

unifying ideology (freedom from reclaiming the individual and building new community values, not based on personal greed) became compromised by having to broker deals with the outside world. While some bands started by manufacturing their own product, these were really devices for attracting deals with major record labels. The politics of how musicians negotiated with corporations was won and lost on an individual basis; there was no template for dealing with straight society.

The counterculture fundamentally changed Western society, primarily by forcing manufacturers to re-examine consumerism. Before, they dictated through mass production what products were available. The new generation of consumers worryingly began rejecting their goods and demanding to be recognized as individuals. By the early Seventies, manufacturers were “hip” and addressed individual choice by designing products to entice them back. 1965, when the Elevators formed, was a turning point. Everyone had witnessed the unbelievable success of the Beatles, who toppled Elvis and now there was the potential for someone to perpetuate the cycle. Established record companies were forced to desperately delve into an alien youth culture in the hope of signing the next big thing. The 45 rpm record, the medium created by rock ‘n’ roll a decade earlier, was still the currency of the music industry. The results were excellent—hundreds of bands with a basic grasp of their instruments and the fact that the *times were a-changin’* were funded to make some of the strangest pop music ever. After only two singles the Elevators were amongst the first bands to utilize the record album to its full potential and express their full manifesto. The record labels recognized the bands for what they were—a self-perpetuating revolution of disposable pop culture—and weren’t committed to investing in long-term careers. Unfortunately, the optimism and experimentation of the mid-Sixties became the hard reality of the early Seventies, a climate in which many musicians could no longer create thought-provoking or original music. At the end of the Sixties, many underground musicians were left with nothing to sell but the other counterculture commodity beside music—drugs. This turned them into criminals, and gave straight society the moral high ground from which to condemn them.

The Vietnam War ended when it couldn’t be won decisively. Similarly, there is no clear answer as to whether the Sixties counterculture succeeded or failed. The issues it raised, however, have dramatically altered the cultural dialogue. The story of the Elevators is a portrait of many of those questions being raised in their most extreme form.

1. INTRODUCING THE HILL COUNTRY BOYS

Stacy had the biggest ego in Kerrville, and I had the second.

—John Ike Walton

It all started in Kerrville.

It was in this small town in the Texas hill country that three key members of the 13th Floor Elevators grew up, and it was Kerrville that would also later provide an important refuge and retreat. In fact, Kerrville’s raw, rural history and connection to the landscape were as important of an influence as its musical heritage—its traditional cowboy stomp and Western swing translated into part of the energy behind the Elevators’ unique sound.

Kerrville is a backwater town, situated along the cypress-lined banks of the Guadalupe River, about 100 miles west of the state capital, Austin. Many Texans regard it as a sleepy retirement town, woken annually by the folk festival, and it’s hard to believe that in 1978 the Sex Pistols played a pickup gig there en route to Dallas. Yet a decade before Sid Vicious taunted his Texan audience (shouting “You’re just a bunch of fucking cowboys”), Kerrville had already become an unlikely locus for spawning musicians who would help to create and define a new musical genre.

While future Elevators Stacy Sutherland and Ronnie Leatherman both attended Kerrville’s Tivy High School, it was a chance meeting in 1963 between John Ike Walton and Stacy Sutherland that sowed the initial seeds of the 13th Floor Elevators, and the birth of psychedelic rock. In those days, drive-ins and parking lots were still the center of every teenager’s social universe. One night, outside the Grove restaurant, twenty-year-old John Ike was showing off his banjo skills, when he suddenly found competition from the seventeen-year-old Stacy on guitar.

John Ike: I was sitting in the back of a pickup playing my banjo, and he came by with his guitar. The next day we met again—I saw him on the street down by the sports center and he had twelve tubes of glue and no models. He says, “Hey man, do you want to go sniff some glue?” and I said, “No, think I’m going to pass on that.” The sports shop’s proprietor told the police about Stacy buying so much glue and not buying any models... Stacy got wind of it and asked me if I turned him in to the law, which was ridiculous!

He may have turned down free glue, but John Ike was no angel—the teenager had a reputation for hot rod racing. His newfound friendship with Stacy soon led to further small-town outrages, and by early 1965 they decided it was time to move to Austin, en route to Australia, where they intended to import bluegrass music. However, things didn’t go according to plan.

Stacy Keith Sutherland was born on May 28, 1946 in San Antonio—at that time there was no adequate hospital in Kerrville. His family, who had worked in Kerrville for three generations, certainly wasn’t poor—when Stacy was born, his parents, G.C. and Sibyl Sutherland, owned two ranches in the area and a house in the center of town. He had an older brother, Beau (named after “Beau Geste”), and a younger sister, Heather. Stacy’s mother, a teacher, encouraged him from an early age to pursue his interests in art and music. Having lived through the dust bowls and the failed fortunes of the Great Depression, she wanted the best for Stacy, who was her obvious favorite. A great storyteller, she often acted out Mark Twain’s books for the children, while sharing with them an obsession with the infamous Texas outlaws Bonnie and Clyde, as well as Pretty Boy Floyd. Her mother had kept scrapbooks filled with newspaper accounts and clippings of the pair’s exploits that provided the only entertainment during the depression. It’s clear that these stories had a profound effect on both brothers, and their later direction—Beau worked for J. Edgar Hoover in the FBI, while Stacy became one of Texas’ most infamous musicians. One of the family ranches had twenty acres and a large stretch of land by the Guadalupe River—it was here that Stacy collected velvet ants, chased nighthawks and spent the rest of his time hunting or fishing. When he was seven, his father had given him a gun, much to Sibyl’s displeasure.

