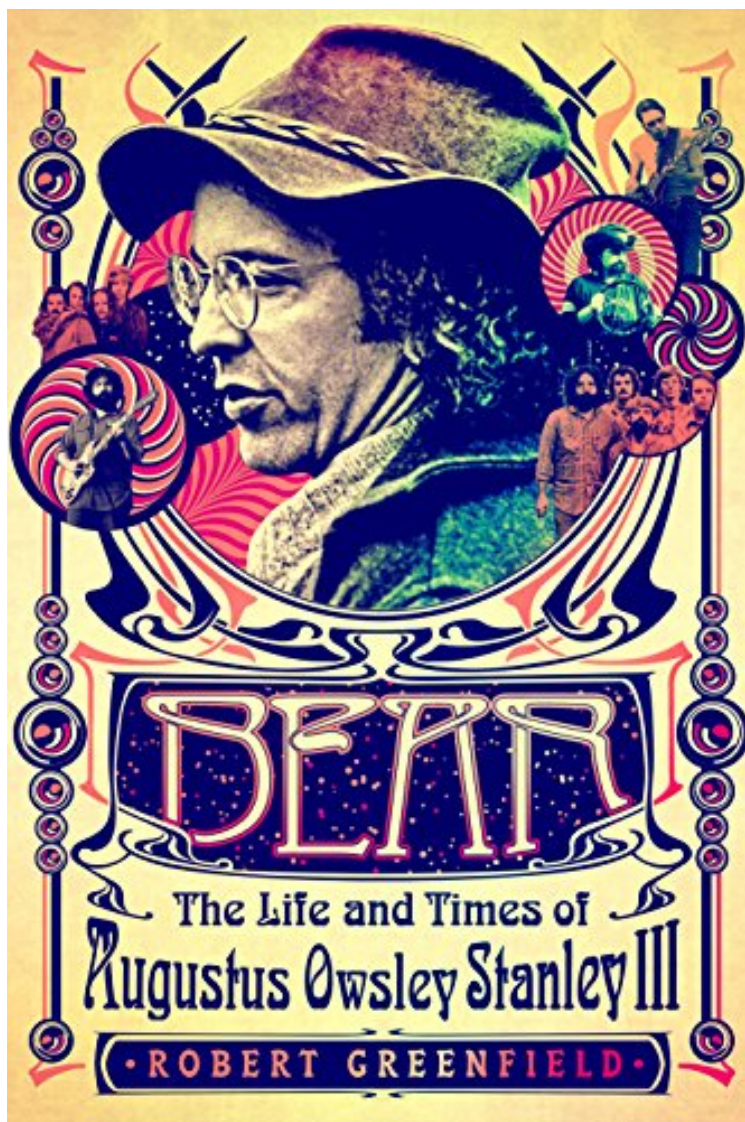


(Download pdf ebook) Bear: The Life and Times of Augustus Owsley Stanley III

Bear: The Life and Times of Augustus Owsley Stanley III

Robert Greenfield

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Robert Greenfield : Bear: The Life and Times of Augustus Owsley Stanley III before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Bear: The Life and Times of Augustus Owsley Stanley III:

60 of 64 people found the following review helpful. Solid Bio of An Enigmatic, Indelible 1960s Personality By James D. McCallister In 1985, when I became initiated into my new life as a latter generation Deadhead—its—called “getting on the bus,” referencing a lyric from the Dead’s psychedelic classic “That’s for the Other One”—I had certainly heard of Augustus Owsley Stanley III. As an aficionado of the 1960s social revolution I had missed by virtue of being born in the midst of it, my knowledge of important figures of the day

