

Excerpts from “The Adventures of Space and Hobo”

Chapter One

The warm sun of the Tempe–Phoenix area was a nice respite from the hitchhiking experience I had just come through. Traveling through Colorado, I’d gotten stuck in a snowstorm while sitting on the side of the road waiting for a ride wearing summer clothes. I was literally shaking from head to foot from the cold. Fortunately, someone stopped and I got one long ride all the way from Colorado to Arizona. I was even able to sleep through the night, waking up to the warmth of the Arizona sun.

I’d been hanging out in a park just outside of Tempe, Arizona for a few days with some other hippies who seemed to have nowhere to call home. We would hitchhike to Phoenix each day around noon to get a meal at the local St. Vincent de Paul food kitchen. During the day we’d hang out at supermarkets and panhandle. There always seemed to be a lot of pot floating around, so we spent a good deal of time getting high as well. In the evenings we’d hit the local bars and spend what little money we’d made that day panhandling. We eventually found a cave not too far from the park where we all slept at night and stashed our packs during the day

It was autumn of 1972 and I had I’d ridden a freight train to Minnesota from Washington State with friends. They all wanted to go back to Washington, but I was up for more of an adventure, so I struck out alone with not much of a destination in mind. In my mind I was lost and knew there was nothing back in Washington that seemed to strike a chord within me. With my pack on my back I struck out for Arizona in hopes of meeting up with my destiny.

In the back of my mind I was thinking that I’d like to go to Phoenix, Arizona, but not really knowing why. A few days earlier we were all browsing through a record store and the latest album by Grand Funk caught my attention. It was titled “Phoenix.” For some reason Phoenix got lodged in my mind and seemed like as good of a place to go as anywhere. Basically, I was following my intuition.

Chapter Two

My trip home from Vietnam was quite an experience in itself. I was under armed guard, along with another person, from the time I began processing out until our plane landed at Travis AFB in California, just north of San Francisco. The reason for the armed guard was that I was being booted out of the Army with a general discharge, under honorable conditions. The discharge papers read, “Unable to Adapt to Military Life.”

My downfall with the military began the first day I arrived in Vietnam as I began to get stoned on pot and other drugs on a daily basis. The drug use had caused me to take on a real “I don’t care” attitude, which led to a couple of Article XIII Court Martials. As a result, I was reduced in rank from an E-4 to an E-1, a buck private, and fined to the extent that I had very little money on my return trip from Vietnam.

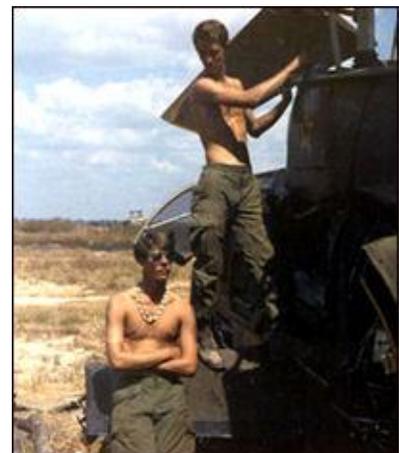
[The Revolutionist – Unable to Adapt to Military Life](#)

Because of the drugs and the people I was hanging around with, I became somewhat of a revolutionist while in Vietnam. I remember one day, while passing the day away in the bone yard (the salvage yard for wrecked helicopters), one of my buddies said to me, “I know what you are. You’re a revolutionist.” I’d never really thought of myself in that way, but it was what I was becoming. I was the one who had thrown the first smoke grenade into the officer’s and NCO’s barracks during the middle of a night while they were sleeping.



I was also one of the main instigators when we tear-gassed them during the night on another occasion, though I wasn’t directly involved. We all knew I would be the one blamed for it because of the smoke grenade incident. So I sat that one out.

We were all bent on doing our own thing without being harassed by the authorities or the “pigs” as we called them. This was especially true after one of our buddies had gotten busted for pot and was sent off to LBJ (Long Binh Jail). The middle-of-the-night attacks was our way at getting back to them and letting them know that if they continued to mess with us there would be consequences.



On another occasion, I was responsible with two other buddies for organizing what we called a “Far East Woodstock.” We mass produced a bunch of flyers several days before the event and put them up all over our post at Phu Loi. As a result we had several hundred people who came and went throughout the afternoon while we listened to the Woodstock Album and getting high on pot and LSD. We had set up a big awning, made from a parachute on our company baseball field, with a stereo system that was blasting the music very loud.

We had no permission to do this; we simply did it not caring about the consequences we might receive. At one point, our commanding officer called the military police on us and tried to break it up. He got up on the hood of the MP jeep and

began to make a big speech about what we were doing was unlawful and there would be consequences for our actions. He told everyone how he and the other officers of the company had been tear-gassed just a few days prior to the event.