Sibyl: I just threw an all-out fit. I just couldn’t imagine anybody in their right mind giving a kid of seven a gun. But I had one all my life and that’s what you do—you learn and teach them. One day he came home dragging a rattlesnake that he’d shot and killed; it was longer than he was—that picture made half the magazines in Texas. But he wasn’t so careful with it one night he’d been fooling around and it went off and my clock in the kitchen was hanging down, springs all out of it...

Stacy found his natural musical ear at an early age, and had learned basic chord structures on the banjo by the time he was three. He was once found bashing out Christmas carols on a friend’s piano, even though he

had no knowledge of the instrument. There was little musical heritage in the family apart from his maternal grandmother, who played violin. Yet it was Beau who received the formal musical training, when his mother convinced him to join the school band and learn clarinet. When Stacy was nine, he requested a guitar for Christmas and begged his mother for lessons at Alamo Music in San Antonio. He was immediately disappointed after three lessons as they only taught the rudiments and not technique.

Sibyl: He said, “This isn’t what I want to learn. I don’t want this ABC stuff.” He said, “I want to learn progression.” I said, “Well, what is progression?” He said, “It’s where each musician does his own thing.”

Stacy bowed his head and resorted to perfecting his own renditions of Chet Atkins songs that he had taught himself to play from records. The guitar provided Stacy with a means to create his own identity and rebel against his older, more athletic brother.

Beau: We’d been extremely close as kids, growing up. I was very active in sports, I loved to play baseball and football, and poor Stacy always got dragged along because he was our fourth guy. Every day, when he wanted to play the guitar, I would grab him and make him go down and play baseball or football. He was the youngest. I was involved in a lot of school offices, I was president of the student body and I played football and tennis. Looking back on it I think what a burden that must have been for him to bear. This is a small town, and poor Stacy was just constantly hammered with, “How come you don’t do this? Beau did this.” I really think that opened up some of the avenues to music for him. Because it was one thing that our family really didn’t do. I think he wanted to carve out an identity.

Sibyl: I would take him and put him out in front of school, and I figured you couldn’t go anywhere now. I’d say where were you and he’d say, “I was down on the river, playing my guitar... I looked at the door of that school and I could not go in.”

In 1958, when Stacy was twelve, he managed to persuade his mother to buy him an electric guitar and amplifier. This allowed him to explore new sounds and emulate John Lee Hooker’s echo-drenched electric recordings from the late 1940s and Buddy Holly’s reverb-heavy 45s of the mid-Fifties. This coincided with a sudden inability to make it through the school gates; instead he’d slope off, dragging his friend Johnny Gathings down to the riverbank. As soon as word spread that he was off playing his guitar, other kids would slope off and join them. By graduation Stacy was well established as a popular local rebel. Despite Beau’s efforts to encourage him to study, and insisting that a little work could produce straight As, Stacy’s answer was always, “Why do that? My idea of a good afternoon is to cut home and go down and sit by the river and play my guitar.” Beau had grown up listening to country and western music and soon recognized that Stacy was experimenting with sound outside its traditional confines.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: (1949) STACY AGE THREE, COURTESY SUTHERLAND FAMILY COLLECTION;
 (CIRCA 1953) STACY FRONT ROW, SECOND FROM LEFT, COURTESY SUTHERLAND FAMILY COLLECTION;
 (1961) THE TRAVELLERS FOUR, L-R: STACY, OLLIE BROOKER, CARLTON WHITE, KATHEY BARTELL, COURTESY SUTHERLAND FAMILY COLLECTION;
 (1962) THE TRADITIONS, L-R: MAX RANGE, BOBBY SANCHEZ, BOB HUNTER, RANDY JACKSON, STACY, COURTESY RONNIE LEATHERMAN COLLECTION;
 STACY'S HIGH SCHOOL SWEETHEART, LAURIE JONES, COURTESY SUTHERLAND FAMILY COLLECTION

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: (CIRCA 1953) BEAU, HEATHER AND STACY; (CIRCA 1953) STACY & RATTLESNAKE;
 STACY & MATERNAL GRANDMA, COURTESY SUTHERLAND FAMILY COLLECTION

In March 1961, when he was fourteen, he met his high school “sweetie,” Laurie Jones, whom he dated on and off for nearly six years, right through the Elevators’ bid for stardom, and Sibyl maintains she was the only woman Stacy ever truly loved.

During his sophomore year of high school, Stacy joined an ensemble called the Travelers Three, which was subsequently renamed the Travelers Four. Because their repertoire was mainly folk, Stacy’s involvement was short-lived, and he went on to join James Dean lookalike Max Range’s (pronounced Ren-gay) rock ‘n’ roll band the Traditions in 1962. “Little” Doug Sahm had scored a regional hit in San Antonio with “Two Hearts and Love,” and the Traditions were hired as his stage band to tour locally. Afterwards Max and Stacy formed another high school rock ‘n’ roll band, the Signatures, in 1963. The musician’s lifestyle immediately suited Stacy, and school became a thing of the past, leading to instant clashes with his mother. As she said: “We began having arguments and he’d stay out late at night, and I’d say there wasn’t anything good happening after twelve o’clock, but he didn’t even come alive till then! And finally, when he was eighteen, I said if you’re not going to abide by one rule of this household maybe you need to get out there and find your own way, and he said, ‘I’ll just do that and show you I can,’ and off he went.”

