly was demanding that it should be heard.

Loud within that voice was one that promised a new world, new colours, new dimensions, new time and new space. Instant karma, and all at the drop of an acid tab.

‘My advice to people today is as follows: If you take the game of life seriously if you take your nervous system seriously. you’ll take your sense organs seriously if you take the energy process seriously you must turn on tune in and drop out.

Acid prophet, Timothy Leary.

Society was shocked, desperate parents backed off as their little darlings 'tripped' over the ornamental carpets. Hysterical reports that acid caused everything from heart-burn to total collapse of decent society appeared almost daily in the press. Sociologists invented the 'generation gap' and when the long haired weirdo flashed a V-sign at them they got that all wrong as well, it was really a peace sign, but, either way around it meant 'fuck off'. In the grey corner we had 'normal society', and in the rainbow corner sex'n'drugs'n'rock'n'roll, at least that's how the media saw it. The CND symbol was adopted as an emblem by the ever growing legions of rock-fans whose message of love and peace spread, like a prairie-fire, world-wide. The media, in its desperate need to label and thus contain anything that threatens to outdo its control, named this phenomenon 'Hippy' and the system, to which the media is number one tool in the fight against change, set about in its transparent, but none-the-less effective way, to discredit this new vision.

By the late sixties, straight society was beginning to feel threatened by what its youth was up to; it didn't want its grey towns painted rainbow, the psychedelic revolution was looking a little bit too real and it had to be stopped.

Books were banned, bookshops closed down. Offices and social centres were broken into and their files were removed, doubtless to be fed into the police computers. Underground papers and magazines collapsed under the weight of official pressure, galleries and cinemas had whole shows confiscated. Artists, writers, musicians and countless unidentified hippies got dragged through the courts to answer trumped-up charges of corruption, obscenity, drug-abuse, anything that might silence their voice; but nothing could, it all mattered too much.

As oppression became increasingly heavy, public servant 'bobby' became known as public enemy 'piggy'; war had been declared on the peace generation, but love wasn't going to give in without a fight.

We are a generation of obscenities. The most oppressed people in this country are not the blacks not the poor, but the middle class. They don't have anything to rise up against and fight against. We will have to invent new laws to break . . . the first part of the yippy program is to kill your parents . . . until your prepared to kill your parents you're not ready to change this country. Our parents are our first oppressors.'

Jerry Rubin, leader of the Yippies (militant hippies), speaking at Kent State University, USA.

Within a month of Rubin's speech, the university was in uproar. The mostly white, middle class students, to show their objection to the way in which both their campus and their country were being run, had staged innumerable demonstrations and burnt down part of the university. The authorities called in the army to 'restore peace', which they did in true military fashion =A5 by shooting dead four students.

‘After the shooting stopped, I heard screams and turned and saw a guy kneeling holding a girl’s head to his hands. The guy was getting hysterical, crying, yelling, shouting, “Those fucking pigs, they shot you”. ’

A Kent State student after the shootings.

The system had got in first. What Rubin hadn’t accounted for, although past history should have been a lesson to him, was that parents would be prepared to kill their children rather than accept change.

‘Mother: “Anyone who appears on the streets of a city like Kent with long hair, dirty clothes or barefooted deserves to be shot.”

Question: “Is long hair a justification for shooting someone?”

Mother: “Yes We have got to clean up this nation, and we’ll start with the long-hairs.”

Question: “Would you permit one of your sons to be shot simply because he went barefooted?”

Mother: “Yes”.

A mother speaks after the shootings at Kent. The days of flower power were over; the piggies were out grazing in the meadows

‘I’m very proud to be called a pig. It stands for pride, integrity and guts.’
Ronald Reagan

By the end of the sixties, throughout the western world, the ‘people’ had returned to the streets. The dream was cross-fading with the nightmare. In France, the government was almost overthrown by anarchist students; in Holland, the Provos made a laughing stock of conventional politics; in Germany Baader-Meinhof revenged itself on a state still run by ageing Nazis; in America, peace became a bigger issue than war; in Northern Ireland, the Catholics demonstrated in demand for civil rights; in England, colleges and universities were ‘occupied’, embassies stormed. People everywhere were calling for a life without fear, a world without war and were demanding a freedom from the authorities who for years they had dismissed as almost non-existent. The system, for far too long, had had it all its own way. Amongst the people themselves, however, a long standing animosity was becoming evident =A5 the conflicting interests of anarchism and socialism.

Disagreements aside, the movement for change continued. Anarchist, socialist, activist, pacifist, working class, middle class, black, white — one thing at least

united them all, a common cause, a universal factor, a shared flag – good old rock'n' roll

In the late sixties, Woodstock in America, and Glastonbury in Britain, created a tradition in rock music that has now become part of our way of life – the free festival. Free music, free space, free mind; at least that, like 'once upon a time', is how the fairy story goes.

Many of the clashes between the authorities and the youth movement in the late sixties and early seventies were, broadly speaking, of a political nature, leftist platforms for social discontent, rather than anarchic demands by individuals for the right to live their own lives. The free festivals were anarchist celebrations of freedom, as opposed to socialist demonstrations against oppression and, as such, presented the authorities with a new problem how do you stop people having fun? Their answer was predictable – stamp on them.