included the most famous purveyor of LSD, the "high octane rocket fuel" that helped usher in what many felt was the beginning of a new age. Even back in 1967's legendary Summer of Love, Owsley, a street chemist nicknamed "Bear," had already acquired a reputation for brilliance and mystery. Credited with manufacturing millions of doses of a drug capable of transforming an individual's worldview as well as that of society itself, Owsley cut a figure of enigmatic renown, in particular because so little seemed known about the man behind the legend. The new biography *Bear* by journalist and author Robert Greenfield (*Dark Star: An Oral History of Jerry Garcia*, *Timothy Leary: A Biography*) seeks to fill in many of those missing details. From an interesting and somewhat unsettled childhood as grandson of a progressive (for the time) U. S. Senator from Kentucky, and son of a troubled father forever laboring in the shadow of his more accomplished patriarch, Owsley would become far more notable, and notorious, than either could have dreamed. An autodidact with a brilliant, computer-like mind—an epigraph from Garcia that opens the book reads "There's nothing wrong with Bear that the loss of a few billion brain cells wouldn't cure"—Owsley acquired a deserved, if overbearing, reputation for being the smartest person in any given room. But Bear knew a great deal about more than chemistry: his contributions to live audio reinforcement would make the Grateful Dead famous not only for their lengthy musical improvisations, but for the clarity and power of their sound system. In an era when Beatles performances came piped through baseball stadium PA horns, Bear's commitment to devising new and elaborate methods of amplifying the output of onstage instruments would alter the way music lovers enjoy live rock concerts. An inveterate womanizer and irascible, intractable egoist, in time Bear would not only wear out his welcome with the band for whom he provided early financial as well as lysergic support, but beginning in 1970 also served a two-year prison stretch. During this incarceration, he learned the fine arts of metallurgy and jewelry making, which would sustain him financially throughout the rest of his life in place of his former chemical endeavors. (Cultivating cannabis would also serve as a vocation, though Bear himself expressed disinterest about using this particular plant for its psychoactive properties.) Ever the iconoclast, after suffering a series of recurring dreams about environmental disaster in the Northern hemisphere of the Earth, in the early 1980s Bear attempted to persuade the members of the extended Dead family to immigrate to Australia. While finding no takers, Owsley himself made the move, living out the rest of his years in converted shipping containers in a barren and secluded part of that vast continent. While he returned to America to attend Dead shows (I met and spoke with him at a couple), Australia would become his final home. As health problems began to plague him, the once indomitable Bear began to show signs of frailty and fragility, particularly after a bout with radiation to treat an instance of cancer in his neck, a disease he attributed to breathing second-hand cigarette smoke during his years working in rock roll sound reinforcement. This illness on top of open heart surgery a few years earlier left this iconic counterculture figure a skeletal version of his former hearty self, though to the end he hosted his own version of Down Under acid tests, as well as lived to see, and criticize, the release of over a dozen of his audio recordings. While Greenfield includes a thorough bibliography, end notes, and discography, for such a towering, world-famous figure—his name, which became synonymous with LSD itself, enjoys a listing in various dictionaries—this biography ends up feeling somewhat thin and anecdotal. Intended more, perhaps, for the general public than scholars of the Grateful Dead experience for whom much of this material will read as duly familiar, Bear still provides a solid, humanizing overview of a cultural enigma who just may have changed the world more than few other twentieth-century figures outside of politics or medicine. Augustus Owsley Stanley may have finally been brought to a prosaic end in a roadside traffic accident, but his spirit, intellect, and contributions to sound reinforcement will most assuredly live on.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Another great book sort of about the Grateful Dead. By Jim Daley I read my LSD family by Rhoney Gissen before reading this. A lot of crossover info but it was still very informative. Great read, both on them. Owsley was a character and a half. Iconic symbol of the beats and the reason the Grateful Dead became who they were.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

A nice read, not only for "dead heads" but anyone ... By J. Woody this biography offers some interesting insight into Bear's background and how his mind worked. A nice read, not only for "dead heads" but anyone interested in the cultural goings on in the 60's

The creator of the dancing bear logo and designer of the Wall of Sound for the Grateful Dead, Augustus Owsley Stanley III, better known by his nickname, Bear, was one of the most iconic figures in the cultural revolution that changed both America and the world during the 1960s. Owsley's high octane rocket fuel enabled Ken Kesey and his Merry Pranksters to put on the Acid Tests. It also powered much of what happened on stage at Monterey Pop. Owsley turned on Pete Townshend of The Who and Jimi Hendrix. The shipment of LSD that Owsley sent John Lennon resulted in The Beatles' *Magical Mystery Tour* album and film. Convinced that the Grateful Dead were destined to become the world's greatest rock 'n' roll band, Owsley provided the money that kept them going during their early days. As their longtime soundman, he then faithfully recorded many of the Dead's greatest live performances and designed the massive space age system that came to be known as the Wall of Sound. Award-winning author and biographer Robert Greenfield's definitive biography of this Grateful Dead legend masterfully takes us through Owsley's incredible life and times to bring us a full picture of this fascinating man for the first time.

.com An Best Book of November 2016: Most people with passing knowledge of San Francisco and the 60s are familiar with the main players: the Grateful Dead, Ken Kesey and the Merry Pranksters, the Hells Angels, et al, but how many know of August Owsley Stanley III, aka Owsley, aka Bear? The grandson of a Kentucky senator, Owsley found his way to California, discovered drugs, and promptly blew his mind at one of Kesey's Acid Tests. He taught himself chemistry and reverse-engineered Sandoz-grade LSD, manufacturing a million doses (and millions of dollars) stashed around Bay Area and inside the brains of countless hippies and failed seekers. After a bust and a stint in prison, Bear pivoted to cutting-edge, drug-inspired studios and sound systems for the Dead, sitting behind their soundboard and archiving hundreds of their legendary live shows. And while the nickname has several possible origins, he was definitely a bear to deal with, at one point or another burning almost every bridge. While it's not surprising that a psychedelic polymath is a bit of an enigma, Robert Greenfield is a writer atypically qualified to tell his story. A onetime editor at Rolling Stone and the author of books on the Rolling Stones, Jerry Garcia, and Timothy Leary, Greenfield digs deep into the past, using the testimony of eyewitnesses both living and dead to draw this strange, influential character to the fore, adding an unexpected interesting chapter to a tale that's otherwise over-told. --Jon Foro, The Book "Robert Greenfield's gossipy Bear captures the genius and craziness of the man who turned a generation on and made the Grateful Dead into a rock powerhouse." ---Shelf Awareness

About the Author A former associate editor of the London bureau of Rolling Stone magazine, Robert Greenfield is the critically acclaimed author of several classic rock books, among them S. T. P.: A Journey Through America with the Rolling Stones, as well as the definitive biographies of Timothy Leary and Ahmet Ertegun. Sean Runnette, a multiple AudioFile Earphones Award winner, has also produced several Audie Award-winning audiobooks. His film and television appearances include Two If by Sea, Copland, Sex and the City, Law Order, Third Watch, and lots and lots of commercials.