There was plenty of religion on offer in Kerrville. His mother was Mormon, and his father Baptist (he eventually joined the Mormon Church at the age of seventy-one). Stacy duly attended the Centerpoint Baptist Sunday School from the age of six, and was baptized at ten. While orthodox religion couldn’t fulfill his spiritual needs, Stacy’s traditional upbringing filled him with a fear that prevented him from challenging it. Later, the awe he felt from nature was far greater than what he felt in church; this was reinforced by hallucinogens, and the countryside became his spiritual landscape and cathedral. Still, the Christian concepts of good and evil—particularly instilled in him by his maternal grandmother—haunted him throughout his life. Stacy matter-of-factly told his friends that his grandmother had been fighting off devils for ninety-three years. As a result, he viewed himself as “bad,” and thought hallucinogens were a catalyst to divine understanding that would help make him good. His anxiety triggered bad drug experiences in which he had many repeated premonitions of his own untimely death.

Sibyl: He said, “I know this book (the Bible) is true, but I can’t live by it, it’s too strict.” And I said, “Nobody can live by it without the help of the Lord.” He always had scripture open, lying on the windowsills, and when he found something that troubled him, he’d say, “What does this mean?” I tried to tell him that half the world didn’t know what this stuff meant.

Stacy (K): When I was a kid in church they told me the Kingdom of Heaven is within you, and I just took that point-blank to be true, I never actually thought of the Kingdom of Heaven being within me, or within you or whatever.

Although Stacy thought school had nothing to offer him, he excelled enough in art and music to secure a place at Southwest Texas College in San Marcos in 1964, studying art. He lasted almost a year, and he was taken by the work of the abstract impressionists, particularly Van Gogh, which was reflected in his own work.

Sibyl: One [of his paintings] hurts me to look at; we called it his Van Gogh period. He carried this book, *Lust for Life*, for about a year, everywhere he went. He started painting in blue and gold and he painted this boy’s face; it’s the most tormented face I think I’ve ever seen on a human being—doubt, fear and anxiety. He painted the angel Gabriel, and he had no face. He’s blowing a trumpet and he’s in a robe, wings, the whole bit—but there’s no face.

The picture possibly relates to the time a fellow student turned Stacy on to hallucinogens for the first time. The student had read about peyote in a magazine, and recognized the small bud-like plant at a cactus ranch. As usual, Stacy was hanging out by the river when they decided to dice them up and swallow them.

Stacy (K): That was a bizarre trip—I’ll never forget it. This one guy told me that it would make me feel strange. It was one of the most beautiful trips I’ve ever had. This guy’s face floated off. We were sitting around a fire by the river, and the fire turned emerald green; everything was just real pretty emerald green. I was watching that and I could not believe it, and this guy’s face turned into a mask and floated off up into the trees. It hit the top and I picked up a burning stick and threw it up and it hit the mask and when it hit the tree there were all these big green pearls floating. Too much! It was nice.

Aside from that early encounter with peyote, getting high was little more than idle experimentation. Billy Nesbitt, one of Stacy’s close friends, used to set the alarm clock and stick his head in the oven, turning the gas off just in time. Inevitably one day the clock didn’t work and his death put an end to that game. Alcohol was largely unavailable, but could occasionally be liberated from dances and enjoyed undetected later at parties in the woods. Marijuana was linked to jazz musicians, and Stacy had a natural tendency to think any association with drugs was “cool.” While still at high school, he made trips to Austin to score marijuana and on one such errand he had a fortuitous first meeting with future Elevator Tommy Hall. Once enrolled in San Marcos, forays to Mexico seemed far easier, yet proved otherwise.

John Ike: Stacy conned this guy into taking him to Mexico in a brand new ‘64 Chevrolet, buying a pound of weed. They put the weed in the car’s air cleaner. When you bought weed in Mexico at that time, the people who sell you the weed also turned you into the customs—you can’t win. So the police kept the car. They said, “We had word that this car is carrying narcotics. You boys get on home, best way you can.” Finally, after about two or three weeks

they found the weed, and immediately contacted the school. So, not only did that guy lose his brand new car, but he also got kicked out of college, same as Stacy.

Although he managed to leave college without his parents finding out exactly why, his activities weren't going unnoticed by the local authorities. Knowledge of natural substances such as mushrooms, peyote and marijuana had been passed down by the older generations of cowboys and musicians, but there wasn't a youth culture that indulged in them yet—so sole blame for their presence was later put on Stacy. The cops had little to do after dark other than play cat-and-mouse with the town's youth, and Stacy and John Ike were their favorite prey. Stacy would look at his watch, smile and leave the house. A cop car would soon be on his tail, so he would proceed to drive them insane by making figure-eights around a car park while they followed and then immediately returning home, not having gone anywhere. The other favorite game for infuriating the cops was sunbathing in deckchairs, bathing suits and sunglasses late at night under the street lamps.