Windsor Park is one of Her Majesty's many back-gardens and when the hippies decided that it was an ideal site for a free festival, she was 'not amused'. The first Windsor Free had been a reasonably quiet affair and the authorities had kept a low profile. Next year things were different and the Queen's unwanted guests were forcibly removed by the police and the royal corgis were, no doubt, suitably relieved, free once more to wander undisturbed. At the front of the clashing forces that year, dressed variously in nothing, or a pair of faded jeans and a brightly embroidered shirt emblazoned with the simple message 'Hope', was one Phil Russell. He danced amongst the rows of police asking, "What kind of gentlemen are you?", or mocking, "What kind and gentle men you are." The boys in blue were probably men, but they were neither kind nor gentle. Phil came away from Windsor disturbed; he hated violence and was sickened by what he had seen. Love? Peace? Hope? It was shortly after this that we first met.

For many years we had been running an open house, we had space and felt we should share it. We had wanted a place where people could get together to work and Live in a creative atmosphere rather than the stifling, inward looking family environments in which we had all been brought up. It was inevitable that someone Like Phil would eventually pass our way

Phil Hope was a smiling, bronzed, hippy warrior. His eyes were the colour of the blue skies that he loved, his neatly cut hair was the gold of the sun that he worshipped. He was proud and upright, anarchistic and wild, pensive and poetic. His ideas were a strange mixture of the thinkings of the people whom he admired and amongst whom he had lived. The dancing Arabs. The peasant Cypriots. The noble lasai. The silent and sad North American Indians for whom he felt a real closeness of spirit. Phil had travelled the world and had met fellow thinkers in every place that he had stopped, but always he returned to England. Perhaps it was his love of the mythical past, King Arthur and His Knights, that brought him

back, or perhaps he felt as we do, that real change can only be effected in the place that you most understand home.

Phil could talk and talk and talk. Half of what he spoke of seemed like pure fantasy, the other half like pure poetry. He was gifted with a strange kind of magic. One day in our garden, it was early summer, he conjured up a snowstorm, huge white flakes falling amongst the daisies on the lawn. Another time he created a multi-rainbowed sky – it was as if he had cut up a rainbow and thrown the pieces into the air where they hung in strange random patterns. Looking back on it now it seems unbelievable but, all the same, I can remember both occasions vividly.

On our first meeting he described Windsor Free; we had always avoided festivals, so our knowledge of them was very limited. Phil outlined the histories and then went on to detail his ideas for the future. He proceeded to unfold what was, to us, a ludicrous plan. He wanted to claim back Stonehenge (a place that he regarded as sacred to the people and stolen by the government) and make it: a site for free festivals, free music, free space free mind; at least that, like ‘happily ever after’, is how the fairy story goes.

It is sad that none of that ‘freedom’ was evident when we attempted to play at the Stonehenge Festival ten years later. Since Phil’s death, it had been a dream that one day we would play the festival as a kind of memorial to him. In 1980 we had the band and the opportunity to do it.

Our presence at Stonehenge attracted several hundred punks to whom the festival scene was a novelty, they, in turn, attracted interest from various factions to whom punk was equally new. The atmosphere seemed relaxed and as dusk fell, thousands of people gathered around the stage to listen to the night’s music. suddenly, for no apparent reason, a group of bikers stormed the stage saying that they were not going to tolerate punks at Their festival’. What followed was one of the most violent and frightening experiences of our lives. Bikers armed with bottles, chains and clubs, stalked around the site viciously attacking any punk that they set eyes on. There was nowhere to hide, nowhere to escape to; all night we attempted to protect ourselves and other terrified punks from their mindless violence. there were screams of terror as people were dragged off into the darkness to be given lessons on peace and love; it was hopeless trying to save anyone because, in the blackness of the night, they were impossible to find. Meanwhile, the predominantly hippy gathering, lost in the soft blur of their stoned reality, remained oblivious to our fate.

Weeks later a hippy newsheet defended the bikers, saying that they were an anarchist group who had misunderstood our motives some misunderstanding! Some anarchists!

If Phil and the first Stonehenge festivals were our first flirtations with ‘real’ hippy culture, this was probably our last.

Dream filled hippies were a phenomenon of the early seventies, lost souls whose brains were governed more by dope and acid than by common-sense. They were generally a bore, waffling on about how things were 'going to be' in about as realistic a way as snow describing how it will survive the summer's sun. For all his strange ideas, Phil seemed different. Drugs, to him, were not something to 'drop out' with, but a communion with a reality of colour and hope that he actively brought back into the world of greyness and despair. He used drugs carefully and creatively, not for 'escape', but to help realise 'a means of escape'.

In many respects we could never have been described as hippies. After the usual small amount of experimentation we had rejected the use of drugs because we felt that they confused thought and generally interfered with relationships rather than contributing to them.

We had opened up our house at a time when many others were doing the same. The so called 'commune movement' was the natural result of people like ourselves wishing to create lives of co-operation, understanding and sharing. Individual housing is one of the most obvious causes for the desperate shortage of homes, communal living is a practical solution to the problem. If we could learn to share our homes, maybe we could learn to share our world and that is the first step towards a state of sanity.

The house has never been somewhere where people 'drop out', we wanted somewhere where people could 'drop in' and realise that given their own time and space they could create their own purposes and reasons and, most importantly, their own lives. We wanted to offer a place where people could be something that the system never allows them to be themselves. In many respects we were closer to anarchist traditions than to hippy ones but, inevitably, there was an interaction.