Chapter Six

With Jack out of the picture, because of getting arrested in Montana and due to the fact that I didn't have a strong enough connection with Nancy, the gal I was with from the Minnesota group, it made my decision to take off for Arizona much easier. I had no idea what I was getting myself into, but I was eager to discover what was yet ahead for me.

I had come a long way since returning home from Vietnam, but I was still very much confused and lost while wondering what was to become of my life. The trip to the East Coast had given me the courage to once again strike out alone to Phoenix, Arizona. I was really amazed at the bold steps I was now taking in trying to figure out who I was becoming. It was as if this internal force within me was pushing me forward. It all seemed so out of character with the person I had been while growing up. I had changed in many ways. The time in Vietnam and the drugs had definitely altered my personality.

[A New Friend for New Adventures](#)

After about a week or so of hanging out with my new friends in Tempe, Arizona, a new friend appeared in our small group of vagabonds. He went by the name "Hobo." I hit it off right away with him. He was a Marine who'd recently completed his service in Vietnam and had just spent the last few months hitchhiking through Mexico. He was now passing through Arizona and I was more than happy to take up with him. We continued to hang with the others, but often found ourselves taking off on our own, exploring the bars and other things around Tempe, and even working odd jobs on occasion.

I had become very unsettled, not knowing what I was really doing or where I was headed when Hobo entered the picture. I really didn't have any direction for my life at this time. I'd just felt the need to go and experience what was out in the world. Growing up in a very religious and confining environment, I'd lived a sheltered life. I was ready to experience what I perceived at this phase of my life to be real freedom. So there I was feeling free, but very unsettled, wondering how things were going to work out. I met Hobo, who would eventually start calling me Space. This resulted in me becoming Space for the next year.



One night, after partying in a bar for a while, we stepped out the back door to smoke a joint with some others who were there. It was getting quite late and one of the guys asked us where we planned on sleeping that night. We were both a little drunk and high from the pot, which meant trying to get back to our cave in our present condition seemed a little ridiculous. So we decided right then and there that we were going to sleep in the alley. We crawled into a nearby car that seemed to be abandoned and went to sleep.

When we went back to our cave the following day, I discovered that someone had stolen my down sleeping bag. Just great! What was I to do now without a good sleeping bag? I managed to find some blankets somewhere, but they weren't the same as having my nice bag.

In the course of the next few days, Hobo said to me, "Hey you want to go to New Orleans with me?" This was just the kind of adventure I was looking for so I said, "Sure, I'd love to." That was all it took and we began to make plans to go. Hobo was the type of guy who was always on the go and ready to explore new places, so I was more than happy to take up with someone who knew all the ropes of living on the road. He seemed to be offering me the kind of security I needed at this phase of my life that had caused the unsettledness that I was feeling to dissipate.

Chapter Seven

The train was now rumbling through Texas and we were getting really hungry. When it finally came to a stop in the freight yard in San Antonio, we'd already decided to get off. Our hunger had gotten the best of us. We were able to find our way into the downtown area and began panhandling to get enough money to eat. Very quickly, we were able to make enough and headed for the nearest fast-food restaurant.

[Getting Comfortable with Panhandling](#)

Panhandling was still something I wasn't totally comfortable with. At the same time, I recognized that it was the best way to come up with the money needed to survive for the lifestyle I'd now chosen. As an introverted person, and being raised with a strong work ethic, the idea of panhandling to support myself was a very difficult thing for me to accept. I remember one time in Tempe when we were panhandling outside of a supermarket, a very pretty gal came up to me and said, "Why are you doing this?" It made me really think.

I'd now come to the conclusion that—to survive in the lifestyle I had chosen—I needed to come to terms with it. I needed to step outside of myself and learn to enjoy it. Otherwise, I wouldn't be making very much money at it. I discovered it was also a way

in which I was learning to deal with fears and obstacles that could have hindered me in the process.

Over the years, some of these early lessons taught me to embrace the new things in my life that would catapult me forward into the destiny that God had for my life. Having to recognize my fears and insecurities, and then move forward in spite of them, has been a major key to the victories God has granted me over the years.

There were always soup kitchens, the Salvation Army, and other places where you could get a free meal, but they weren't always available when you really needed them. They had their time schedules and we were hungry right then. So panhandling was a great backup plan. I would discover over the next several months that it would be relatively easy to live on the road without having to work.

Even though some aspects of living on the road went against the morals and work ethic I'd grown up with, I recognized I was now on an adventure of a lifetime. I realized I needed to embrace new things that didn't always agree with the way I'd been brought up.