After dropping out of college, Stacy and John Ike teamed up and started their reign of terror on the town with motorcycles. John Ike owned a Triumph, and helped Stacy buy and fix up a BSA Thumper.

Sibyl: He had a motorcycle that John Ike helped him fix up, but we never knew that until he got four tickets in two weeks. His daddy paid the first one, and told him "I've never been in any trouble and there's no reason for it. I'm paying this one, and any trouble you get yourself in after this, you get yourself out of, because I won't be there." That's what made him get marked him as a troublemaker with the police, and from that time on they rode him, bug hunting, every time he was in town.

Having outgrown Kerrville, and with their youthful energy causing real aggravation with the cops, Stacy and John Ike decided to skip town for Australia.

John Ike Walton exemplified the cowboy-booted tall Texan, with a raw sense of humor and dry wit. Although he never fully participated in the wide-eyed, twenty-four-hour lifestyle of the rest of the band, John Ike was nonetheless far out in his own way. Although a multi-instrumentalist, it was the drums that suited John Ike's personality the most—his lanky stature fitted his drumming technique perfectly. He had a custom size thirteen-drum pedal made for his huge feet, while his long reach allowed him to utilize the "bell" in the center of the ride cymbal as a trademark style. While John Ike's natural manic energy corralled the band into activity, his family's oil money bankrolled its early endeavors.

John Ike was born on November 27, 1942, the youngest sibling of three, in Beeville, Texas, inland from the Gulf of Mexico. His "wildcatter" father struck oil on several properties to which he owned the profitable mining rights. John Ike spent much of his childhood on the coast in Port



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: JOHN IKE IN FOOTBALL UNIFORM; AT SCHREINER MILITARY SCHOOL, KERRVILLE, TEXAS; (1963) JOHN IKE PERFORMING WITH GARLAND ARNOLD, SOUTHWEST TEXAS COLLEGE, COURTESY JOHN IKE WALTON

Aransas before the family moved to Kerrville in 1950, where they built a huge, sprawling house on Fairview Drive complete with a swimming pool. John Ike attended the local school before transferring to Schreiner, a former military college. He proved a fair student, joined the band and learned the rudiments of music. Sight-reading, especially drum music, wasn't his forte, especially when rock 'n' roll emerged when he was a teenager. John Ike made an easy rebel. He loved excitement, but always knew when to stop before he got into serious trouble. He quit hot-rod racing after hitting a pothole in the road and tearing off the front of his car. He still won his race against Arnold Kocurek of the notorious Gear Grinders Club, who was a sore loser and drove off, leaving John Ike stranded with his wreck.

By 1957, he was convinced he wanted to play drums, so he bastardized what was available at school into a makeshift kit. The quality was limited, and soon his mother gave in and took him to San Antonio to buy his first proper kit. Once equipped with pearl Ludwig drums and Zildjian cymbals, he looked for opportunities to play. But Kerrville wasn't exactly the heart of rock, and his first foray into live music was accompanying a country band called Fiddlin' Phil Trimble and the Rhythm Ranch Hands after their drummer retired.

John Ike: I didn't know hardly anything. But they were desperate for a drummer, and I had a set of drums. So even though I was—guess I was fifteen or sixteen years old then—they started teaching me how to play.

Although he had an opportunity to play, their repertoire only consisted of Western swing and songs from the 1940s—not what he wanted to play at all, and it wasn't until meeting drummer Johnny Bush and the Texas Top Hands, who'd had success with a song called "Whiskey River;" that he found his style. When John Ike left high school, he enrolled in college at Trinity in San Antonio as a math student before moving to Southwest Texas College in San Marcos, where Stacy was also a student. John Ike flunked out in his sophomore year when calculus proved too much. Meanwhile, he was ingesting a wide variety of music, although country remained the staple—until John Ike witnessed one of rock 'n' roll's true stars, Jerry Lee Lewis.

John Ike: Jerry Lee Lewis came to Bandera, of all places, in 1961 and played at the cabaret, and there were only about ten people there. I got to play on the same bill, and I watched his drummer [Gene Crisman]—he was a big influence on me. He played hard. He was the first drummer I'd ever seen who really played hard and fast, and did not let up. He was sixteen years old.

In 1962, before heading to college, John Ike toured with Sun recording artist Sleepy LaBeef around Texas. By 1965, both John Ike and Stacy had long since flunked college, and their infamy led to their plan to head to Australia, which started with a move to Austin to raise money for tickets

by playing the bars. One night, while hanging out at a drive-in, they had a chance meeting with another stray cat.

John Ike: I met Benny at the Dirty Martin's drive-in restaurant, you know, where they have carhops and stuff. He was out in the parking lot, and Stacy and I got out of my car, because we saw him with a violin. Well, I had my banjo at the time and Stacy had his guitar—we had just blown into Austin and I think Stacy was trying to score a lid of weed. We started playing in the parking lot.

Austin-born and bred, Benny Lynn Thurman was the Elevators' first bass player. A hyperactive child, he had a natural ear for music, and at an early age studied the violin. His strong Baptist upbringing made him spiritually inquisitive.