We shared Phil's disgust with 'straight' society, a society that puts more value on property than on people, that respects wealth more than it does wisdom. We supported his vision of a world where the people took back from the state what the state had stolen from the people. Squatting as a political statement has its roots in that way of thought. Why should we have to pay for what is rightfully ours? Whose world is this?

Maybe squatting Stonehenge wasn't such a bad idea. Phil kept coming back to the house with new plans. His enthusiasm was infectious and finally we agreed to help him organise the first Stonehenge Festival, Summer Solstice, June 74.

'Then called King Arther with loud voice "Where here before U5 the heathen hound who slew our ancestors now march we to them . . . and when we come to them myself foremost of all the fight I will begin.'

'Brut' Layamon

By the beginning of 1974 we had printed thousands of hand-outs and posters for the festival and Phil had sent out hundreds of invitations to such varied celebrities as the Pope, the Duke of Edinburgh, The Beatles, the British Airways air hostesses and the Hippies of Katmandu. Needless to say, not many of the invitees turned up on the appointed date, but Phil was happy that a motley crew of a few hundred hippies had.

For nine weeks Phil and those who were prepared to brave the increasingly wet summer, held fort at the old stone monument, watched in growing confusion by the old stone-faced monument keepers.

Wood-smoke drew into the damp night air, grey smoke against grey stones. Leaping flames illuminated the story-tellers who sat, rainbow splashes in the plain landscape, telling tales of how it was that this fire was lit in this place, at this time, on our earth.

‘Our generation is the best mass movement in history – experimenting with anything in now search for love and peace. Knowledge kicks religion life but even if it leads us to our death at least we’re all trying together Our temple is sound we fight our battles with music drums like thunder cymbals like lighting banks of electronic equipment like nuclear missiles of sound. We have guitars instead of tommy-guns’

Phil Russell, 1974.

Rock ‘n roll revolution, day in, day out, the talk went on, the rain came down and if this year there’d only been a battered old cassette player to pump out the sounds, next year they’d do better.

Eventually, the Department of the Environment, keepers of the old stone-faced monument keepers, served the ‘Wallies of Stonehenge’ notice to withdraw from government property. The various inhabitants of the fort had agreed that, should the authorities intervene, they would answer only to the name of Wally; the name originated from a lost dog, much sought after at the Isle of Wight Festival of many years back. The ludicrous summonses against Phil Wally, Sid Wally, Chris Wally etc. did much to set the scene for the absurd trial that followed in London’s High Courts.

Government enquiries are frequently used to lead the public into thinking that something positive is being done about situations where the system has been seen to step out of line. These token gestures allow the authorities to commit atrocious crimes against the people while suffering no real fear of reprisal The tactic has been employed in cases of military and police violations in Belfast, Brixton etc.; environmental violations such as deadly radiation leaks from power stations like Wind scale in Cumbria; compulsory purchase orders, official theft, on land for

motor ways, airports and more nuclear plants, all of which are more likely to be a part of government plans for the event of nuclear war than to be for the convenience of the public; other 'mistakes' such as corruption by government officials, the maltreatment of inmates in prisons and mental homes, violence by teachers in schools, whenever, in fact, the authorities need a cover-up for their activities.

Those in government are perfectly aware that they and the authorities to whom they have been given power, daily commit crimes against the public and yet, unless they are exposed by that same public, who rightly might fear for their own well-being, nothing is done.

In cases where the public do become aware of inexcusable behaviour by the authorities, the government sets up its own enquiry to 'investigate' the issue. Something 'appears' to be happening and the gullible, silent, violent majority are satisfied that 'justice has been done'. The crude fact however, is that the government will have done nothing at all except to have produced and printed a few White Papers that hardly anyone will read and no one will take any notice of. Meanwhile the 'official crimes continue, unhindered.'

Wally Hope came away from Windsor bruised and depressed. Once again he had danced amongst the boys in blue in a vain attempt to calm them with his humour and his love — he had been beaten up for his efforts.

'I saw the police dragging away a young boy punching and kicking him I saw a pregnant woman being kicked in the belly and a little boy being punched in the face. An around the police were just laying into people. I went to one policeman who had just knocked out a woman's teeth and asked him why he'd done it he told me to fuck off or I'd get the same. Later on I did. 'Fleet Street loved it, there hadn't been any suitably unpleasant murders, rapes, wars or 'natural' disasters, so the Wallies, with their leader Phil Wally Hope, became this week's 'disposable' stars. The grinning heroes appeared daily in the pages of the papers, flashing peace-signs and preaching the power of love, next to that day's tits 'n bums an old message in a new setting.

Having lost the case and been ordered to immediately vacate the land, Wally Hope jubilantly left the courtroom to face waiting reporters announcing, "We have won, we have won Everybody loves us, we have won," Everybody was, if not in love with, certainly confused by Wally and his disposable statement. All the same, for a day or two, the Wallies had been good copy. In a way they had won, they had moved on, but there's always a next year and a tradition had been born. In a way they had won, but the system doesn't like being made a fool of; the tradition has now become one of the only yearly major free festivals. So, in a way they had won, but Wally Hope had pushed a thorn in the side of the system and the system wasn't going to let him get away with it again.