A Change of Plans

While talking to various people we were meeting on the streets of San Antonio, we began hearing about a Rock Festival that was to take place northeast of Austin, Texas, in a place called Gatlin Creek. Even though our plans were to get through Texas as fast as possible, it couldn't be all that bad if they were having Rock Festivals here.

Within an hour or so, we were on our way hitchhiking to Austin. This was the aspect of living on the road that I would really come to love. We could simply drift with the flow and not have to worry about where we were supposed to be since there was no place in particular we were supposed to be—a rolling stone with no direction home.

Chapter Eight

Our adventures through Texas had been a great experience for both Hobo and me, but we were thankful we were finally on our way to New Orleans and wherever else our adventures would take us. Our first few weeks of traveling together had really given me the confidence and assurance I needed to 'keep on truckin' in this new lifestyle I was discovering.

Wrong Train, Wrong Direction

Even though we weren't detected in the Houston yard, we soon discovered that we had made a critical mistake when we jumped on the freight train in Houston. We quickly found out that we were headed in the wrong direction. The workers in the

Houston yard must have deliberately pointed us in the wrong direction, thinking, "We'll fix those stupid hippies." Our thought was that "if that's the worst that happened to us in Texas, we did pretty well."

We knew from experience that the trains had to stop periodically to allow the trains coming from the other direction to pass. So, we figured as soon as the train had to stop we'd get off and wait for the next one coming from the opposite way.

Within an hour or so our train had to stop. We jumped off, sat, and waited. It was another couple of hours before another train coming in the direction we wanted to go appeared and, luckily, it was the one designated to pull over and stop. We found an empty car, hopped on, and were finally on our way to New Orleans. Our only concern was whether this train would travel right through Houston rather than it being the end of the line for this particular train. Many times when a train arrives in a big yard like the one in Houston it is for the purpose of being disassembled with each of the cars being assigned to a new train going in the direction for which its merchandise was intended.

[More Reflections](#)

As we were riding along on the train, my mind began drifting back to my time in Vietnam. I was thinking about where I was at that moment. I also thought about all the changes I'd gone through in the past couple of years that had brought me to the place of now riding on a freight train to New Orleans.

Vietnam and the drugs had opened up a whole new perspective on life for me. There was restlessness in me that wanted to catch up for lost time. I had grown up in a very sheltered and protective environment and hadn't experienced much of a worldly lifestyle prior to joining the Army. Now that I was out of the Army there was an aching within me that wanted to experience as much as I could.

Chapter Twelve

[Adventures in Coconut Grove](#)

We arrived in Coconut Grove in the early afternoon and spotted a bunch of people hanging out on a sidewalk leaning up against their cars. There happened to be a pay phone nearby and Hobo immediately started to make a phone call without saying anything to me. He got on the phone and started talking to someone in a voice loud enough for everyone around us to hear what he was saying. He was basically carrying on a phony conversation with someone about buying a kilo of pot. When he finished the conversation everyone heard the dime drop into the coin return and immediately knew he was just trying to impress the people around him. I was really embarrassed for him

and for myself. They all made a comment about what an idiot he was and what great lengths some people will go to in trying to impress others.

Well, that didn't go so well, so we took off down the street to a park that was just around the corner and decided to just hang out at the park for a while until we could get our bearings. In the meantime, I was really getting on his case about his phony way of talking and what he had just done. His reply to me was that it was necessary if we really wanted to make the kind of friends we wanted and to be accepted. I reminded him we had been doing fairly well without having to resort to this kind of bull.

As we were sitting in the park just taking things in, we noticed there was some kind of a shopping area up the street with a coffee shop where a lot of people were hanging out. We made our way there and discovered all kinds of people just hanging out. There were Hare Krishna's, Jesus Freaks, and just plain Freaks and hippies all hanging out together. It was really interesting to listen to the Hare Krishna's and the Jesus Freaks get into it with each other about who was right and who was wrong.

As we were mingling and hanging out, we were invited to smoke pot with some of the Freaks at the park that weren't into Krishna or Jesus. They turned out to be the most interesting Freaks that we'd met so far. More and more we were beginning to refer to ourselves and others like us as Freaks rather than hippies. I sensed a real spiritual vibe coming from all of them. They seemed to really be in tune with the spiritual forces around them. They were really heavy dudes. There was a real intensity to the high that we were experiencing in the sense that there was an understanding that some of them were on the side of evil and some on the side of good.