Benny: I'm the Benny of the bunch. I was born in '43, February 20, right at the cusp of Pisces. Well, I went to the Baptist church for twelve years, and everybody assumed I was a Christian. When I was about fifteen, I really felt—I don't know if they doped me, or I felt the pull, but I walked the aisle and dedicated my life to Jesus but I couldn't make it work for me. I couldn't make God fit into my life.

Following graduation in 1960, he attended the University of Texas to train as a classical violinist. When endlessly practicing stultifying music led to problems, Benny's father, a retired military officer, was quick to enlist him in the U.S. Marine Corps.

Benny: I was getting really tired of Vivaldi and Brahms in the practice rooms four hours a day. And all those stuffy people and the orchestra itself, you know? They very seldom smile. I wanted to get out and in three days I was [in the Marines Corps Reserve]—"Hello mother hello father, here I am at Camp Granada," that's the way it was, the song came out and I was there, "A" Company, First Battalion, Second Training Regiment, U.S. Marine Corps. So they said, man, you passed the test. They had nothing going on 'cept the Bay of Pigs at that time, no war. I turned twenty-one in the Marines, and I was in for life—but it didn't work out that way.

Even the strict discipline of the Marines couldn't rein Benny in: "I got out of the Marine Corps for sleepwalking, because I had a sleep dysfunction and I couldn't tell my dreams from reality. I had a rough time."

Supposedly he rode a motorcycle naked through the mess hall and walked down a runway wearing only a pair of shoes, which he tucked under the perimeter fence before scaling it. Having left the Marines in 1965, Benny found himself joining his father painting barrack houses near the military airport on 53rd Street

Benny: I was kind of freewheeling around, and I ran into John Ike. I was going to the drive-in all the time. One night I was alone playing fiddle and he came up with a five-string. He and Stacy were trying

to get something together. They were cracking the egg, so to speak. Oh, he managed me during a hard part of my life, you know? I had failed in the Marines, I had failed in college, and I'd had my fill. John and I were both searching—we were searching for some way to make money off the talents that were left to us.

While Australia became a distant memory, Mexico became a more realistic prospect.

In mid-1965, the three traveled there on holiday, smoked the local weed, and eventually got it together to play. They'd stopped at a place called Club Malibu where they decided to break out the instruments and play bluegrass for the locals. They were thrown out but continued playing, and enough punters joined them for the manager to invite them back in again. Broke again after the vacation, Stacy and John Ike found themselves back in Kerrville, where they made plans to head to the Texan coastal resort of Port Aransas for summer jobs. While there, they chatted with one Mr. Plumley at a burger stand, who turned out to be the owner of a beach club called the Dunes. He offered them a residency if they returned immediately with a full band. They enticed Max Range to be their singer, but Ronnie Leatherman, a lifelong friend of Stacy's, wasn't due to graduate in time, so Benny was engaged on bass. Stacy named them the Lingsmen, which Benny recalls meant "Crazy. Ling is crazy in Chinese," and soon he renamed everything they owned to suit: the Lingsmobile, the Lingshack, etc.

In order to ensure the booking at the Dunes, they had to be liberal with the truth and pretend they were already a fully-fledged band. This meant that John Ike invested family funds in electric equipment (Stacy a Gemini 2 Rickenbacker guitar, Benny a Fender Jazz bass and Ampex amps) and a Rogers "swivomatic" kit. A basic set list was agreed on, consisting mainly of covers of the Surfariis and Beach Boys to keep the local surfers happy, mixed with R & B and British beat covers. With no time to rehearse, they headed straight for the coast—however, when it came to their first show, they were in for a nasty surprise.

Stacy (K): John Ike has always had a rib about technical experience, it's like if a person hasn't been playing very long, well, John just refuses to believe that they have it. Benny was an incredible musician, he was playing with an orchestra, first chair, and he told us he could play bass. So when we went down to Port Aransas and plugged in at our first show, and we're all nervous, we hadn't played together. Max is up there and Benny says, "Hey man! I have to tell you something!" I'm going [whispering] "What? What?" He said, "I never played a lick of bass in my life." I freaked out: "Get it, get it!" He started watching me, and he hit the same frets I was hitting. He learned bass right there from scratch, playing live gigs. I'll tell you what, that blew me out!

Benny didn't know any of the songs because he didn't like rock music—he liked country and western. Luckily, Ronnie was soon on summer vacation: "Well, see, when Benny first started playing with them, he

wasn't real well on the bass, so I went down and played for two weeks during the summer of '65, and I played bass and showed him some of the runs and stuff." Somehow the band wasn't sacked, and they muddled through playing a mixture of surf and country, sometimes with Benny on electric fiddle.

John Ike: Stacy learned some Lightnin' Hopkins stuff. He learned his style of playing from Lightnin'. He was real talented, but he was so mixed up. He was so unhappy. Oh, man. Stacy was never satisfied. Benny had a show. We didn't have a bluegrass set, but Benny would break out his fiddle and play "Orange Blossom Special." And people would dance real crazy and wild out there. We'd start off real slow and then we'd play it real fast. He was an incredible violinist.

Although Stacy's estimations of audiences of 6,000 may be exaggerated, the band did prove to be immensely popular, attracting huge crowds at the busy holiday resort. The band was offered \$75 per member a week and lodging for their services, and the Lingsmen settled down for a summer of fun.