From Stonehenge the retreating Wallies moved to Windsor. This year the festival had attracted the biggest gathering ever. Tens of thousands of people had come to ensure that Her Royal Majesty remained unamused and she, in turn, was waiting in the guise of a massive police presence. Tension between the two factions existed from the start and eventually things exploded when the police staged a vicious early morning attack on the sleeping festival goers. Hundreds of people were hurt as the police randomly and brutally laid into anyone unlucky enough to be in their way. People were dragged from their tents to be treated to a breakfast of boot and abuse. Protesting hippies were pulled away to waiting Black Marias to be insulted, intimidated, beaten up and charged.

The media pretended to be shocked and the government ordered a public enquiry, neither of which did much to improve the condition of the hundreds of injured people.

Wally Hope, after the party was over. Bit by bit, we were learning. The days of flower-power were over, the pigs were out grazing in the meadows. Our parents, at least their public servants, are our first oppressors. The daisies w . . . being eaten. The nightmare was becoming reality.

‘Where today are the many powerful tribes of our people? They have vanished before the greed and oppression of the White Man, as snow before the summer’s sun,’
Indian Chief.

Things don’t seem to change much. We should have known. Bit by bit, we were learning.

In the winter of that year Wally started work on the second Stonehenge Festival; posters, hand-outs, invites. This time round he had the questionable success of the first festival to point to, so the job was easier. Word of mouth has always been a powerful tool of the underground and already people were talking about what they would do to make it work.

Wally spent much of the first two months of 75 handing out leaflets in and around London. Dressed in his ‘combat uniform’, a bizarre mixture of middle-eastern army gear and Scottish tartans and driving his rainbow striped car complete with a full sized Indian tepee, a large multipoled tent, strapped to the roof, he was a noticeable and colourful sight, a sight that those greyer than himself, in appearance and thought, would certainly not have missed. In May, he left our house for Cornwall; we had done all that we could to prepare for the festival and Wally wanted to rest up in his tepee until it began. The day of his departure was brilliantly hot; we sat in the garden drinking tea as Wally, glorifying the golden

sun, serenaded us and it, with a wild performance on his tribal drums. He was healthy, happy and confident that this time round he'd win again.

As the rainbow coloured car drew away from our house, Wally leant through its window and let out an enormous shout, something in between an Indian warcry and the words 'freedom and peace', he was too far away to be properly heard. The next time that we saw him, about a month later, he had lost a stone in weight, his skin was white and unpleasantly puffy, he was frail, nervous and almost incapable of speech. He sat with his head hung on his chest, his tongue ran across his lips as if it were searching out the face to which it had once belonged. His tear filled eyes had sunk, dull and dead, into his skull like some strange Halloween mask. His hands shook constantly in the way that old men's do on a cold winter's day. The sun which he worshipped had darkened for him, he was unable to bear its light or its heat. Every so often he would take pained, involuntary glances around the walled garden in which we sat. Occasionally our eyes would follow his and always they were met with other more sinister eyes watching us from across the perfect lines of the neatly cut green lawns. Wally Hope was a prisoner in one of Her Majesty's Psychiatric Hospitals, a man with no future but theirs. This time round he was not winning.

A couple of days after Wally had left us he had been arrested for possession of three acid tablets. The police had mounted a raid on the house at which he had stopped for the night claiming that they were looking for an army deserter. It just so happened that while they were looking for the deserter they decided, for no reason at all, to look through Wally's coat pocket. Of course they hadn't noticed the rainbow coloured car parked outside, nor were they aware of the fact that the owner of that coat was the laughing hippy anarchist who had made such an arsehole of the courts only a year before, or that he was the same colourful character that had been handing out leaflets about Stonehenge 2 in the streets of London just a few days ago. The police don't notice things like that; their job, after all, is to catch fictitious army deserters.

Whereas most people would have been given a large wobble from the trigger-finger and a small fine, Wally was refused bail and kept in prison on remand. He was refused the use of the phone or of letter writing materials, so he had no way of letting people or the outside know what had happened to him. The people from the house in which he was arrested did nothing to help, presumably because they feared similar treatment by the authorities. He was alone and hopelessly ill-equipped for what was going to happen to him.

After several days in jail, he appeared on parade wearing pyjamas claiming that the prison clothing, which he was obliged to wear, was giving him rashes. Rather than suggesting the simple remedy of allowing him to wear his own clothes, the warden, clearly an expert in medical matters, sent him to see the prison doctor

who, in his infinite wisdom, had no trouble at all in diagnosing the problem as 'schizophrenia'.

'Just because they say that you're paranoid, it doesn't mean that you're not being followed.'

Unknown hippy wit.

Since the beginning of time, mental illness has been a powerful political weapon against those seeking, or operating, social change. A lot of the definitions of 'madness' are bogus inventions by which those in authority are able to dismiss those who dare to question their reality. Terms like schizophrenia, neurotic and paranoid, mean little more than what any particular, or not so particular, individual chooses them to mean. There are no physical proofs for any of these 'conditions'; the definitions vary from psychiatrist to psychiatrist and depending on which is considered undesirable or subversive, are totally different from one country to another. Because of these different standards, the chances of being diagnosed schizophrenic in America are far higher than they are in Britain and this led one psychiatrist to suggest that the best cure for many American mental patients would be to catch a flight to Britain. The label of 'mental illness' is a method of dealing with individuals, from unwanted relatives to social critics, who, through not accepting the conditions that are imposed upon them by outsiders, are seen as 'nuisances' and 'trouble makers'.