I remember getting into a conversation of wars and fighting and how we as Freaks were supposed to be removed from all that. The conversation then shifted to the fact that there was an understanding of good and evil, but Freaks handled it in different ways. It was all rather confusing to me. I was still trying to process things through my view and understanding of Christianity versus the devil. What they were talking about was on a whole different level.

When you mix pot and other drugs with religion it can get really weird. This is what I had been doing since my spiritual experiences from my Vietnam days. As a result, spiritual deception was really beginning to settle into the fiber of my being.

For the next couple of days we continued to hang out at the coffee shop and in the park with the same people we had met the first day. We had found a nice place to sleep in a secluded area near the park. We were making enough money every day panhandling to supply us with food and cigarettes. We were having a really good time in spite of Hobo's initial blunder.

[Another LSD Trip](#)

On the third day, we all dropped some acid and things really started to get weird. I was on this trip where I always just within reach of discovering the missing pieces to the vision I had in Vietnam, only to see them disappear beyond my reach.



We were still in the middle of the acid trip when we all decided to take off for another place that one of them was talking about. It was to be an adventure that would lead us into a place where we could discover the truth and the missing pieces for which we were all searching. It was really interesting because we were all on this trip together. We were all trying to discover the missing pieces to our lives. Yet, individually, each person was looking for something that was different.

[Getting Fed up with Hobo](#)

Hobo and I got into an argument about this. I wanted to go and he didn't. At this point, because I was starting to get fed up with him, I just took off without him. I was happy to accompany my new friends with whom I was quite intrigued. However, the adventure proved to be another dead end with us ending up in someone's back yard as we were coming down off the LSD. Hobo had somehow found his way to where we were and we made our peace with each other and took off the next morning together once again.

Even though the acid trip was enjoyable in many ways, it had once again left me feeling empty and unfulfilled. I felt like I was being teased. While trying to navigate through the spiritual maze and connect the missing pieces of the puzzle to my life, I seemed to keep coming up empty time and time again.

Chapter Fourteen

[Reflections: Spiritual Awakening in 'Nam](#)

I remember one morning—while in Vietnam—I was standing in front of my wall locker. I noticed the two New Testament Bibles that had been laying there on the shelf since the first day that I had arrived. One of them was a Bible that a family friend had given to me. It had belonged to her son who was a Green Beret and had been killed in action while serving in Vietnam. The other was a Living New Testament my mother had given to me. They had both been on the shelf untouched for the first four months that I had been in Vietnam.

For some reason, I decided to pick up the Living Bible and take it with me that day. At this point during my tour of Vietnam, I spent most of my days in the Bone Yard

with my pothead buddies. The Bone Yard was the place where all of the wrecked helicopters found their way to. Although I was still the Maintenance truck driver, we had been relegated to the Bone Yard as we couldn't be trusted doing our jobs.

I would go to the motor pool each morning and check out my truck and park it near the Bone Yard. I would be notified if I was needed to go somewhere.

[Vietnam Reflections: The Boneyard and Playing with Explosives](#)

In the Bone Yard, we'd made ourselves fairly comfortable with hammocks strung up in various places. We had also put together makeshift awnings with tarps to keep the sun and the rain off of us. We would sit out there and smoke pot all day long. The lifers, as we called them, would leave us alone for the most part. By now they knew better than to mess with us too much. We had tear-gassed them in the middle of the night on more than one occasion. They also knew we had hand grenades and C4 explosives.

At one point, we had figured out that from noon to 1:30pm every day there was no guard posted at the ammo dump. On occasion, we would all jump in my truck and head over to the ammo dump and avail ourselves to all kinds of explosives, including tear gas and smoke grenades.

Our company had tried to put a big swimming pool together in the middle of our company area, but for some reason was unsuccessful. All of the parts ended up in the Bone Yard with us. Some of the parts were long tubular poles out of which we made fire bombs. We would take the C4 explosive pieces attached to a blasting cap with a long wire running out, which would be attached to the clicker in our hands. We would then jam a couple of quarts of oil down the tube and ignite the C4. The result was a huge fire bomb shooting into the air for several hundred feet. It was quite a sight and could be seen by everyone.

As a result of our fire bombs, the lifers decided to come and do a thorough search of the Bone Yard and found several hand grenades. They couldn't prove who they belonged to so we didn't get into any trouble. But now they knew what we had and they were afraid of us. They pretty much left us alone.



[The Beginning of the Jesus Movement in our Company](#)

It was this environment that I found myself in on this particular day. I made myself comfortable, rolled a joint, and began reading the story of Jesus in the New Testament. To my surprise, another one of my buddies had brought a Bible with him and he began to read as well.

That was the beginning of the Jesus movement in our company. It wasn't long before I was writing home about what was happening and my mother began to send me Bibles to give away to all of my buddies. Everyone wanted the Living New Testament like I had.