Benny: We played "Bo Diddley," "Wipe Out," three-chord progressions. "You Really Got Me!"—The Kinks... We had our minds completely blown; the wind would blow in the seas and the pill heads—all kinds of pills for one-night stands. And there were a lot of senators' daughters.

They set up their own P.O. box as the Lingsmen, and it soon filled up with curious letters from Laurie, Stacy's sweetheart back home in Kerrville. Though leaving Laurie devastated him, Stacy's eye had already begun to roam. He enjoyed as much of the female attention as he could get, always claiming "I saw her first!" but that summer he soon discovered that the two things that really made him miserable were his relationships with women and drugs. He became involved with a girl from Dallas named Linda Sharpe.

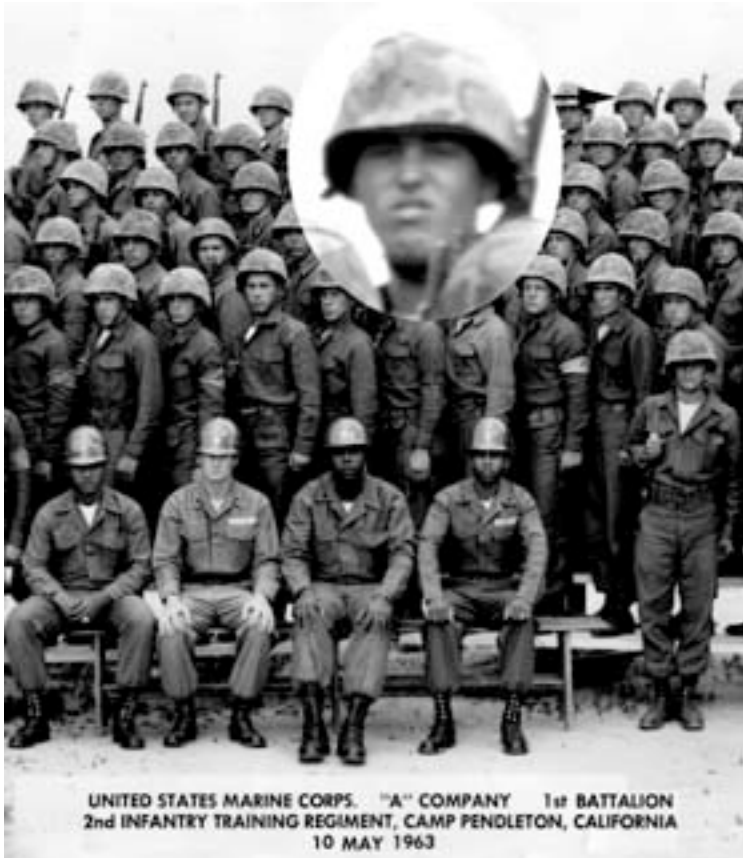
The local rednecks started to take offense at the band's antics, their long hair and, particularly, Benny's earring. When one unfortunate in the audience heckled them, Benny stepped straight off the stage and silenced him with a single blow.

However the sight of one particular holidaymaker struck horror in Stacy's heart and left him unable to play. His family took their vacation in the nearest big shoreside town, Corpus Christi, and the sight of his mother in the audience proved too much.

Sibyl Sutherland: He saw me, and he came up and he said, "What are you doing here?" and I said, "Well, don't I always come down here all the time for my vacation?" "Well it makes me feel funny, looking up and seeing my own mother standing there!" So that angered me and I went and got in the car. But my mother stayed and listened and she said that he was really good. I could hear him playing.



(1958) BENNY, SECOND VIOLINIST FROM LEFT, McCALLUM HIGH SCHOOL ORCHESTRA, AUSTIN, TEXAS; BOTH PHOTOS COURTESY BENNY THURMAN



UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS. "A" COMPANY 1st BATTALION
2nd INFANTRY TRAINING REGIMENT, CAMP PENOLETON, CALIFORNIA
10 MAY 1963

According to band lore, before one of their earliest performances an old shrimper known as “Bottlehead” shot up Benny, Stacy and Johnny Gathings with codeine, which made them so sick they took turns throwing up in a pail off-stage throughout the performance. Soon John Ike, who was a natural rebel, found himself increasingly alienated by their antics, and it proved too much for Max, who elected to find his own accommodations.

Benny: Stacy, he had a hard, black soul, but he had a good dream. He was a barbiturate addict—you know, downers. Had to have something to hold him down. So, that’s why he kept getting into trouble, because those things are tailor-made, I mean, you’re not going to find them on the streets, and he was hurt worst of any of us chemically, because he couldn’t get his drugs. You probably have to be a registered nurse working for a doctor to get the barbiturates that he was hooked on, or a doctor’s daughter. [Laurie Jones’ father was a doctor.] He was like constantly trying to hold his brakes on.

John Ike: Stacy and Benny got hooked up with this guy and he says, “I’ve got some coke.” So he comes down with his rig of coke and gets Benny and Stacy off in their part of the house, showin’ them how to shoot up cocaine. This was when Stacy was eighteen or nineteen years old. Stacy was talking to me when we were first smoking joints together, and he says, “Man, I saw a heroin addict today who had the coolest look.” He was destined to be a drug addict.