The works of psychologists, notably Freud, Jung, and the school of perverts who follow their teachings, have, by isolating 'states of mind' and defining some of them as 'states of madness', excluded all sorts of possible developments in the way in which we see, or could see, our reality. By allowing people to learn from the experience of their so called 'madness', rather than punishing them for it, new radical ways of thought could be realised, new perspectives created and new horizons reached. How else has the human mind grown and developed? Nearly all the major advances in society have been made by people who are criticised, ridiculed, and often punished in their own time, only to be celebrated as 'great thinkers' years after their deaths. As mental and physical health becomes increasingly controllable with drugs and surgery, we come even closer to a world of hacked about and chemically processed Mr. and Mrs. Normals whose only purpose in life will be to mindlessly serve the system; progress will cease and the mind-fuckers will have won their battle against the human spirit.

Once labelled 'mad', a patient may be subjected to a whole range of hideous tortures politely referred to by The Notional Health Service as 'cures'. They are bound up in belts and harnesses, strait jackets, so that their bodies become bruised and their spirits beaten. They are locked up in silent padded cells so that

the sound of their own heartbeat and the smell of their own shit breaks them down into passive animals. They are forced to take drugs that make them into robot-like zombies. One common side effect of long term treatment with these drugs is severe swelling of the tongue; the only effective cure is surgical — the tongue is cut out — what better way to silence the prophet? They are given electric shocks in the head that cause disorientation and loss of memory. ECT, electro-compulsive therapy, is an idea adopted from the slaughterhouse where, before having their throats cut open, pigs are stunned with an identical form of treatment — ECT is a primitive form of punishment that owes more to the traditions of the witch hunters than it does to the tradition of science. The ultimate ‘cure’, tour de force of the psychiatric profession, is lobotomy. Victims of this obscene practical joke have knives stuck into their heads that are randomly waggled about so that part of the brain is reduced to mince-meat.

Surgeons performing this operation have no precise idea what they are doing; the brain is an incredibly delicate object about which very little is known, yet these butchers feel qualified to poke knives into people’s heads in the belief that they are performing ‘scientific services’. Patients who are given this treatment frequently die from it; those who don’t can never hope to recover from the state of mindlessness that has been deliberately imposed upon them.

Disgusting experiments are daily performed on both animals and humans in the name of ‘medical advance’; there is no way of telling what horrific new forms of treatment are at this moment being devised for us in the thousands of laboratories throughout the country. In Nazi Germany, the inmates of the death camps were used by drug companies as ‘guinea-pigs’ for new products. Nowadays the companies, some of which are the very same ones, use prisoners in jails and hospitals for the same purposes.

Mental patients are constantly subjected to the ignorance of both the state and the general public and, as such, are perhaps the most oppressed people in the world. In every society there are thousands upon thousands of people locked away in asylums for doing nothing more than question imposed values; dissidents dismissed by the label of madness and silenced, often for ever, by the cure.

Wally was prescribed massive doses of a drug called Largactil which he was physically and often violently forced to take. Drugs like Largactil are widely used not only in mental hospitals, but also in jails where ‘officially’ their use is not permitted. The prison doctor’s ‘treatment’ for ‘schizophrenia’ reduced Wally to a state of helplessness and by the time he was dragged into the courts again he was so physically and mentally bound up in a drug induced strait jacket that he was totally incapable of understanding what was going on, let alone of offering any kind of defence for himself.

When finally we did hear from Wally, an almost incomprehensible letter that looked as if it had been written by a five year old child, he had been taken from the jail, herded through the courts where he was 'sectioned' under the Mental Health Act of 1959, and committed, for an indefinite time, to a mental hospital

Sectioning, compulsory hospitalisation, is a method by which the authorities can imprison anyone who two doctors are prepared to diagnose as 'mad'. It is not difficult, naturally, to find willing doctors, since prison hospitals are riddled with dangerous hacks who, having sunk to the bottom of their profession, are willing to oblige.

Once sectioned, the patient loses all 'normal' human rights, can be treated in any way that the doctors see fit and, because appeal against the court decision is almost impossible, stands no chance of release until certified 'cured' by those same doctors.

Recently Britain was forced by the European Court of Human Rights to allow patients, prisoners, the right to appeal against compulsory hospitalisation. Although this might appear to be an improvement on what existed in Wally's time, patients still have to wait six months before the appeal will be heard, by which time, like Wally, they are liable to be so incapacitated by the treatment that they have received, that the appeal procedure would be impossible for them to handle.

Sectioning enables the state to take anyone off the streets and imprison them, indefinitely, without any crime having been committed; it enables the state, within the letter of the law, to torture and maim prisoners and suffer no fear of exposure.

Compulsory hospitalisation is the ultimate weapon of our oppressive state, a grim reminder of the lengths to which the system will go to control the individual. Whereas the bomb is a communal threat, sectioning violates concepts of 'human rights' in its direct threat to the freedom of personal thought and action.

When we heard of Wally's fate, we were convinced that the experience would destroy him; some of us indeed, were convinced that the authorities intended to destroy him. Inevitably, we were assured by liberal acquaintances that we were 'just being paranoid about the intentions of the state'; those same liberals say the same about any of the horrors of modern technological society, from the bomb to computer systems, that they are afraid to confront within that society and themselves. Paranoid or not, we made efforts, firstly legally, then, illegally, to secure Wally's release. All of our attempts failed.