About this same time, I had just returned from a two-week leave over the Christmas holidays and had brought back George Harrison's new album *All Things Must Pass*. His album was full of spiritual overtones, which also included the song, "My Sweet Lord." Even though the song was about Krishna, we didn't pay too much attention to the fact. We immersed ourselves into his lyrics. I was a real Beatles fan. After they split, their solo albums really were something to look forward to.

Over the next few months I would read the Bible constantly as would some of my other pot smoking buddies. We would smoke pot and read the Bible at the same time. It was a really wonderful period of discovery and enlightenment. The seeds of the gospel were definitely being planted into my heart, even though I hadn't come to a complete repentance and surrender to what Jesus wanted to do in my life.

These were the thoughts and memories that had filled my mind as I was sitting on the side of the road waiting for our next ride towards Clearwater. Once again I had to somehow reconcile these thoughts and emotions that had been stirred up. I would always come to the conclusion that someday I would probably surrender my life over to the Lord completely...but not now.

Chapter Seventeen

[Fate as our Guide and a Free Ride to Nowhere in Particular](#)

We had no idea where we were until we got off the train and asked one of the workers in the yard. To our surprise, we were in Pine Bluff, Arkansas. Talk about being in the middle of nowhere! This was one of the hazards of riding freight trains, but we had learned to simply adjust to our circumstances and see where the next adventure would take us. We were still on our way to New Orleans and Mardi Gras, but now detoured. Our attitude was, "Well, we might as well enjoy the detour and see where it takes us."

This was the type of thing Hobo and I had learned to thrive upon—going into a situation that was completely unknown to us, yet being very comfortable with it. It was simply the matter of allowing fate to be our guide. We used our wits and knowledge of street life to afford us the opportunities to enjoy the lifestyle we had now chosen for ourselves. We were a couple of Freaks traveling through our nation's cities as vagabonds or rolling stones looking for our next free ride to nowhere in particular. All the while we mooched off of whatever resources or people who happened to come our way.

We soon discovered it was only about 35 miles to Little Rock where we would be able to catch another freight train to Memphis, Tennessee. We had never been to Memphis, so we were looking forward to the trip. It was another 140 miles or so from Little Rock to Memphis. This meant that if all went well we would be in Memphis by early evening. It was still early morning, so we had a good chance of making it.

[Catching a Train from Little Rock to Memphis](#)

We were able to hitchhike up to Little Rock in little more than an hour and by early afternoon we had spotted a train that was headed for Memphis. The only problem was that there were no open box cars to ride in. We then found a car with Sea-Land Trailers on it. We realized it was going to be a cold ride, but we had our down bags, which we would crawl into as soon as the train was ready to leave. We had never tried this before, but we were game and decided to go for it.

By mid-afternoon we were on our way. We had been traveling for about a half an hour when we realized this wasn't going to work. We were freezing cold because of the wind factor. We decided the next time the train stopped to let another train pass by we would make a mad dash for the third engine, hoping we wouldn't be spotted. We'd never done this before, but we were willing to give it a try in light of the fact that there seemed to be only two options: either continue to freeze or get off of the train in the middle of nowhere.

Within the next 15 minutes or so, the train stopped and we made a mad dash to the third engine without being detected. It was great! We were now nice and warm riding in comfort into Memphis, Tennessee. It was quite a sight coming into Memphis just as it was getting dark with all the city lights in full view as we entered the city. What had started out as a disastrous morning had turned into a great day with the promise of a warm place to sleep once we reached Memphis. Not bad for a couple of Freaks with nowhere to call their own.

Chapter Eighteen

As I was driving along I began thinking back to our evening with the Jesus people in Kansas City. I had come to realize my heart was getting harder and harder and that I had even become somewhat disengaged from what Jesus had begun to do in my life. Would I ever find my way through this spiritual maze I was continually finding myself in; and would I at some point completely turn my life over Christ? What was I really trying to prove wandering all over the country? What about Hobo? We were bound to split up at some point and go our separate ways. How would that all work out?

The biggest question was the Jesus thing. I knew in spite of my heart being somewhat disengaged, the seed was still there and I did not want to lose it. However, I

also didn't sense that I was ready to wholeheartedly become one of His followers at this point in my life. It was interesting, though, how the Lord would bring me in touch from time to time with what was happening in the Jesus people culture.

In some unique and mysterious way, I did sense that God was leading me in spite of my stubbornness and refusal to submit to Him. This gave me a sense of peace, just knowing that God was being longsuffering with me and hadn't given up on me. But the question was: how long would He continue to allow me to have my way?