The easiest way to score grass was to order, from a certain bartender, “a brandy, with a little something in it.” However, Stacy wanted to score a large stash.

Port Aransas is at the top of a vast crescent-shaped stretch of islands that arc along the Gulf of Mexico coastline to the Mexican border. They include Padre Island seashore—one of the largest undeveloped stretches of coastline in the U.S.. Stacy and John Ike would often jump on the Bonnevillie and tear down the beach, popping man-of-war jellyfish as they headed south toward Mexico.

Toward the end of the summer of ‘65, Tommy and Clementine Hall had been to South Texas on a peyote-buying trip, and were taking a vacation on Padre Island on their return to Austin. They had spent a solitary two weeks without meeting a soul, and were preparing to head home when they noticed a peculiar magenta motorcycle that resembled a wasp, parked on the gas station forecourt. While admiring the bike, John Ike and Stacy returned and Stacy, recognizing Tommy as a kindred spirit he’d met in Austin, persuaded them to delay leaving and come and see them play.

Stacy (K): Well, I met Tommy, dig this: the first time, when I was in high school and we wanted to buy some weed, and like it was about five people in Austin from the university and we were going to make several exchanges, and we were over there and I ran into him at the Shamrock Bar, and we stood there and talked a while, you know, and that was it. I never saw him again. And, like, a year or so later we

ran into him on the beach one day and just got talking. And like he had some Acapulco Gold with him, we got stoned, we drank some Romilar [cough syrup with codeine]... and I had a really bum trip. It was too much...

John Ike: We met him in a filling station—he had kinda long hair and Beatle boots. So we knocked each other off as heads. I wasn't even a head, that was the first time I even smoked any dope, in Port Aransas with Tommy Hall; first we drank a bottle of Romilar, then started smoking some Acapulco Gold, and I was ripped beyond belief, man, I was hallucinating, houses were turning into monsters and walking across the land. We went to this stand called "Custer's Last Stand," but I don't remember being able to talk, and they asked us if we were from Russia because we were talking like wah, wah, wah, and they couldn't understand us. We couldn't understand each other. The cops came up, but Clementine jumped out of the car and said, "What's wrong, officers? We're a family and we're camped here." And they left us alone. If they'd rolled down the window and smelled the Acapulco Gold we'd still be in prison.

The Halls extended their vacation and hung out with the band, and although Tommy was working on poetry, there was no suggestion of a musical collaboration yet. Mutually impressed by each other, they exchanged numbers and agreed to look each other up in Austin. Stacy had found a new source of marijuana.

Stacy and Benny acquired a pound of weed for \$100 and became so blatant in their dope smoking that John Ike banned any marijuana from the living quarters. Paranoia set in, and after moving their stash around different hiding places, they panicked and tried to sell it. Then Stacy spotted a solution.

Stacy (K): Everybody knew we were turning on. We had two cops on, Benny and I. You know the gunnery in Port Aransas? Well, he and I used to go up there every morning, man, and we'd sit up there, and you can see the whole island, and the pigs would drive up and they knew we were up there smoking. It would piss them off. And if they came up there we'd stash it in the sand. They'd walk all around checking in the sand and we'd ask them what they were looking for. It was a big sport in a way.

Stacy was a huge Kinks fan, and bastardized the riff to "Come On Now," the B-side of their current U.S. hit "Tired of Waiting for You," for a song called "Tried to Hide" about their stash. Although the original lyrics are now long forgotten, elements survived when it was recycled for the 13th Floor Elevators' first single.

You blew what you had and tried to sell it, you thought what you were and you tried to tell it, and when I got near, all I saw was fear, and I know you tried to hide, and you cried 'cos you lied about it...¹

During their stay, the Lingsmen took the free ferry to the largest coastal town of Corpus Christi, where they came into contact with a wide range of musicians in for the summer season. The Carousel Club hosted local bands, including the Bad Seeds and Zakary Thaks. They hung out with twenty-four-year-old music veteran Glen Campbell, who had performed on recordings by Frank Sinatra, the Beach Boys, Nat King Cole and Elvis Presley. Campbell's career took off a few years later in 1967, when "Gentle on My Mind" made the national charts, and international stardom followed when he immortalized the Texan coast with the 1969 hit "Galveston."

In Corpus they followed up a recommendation for an off-the-beaten-track music venue called the French Beachcombers where they encountered Mr. Swamp Music—Tony Joe White. Like Campbell, he achieved international stardom with his 1968 hit "Polk Salad Annie." White had formed his first band, Tony White and His Combo, with Robert McGuffey on bass and Jim Griffith on drums, and had started playing nightclubs in Louisiana and Texas. After playing a grueling six-night-a-week residency for nearly eight months in Kingsville, Texas, for much of 1964, the Combo were running out of steam by the summer of '65. Since Max Range had distanced himself from them, the Lingsmen, impressed by White, invited him to the Dunes to see them play.

Benny: Tony Joe had it down, he was really practiced, I mean, man, they were so good. All of us went and listened to them, and sat around and picked with them. But he was a very religious-type person; he was just like Elvis when he wasn't misbehaving.

Beyond playing a handful of shows with Tony Joe, any serious consideration of forming a band together² was prevented by their undisciplined antics.