We spent days on the phone contacting people whom we thought might be able to help or advise us. The most useful and compassionate help came from organisations like Release and BIT, underground groups, some of which still operate today helping people over all sorts of problems, from housing to arrest. Critics of the 'hippy generation' would do well to remember that the majority of such organisations, plus alternative bookshops, printing presses, food shops,

cafes, gig venues etc., are still run, for the benefit of us all, by those same hippies; old maybe but, because of the enormous efforts many of them have made 'to give hope a chance', not boring.

We found that appeal was as good as impossible and realised, in any case, that to follow 'normal' procedures could take months and by then we thought it would be too late. We employed a lawyer to act on Wally's behalf, but the hospital made it impossible for him to contact Wally; letters never got through and telephone calls proved pointless. The 'patient' was always 'resting' and messages were incorrectly relayed to him.

When we attempted to visit Wally in hospital we were informed that no one but his close relatives could see him. His father had died and his mother and sister, neither of whom would have anything to do with him, were abroad. Gambling on the chance that the staff knew little about his family background, one of us, posing as Wally's sister, finally gained access to the hospital. The aim of the visit, apart from simply wanting to see Wally, was to plan a means of kidnapping him so that it could be taken somewhere where he could recover from his ordeal.

On our second visit, two of us were able to see him without arousing suspicion. We had hoped to finalise the kidnap plan, but we found him in such a bad state that we decided it could be damaging to him to have to deal with the kind of movements we had planned.

What none of us realised at the time, was that his condition was the direct result of the 'treatment' that he was being given rather than the 'symptoms' of mental illness. The sad shuffling half-people that can be seen through the railings of any mental hospital are like that not because of the illness that they supposedly have, but because of the cures that they are being subjected to. The social stereotype of the grey-raincoated loony is a tasteless twist more worthy of a B movie than a civilised society. The stereotype is one that is forced, surgically or chemically, by an uncaring system, onto the 'patient' whose 'moronic and lifeless appearance' is used, by that same system, to 'prove' the patient's illness'.

Since his admission into hospital, Wally had been receiving pills to 'cure his illness' and injections to counter-act the side effects of the pills. Naturally, he had been slipping the pills under his tongue and spitting them out later. The injections were unavoidable, the hospital nurses were mostly male and considerably stronger than Wally, so polite refusals weren't much use, but in any case, as they were to cure the side-effects, they didn't really matter. What neither he nor we knew was that the hospital staff had deliberately lied to him about which medicine' was which. The result was that the injections, of a drug called Modecate, of which he was receiving doses massively above those recommended by the manufacturers, were creating increasingly serious side effects that were not being treated. It should have been obvious to the staff that something was going amiss, they must

have realised that Wally was gobbing out the pills, but that, after all, was part of their 'cure' – he was being made into a mindless moron.

Meanwhile, Stonehenge 2 took place. This year thousands of people turned up and for over two weeks the authorities were unable to stop the festivities. Wood-fires, tents and tepees, free food stalls, stages and bands, music and magic. Flags flew and kites soared. Naked children played in the woodlands, miniature Robin Hoods celebrating their material poverty Dogs formed woofing packs that excitedly stole sticks from the innumerable wood piles and then scrapped over them in tumbling, rolling bundles of fur. Two gentle horses were tethered to a tree and silently watched the festivities through the dappled Light that danced across their bodies Old bearded men squatted on tree stumps muttering prayers to their personal gods. Small groups of people tended puffing fires upon which saucepans bubbled and bread baked, the many rich smells blending across the warm air. Parties of muscular people set out in search of wood and water accompanied always by a line of laughing, mimicking children. Everywhere there was singing and dancing. Indian flutes wove strange patterns of sound around the ever present bird song. The beat of drums echoed the hollow thud of axe on wood. Old friends met new, hands touched, bodies entwined, minds expanded and, in one tiny spot on our earth, love and peace had become a reality. Just ten miles down the road, Wally Hope, the man whose vision and hard work had made that reality possible, was being pumped full of poisons in the darkness of a hospital cell.

A couple of days after the last person had left the festival site. Wally was, without warning, set free. The great- I..en hau lept the smiling, bronzed, hippy warrior from his festival and now, having effected their cure, ejected a nervous gibbering wreck onto their grey streets.

It took Wally two days to drive his rainbow coloured car from the hospital to our home. Seventy miles in two days, two days of terror. He found himself incapable of driving for any length of time and had to stop for hours on end to regain his confidence. No one knew of his release and, maybe to restore some kind of dignity for himself, he was determined to do it alone. When he finally arrived at our house he was in worse condition than when we had seen him at the hospital; he was barely able to walk and even the most simple of tasks was impossible for him. It is hard to believe that he was able to drive those seventy miles at all This pale shadow of the person who we had once known now found it agony to sit in the sun, his face and hands would swell up into a distorted mess The sun that he worshipped was now all darkness for him. At night he would lay in his bed and cry; quiet, desperate sobs that would go on until dawn, when he would finally go to sleep. Nothing seemed to help his pathetic condition. We tried to teach him to walk properly again, but he was unable to co-ordinate and his left arm would swing forward with his left leg, his right with his right. Sometimes

we were able to laugh about it, but the laughter always gave way to tears. We couldn't understand and we were afraid.