John Ike: Anyway, Tony Joe brought a guy over who wanted to be our manager. Tony Joe's a "redneck," he doesn't smoke dope, he's strictly into music. And I should have stayed with him. (Laughs.) We left Tony in Corpus Christi and that's the last we heard of him until "Polk Salad Annie" came out.

With their situation stalling on the coast and plans for Australia gone up in smoke, Stacy and his childhood friend Johnny Gathings drifted to Austin to visit Tommy and Clementine. For Stacy, the Halls' residence on Poplar Street was an education. He could get stoned and luxuriate in Tommy's vast record collection and limitless knowledge of blues, classical and jazz as well as the latest weird sounds, such as the Holy Modal Rounders.

He was also impressed by their lifestyle, which was much freer and more open than anything he'd experienced with Laurie. He viewed Clementine as "a super hip person—very cultured person," while she noted, "Stacy especially couldn't get over the fact that Tommy and I turned on together. His girl [Laurie] was so straight."



TOP: (SUMMER 1965) LINGSMEN & FRIENDS, DUNES CLUB, PORT ARANSAS, TEXAS, L-R: BENNY, STACY, UNKNOWN, MAX, JOHN IKE (HIDDEN), UNKNOWN; BOTTOM: (1965) TRIP TO MEXICO, "FIRST TIME UP," L-R: STACY, BENNY & JOHN IKE; (1965) THE LINGSMEN, L-R: MAX RANGE, JOHN IKE, STACY & BENNY, COURTESY BENNY THURMAN

Stacy (K): Tommy knew about every form of music, that was one of the things that blew me about him, I mean, he could sit there for a solid week and put on different albums that would blow your mind constantly, stuff I'd never heard before in my life. We'd go to his pad, smoke dope and listen to hours and hours of music I'd never even heard before.

Having recognized the Lingsmens' talent, Tommy decided to take them to the Jade Room to see a young singer he regarded as the best in town. Although his backing band was good, Tommy decided the Lingsmen were the better band, and so on November 24 they descended *en masse* to witness Roky Erickson and the Spades. Having been introduced to Roky during the break, they jammed with him after the show, and persuaded him to come to Port Aransas to see them play. After performing just one song ("I Can't Get No Satisfaction") with the band, Erickson was convinced of their talents.

Back in Port Aransas, the Lingsmen were having the same old problems, and one evening while setting up for their regular show, John Ike got talking to a man at the bar that reminded him of Johnny Cash.

John Ike: We had a couple of policemen that were the security guards and they said, "D'you know who you're talkin' to there? That's the head of the state narcotics commission. You boys better get out of here. You're talking to The Man. He wants you guys." I said, "Thank you very much."

The Galindo brothers, Danny and Bobby, received an emergency booking from Max Range asking them come to Port Aransas for a show that evening. When they arrived they witnessed the old band loading their equipment and Bonneville motorcycle onto the back of a pickup truck, and beat a hasty retreat.

The vice squad raided the Lingshack the next morning hoping to find them still sleeping, but found only a scattering of marijuana seeds and stems.

Max's new band was named "Max and the Laughing Kind," and he continued to play the coast with various lineups until 1967. In 1967, Danny Galindo joined the 13th Floor Elevators.

1. The Bad Seeds, a band from Corpus Christi, recorded a re-titled version, "All Night Long" (Hall-Sutherland) on J-Beck Label : J1005 20th Jan 1966, released the same week as the Elevators first 45 backed with "Tried to Hide." Their version contained further references, " well you threw it away and you changed your mind...now leave me alone and let me be."

2. The Lingsmen were never recorded, and despite developing new material with White, they do not appear on either of his 45s made around this time on the local J-Beck label.

2. "THE EYES OF TEXAS ARE UPON YOU" (THE CAMPUS CACTUS EATERS)

Musical creators have been, and are, the exponents and the victims of system, philosophy and attitude, determined for them by textbooks and classrooms, and by the atmosphere in which they grow; in short, by their milieu. Consequently the later history of Western music is of one system, one philosophy, one attitude, and it is characterized by successive bodies of practitioners made up of multitudes of innocent believers and sprinklings of individualists who are frequently unequal to the struggle of fundamental dissent with the musical practicalities.

—Harry Partch, Preface to *Genesis of Music*, 1947

Allow me to express now once and for all my deep respect for the work of the experimenter, and for his fight to wring significant facts from an inflexible native.

—Count Alfred Korzybski, *Science and Sanity*, 1933

Tommy Hall was the man with the vision that would become the 13th Floor Elevators. Although he wasn't a natural musician, he was equally a fan of most forms of music and possessed a deep appreciation and understanding of classical composition. Inspired by the innovations of Bob Dylan and the Beatles, in 1965 he decided to take the medium of pop music more seriously and apply it to his own ideas about enlightenment. Although many bands dabbled with psychedelia, Tommy's unique vision went further by using a hallucinogenic catalyst to transcend the barrier of the stage and evoke synesthesia—all of the members of the band, minus John Ike, would ceremonially take LSD and "play the acid" with the intention of extending the effect to the audience through their performance. Unknowingly, he retained the reforming zeal of a Southern preacher while simultaneously extolling a punk ethos.