Finally, in desperation, we got Wally to a doctor friend who diagnosed his condition as being 'chronic dyskinesia', a disease brought about through overdoses of Modecate and similar drugs. Wally had been made into a cabbage and worse, an incurable one.

Bit by bit the realisation that he was doomed to live in a half-world of drug induced idiocy made its way into what was left of Wally's brain. On the third of September 1975, unable to face another day, perhaps hoping that death might offer more to him than what was left in life, Wally Hope overdosed on sleeping pills and choked to death on the vomit that they induced.

In the relatively short time that we have on this earth we probably have contact with thousands of people with whom we share little more than half smiles and polite conversation. We are lucky if amongst those thousands of faces one actually responds to us with more than predictable formalities. Real friends are rare, true understanding between people is difficult to achieve and when it is achieved it is the most precious of all human experiences.

I have been lucky in that I am part of a group of people who I regard as friends and with whom I can share a sense of reality and work towards a shared vision of the future. I have met many people whose only aim, because of their own cynicism and lack of purpose, appears to be to prevent people like ourselves from expressing our own sense of our own life; I see people like that as the dark shadows that have made our world so colourless.

Wally was a genius, I can't pretend to have completely liked him, he was far too demanding to be liked, but I did love him. He was the most colourful character that I have ever met, a person who had a deep sense of destiny and no fear whatsoever in pursuing it. If friends are rare, people like Wally are very very rare indeed. I don't suppose I shall ever meet someone like him again; he was a magical, mystical, visionary who demonstrated more to me about the meaning of life than all the grey nobodies that have ever existed could ever hope to do. Wally was an individual, pure energy, a great big silver light that shone in the darkness, who because he was kind, gentle and loving, was seen, by those grey people, as a threat, a threat that they felt should be destroyed.

Wally was not mad, not a crazy, not a nut, he was a human being who didn't want to have to accept the grey world that we are told is all we should expect in Life. He wanted more and set out to get it. He didn't see why we should have to live as enemies to each other. He believed as do many anarchists, that people are basically kind and good and that it is the restrictions and Limitations that are forced upon them, often violently, by uncaring systems, that creates evil

‘What evil but good tortured by its own hunger and thirst.’
Phil Russell 1974.

Wally Hope had both the strength and the courage of his own convictions, but like ourselves had been hopelessly ill-informed about the workings of the state. He demanded the right to live his own life and was met with savage resistance. He was killed by a system that believes that ‘it knows best’. It is that system and hundreds like it, that oppress millions of people throughout the world. Left-wing oppression in Poland, or right-wing oppression in Northern Ireland, what’s the difference?

The prisons and mental hospitals of the world are full of people who did nothing but to disagree with the accepted ‘norms’ of the state in which they lived. Russian dissidents are American heroes, American dissidents are Russian heroes; the kettle simply gets blacker. To defeat the oppressor, we must learn its ways, otherwise we are doomed, like Wally, to be silenced by its fist.

Wally sought peace and creativity as an alternative to war and destruction. He was an anarchist, a pacifist and, above all, an individualist, but because of the times in which he naively lived, and innocently died, he was labelled a ‘hippy’.

In the coroner’s court, the police officer responsible for investigating Wally’s death dismissed him in one sarcastic sentence, “He thought he was Jesus Christ, didn’t he” Wally certainly did not think of himself in that light, but judging by the way in which the state dealt with him, they did. The same inspector claimed to have thoroughly interviewed everyone who had had contact with Wally from the time of his arrest to the time of his death. Although we had twice visited Wally in hospital and he had later stayed with us for around two weeks, this guardian of the law had not once been in touch with us. The few witnesses that were called had obviously been carefully selected to ‘toe the official line’. Amongst them was one of the doctors who had been responsible for Wally’s treatment. Throughout his statement he told lie after lie and then, rather than being subjected to the possible embarrassment of cross-examination, was reminded by the coroner that he mustn’t miss his train nod nod, wink wink.

The court passed a verdict of suicide with no reference at all to the appalling treatment that had been the direct cause of it. We loudly protested from the back of the courtroom the grey men simply met our objections with mocking smiles.

Wally’s death and the deceitful way in which the authorities dealt with it, led us to spend the next year making our own investigations into exactly what had happened since he left us that hot day in May. Our enquiries convinced us that what had happened was not an accident. The state had intended to destroy Wally’s spirit, if not his life, because he was a threat, a fearless threat who they hoped they could destroy without much risk of embarrassment.

The story was a nightmare web of deception, corruption and cruelty. Wally had been treated with complete contempt by the police who arrested him, the courts that sentenced him and the prison and hospital that held him prisoner. Our enquiries led us far from Wally's case; as we tried to get to the truth of any one situation, we would be presented with innumerable new leads and directions to follow. We got drawn deeper and deeper into a world of lies, violence, greed and fear. None of us were prepared for what we discovered, the world started to feel like a very small, dark place.

We found evidence of murder cover-ups, of police and gangland tie-ups, of wrongful arrest and imprisonment on trumped up charges and false evidence. We learnt of the horrific abuse, both physical and mental, of prisoners in jails and mental hospitals, doctors who knowingly prescribed what amounted to poison, who were unable to see the bruises inflicted, by courtesy of Her Majesty's officials, on an inmate's body wardens and interrogating police are requested to punch below the head, where the bruises won't be seen by visiting relatives. We learnt of wardens who, to while the day away, set inmates against each other and did 'good turns' in return for material, and sexual favours. We learnt of nurses in mental hospitals who deliberately administered the wrong drugs to patients 'just to see what happened'; who, for kicks, tied patients to their beds and then tormented them. The official line, that the purpose of prisons is 'reform' and of mental hospitals is 'cure', is total deception – the purpose is 'punishment'; crude, cruel and simple – punishment.

Beyond the world of police, courts, jails and asylums, we were faced with the perhaps even more sickening outside world. Within this world, respectable people, smart and secure, work, day in, day out, to maintain the lie. They know about the abuse and cruelty, they know about the dishonesty and corruption, they know about the complete falsity of the reality in which they live, but they aren't turn against it because, having invested so much of their lives in it, they would be turning against themselves, so they remain silent – the silent, violent, majority.

Beneath the glossy surfaces of neatly combed hair and straightened nylons, of polished cars and sponged-down cookers, of pub on Friday and occasional church on Sunday, of well planned family and better planned future, of wealth and security, of power and glory, are the 'real' fascists. They know, but they remain silent.

'First they came for the Jews and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew. Then they came for the communists and I did not speak out – because I was not a communist. Then they came for the trade Unionists – and I did not speak out – because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for me –

and there was no one left to speak out for me.’
Pastor Niemoeller, victim of the Nazis.

They remain silent when the windows of the house across the street are smashed in, the walls daubed with racist abuse. Silent when they hear the footsteps at night and the beating of doors and the sobbing of those inside. Now, perhaps, a whisper, the quietest whisper, ‘They’re Jews you know’ – or Catholics, West Indians, Pakistanis, Indians, Arabs, Chinese, Irish, Gypsies, gays, cripples, or any minority group, in any society, anywhere – they only whisper it once before the warmth of the duck-down continental quilt soothes away their almost accidental guilt. Silent again as they hear them led away into the darkness. Silent, as through the cold mist of morning, they hear the cattletrucks roll by. And when they hear of the death-pits, of the racks, of the ovens, of the thousands dead and thousands dying – they remain silent. Because security is their god and compliance is his mistress, they remain silent. Against all the evidence, against all that they know, they remain silent, because convention decrees that they should. Silence, security, compliance and convention – the roots of fascism. Their silence is their part in the violence, a huge and powerful, silent voice of approval – the voice of fascism.

It is not the National Front or the British Movement that represents the right-wing threat; they, like the dinosaur, are all body and no brain and because of that will become extinct. It is the ‘general public in their willingness to bow down to authority, who pose the ‘real’ fascist threat. Fascism is as much in the hearts of the people as in the minds of their potential leaders.

The voices of silence, at times, made our investigations almost impossible. The respectable majority were too concerned about their own security to want to risk upsetting the authorities by telling us what they knew. They did know and we knew that they knew, but it made no difference – they remained silent.

From the enormous file of documentation that our enquiries produced, we compiled a lengthy book on the life and death of Wally Hope. During the enquiries we had received death-threats from various sources and were visited several times by the police who let us know that they knew what we knew and that they wanted us . . . to remain silent.

We felt alone and vulnerable. Finally our nerve gave out and one fine Spring morning, one and a half years after Wally’s death, we threw the book and almost all the documentation onto a bonfire and watched the flames leap into the perfect blue sky. Phil Russel was dead.

As nearly all the documentation that we had on Phil was burnt, this article has been written largely from memory. As a result, some of the fine details exact

periods of time etc., may be slightly incorrect. The rest of the story is both true and accurate.

Throughout the 'hippy era we had championed the cause of peace, some of us had been on the first CND marches and, with sadness, had watched the movement being eroded by political greed. Throughout the 'drop out and cop out' period we hung on to the belief that 'real' change can only come about through personal example, because of this we rejected much of hippy culture, notably the emphasis on drugs, as being nothing but escapism. It is sad that many punks appear to be resorting to the same means of escape while in their blind hypocrisy they accuse hippies of never having 'got it together' – neither will these new prophets of the pipe dream.

We had hoped that through a practical demonstration of peace and love, we would be able to paint the grey world in new colours; it is strange that it took a man called Hope the only 'real' hippy with whom we ever directly became creatively involved, to show us that that particular form of hope was a dream. The experiences to which our short friendship led made us realise that it was time to have a rethink about the way in which we should pursue our vision of peace. Wally's death showed us that we could not afford to 'sit by and let it happen again'. In part, his death was our responsibility and although we did everything that we could. it was not enough.

Desire for change had to be coupled with the desire to work for it, if it was worth opposing the system, it was worth opposing it totally. It was no longer good enough to take what we wanted and to reject the rest, it was time to get back into the streets and attack, to get back and share our experiences and learn from the experiences of others.

A year after Wally's death, the Pistols released 'Anarchy in the UK', maybe they didn't really mean it ma'am, but to us it was a battle cry. When Rotten proclaimed that there was 'no future', we saw it as a challenge to our creativity – we knew that there was a future if we were prepared to work for it.

It is our world, it is ours and it has been stolen from us We set out to demand it back, only this time round they didn't call us 'hippies', they called us 'punks'.

Penny Rimbaud, London, jan/Mar., '82.

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Penny Rimbaud
The Last Of The Hippies – An Hysterical Romance
1982

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