

Rock & Roll Dope

John Sinclair

1969

The Legal Self Defense (LSD) benefit February 4th was the greatest success in my memory: over 1200 people attended and offered their bread for support, and the LSD Fund netted over \$2200.00 for the community.

A Board of Directors for LSD was set up to handle the disbursement of the money when people need it, and a bank account was opened in the name of Legal Self Defense. The Board comprises Brother Jack Forest, Detroit Captain White Panthers; Brother John Watson, editor of the *South End* newspaper; Brother Pun Plamondon, editor of the *Sun* (Ann Arbor) and Minister of Defense, White Panthers National Office; Brother Alan Gotkin, of the *Fifth Estate* Editorial Group and Minister of Propaganda, Detroit White Panthers; and Revs. James Markunas and Robert Morrison from St. Joseph's Episcopal Church.

The phone numbers for the time being are LSD-Detroit, 831-6800; LSD-Ann Arbor, 761-3223.

The benefit was successful because everyone worked together and because people are ready to get together and work together for the good of the community, that is, for the common good. It was successful also because communications have improved drastically over the last two years and because people have learned that a concert by three major Detroit-Ann Arbor bands is well worth going to, any other considerations notwithstanding. And when it's the 5, the Stooges, and the UP playing to benefit the people as a whole, even more than usual since even the money from the gig went directly to the community as a whole, then it isn't hard for people to make the benefit.

I talk about "successful" because (with two minor exceptions) every benefit in the past has been a failure from the standpoint of raising money for a specific group or cause. (The Festival of People at the old Artists' Workshop in August 1966 netted \$150, and a Trans-Love benefit in August 1967 netted \$400, but that ain't very much). What it means to me is that a community consciousness is really starting to develop, and as it develops it demonstrates its effectiveness as a political and cultural tool just as a lot of us have been saying it will.

Benefits in the past were always useful as killer cultural events the benefit dance/concerts were always more fun than the regular dances and a conscious attempt was always made to create a community consciousness in the people at the dances.

There have been times when the benefits turned into pure religion, pure magic, like the time when all the people in the Ballroom got on stage with the 5 and GOT DOWN, so there was no more separation in the room and everyone got a taste of what we mean by TOGETHER. These things didn't happen by accident (nothing ever does) but were developed by people with the spirit-feel because they had to have that feeling spread. Just like this time. Only this time there were a lot more people involved, and consequently a lot more people were reached and moved.

The radio seems to be the effective factor. Before there was radio in the sense I want to refer to, that is, COMMUNITY RADIO, that is, WABX-FM of the last few months, say since the Rouge Park free concert last summer, before there was radio it was impossible to get the news out and around effectively enough to raise a crowd for anything unless you had the time and money to plan ahead for several weeks and advertise in the straight media. And then it never really worked, because the radio is the perfect advertising media just as the print media is not.

You read about an event some weeks or days in advance and then have to remember when and where it is and who's there and how much it costs and what time it is, and it's just too easy to let it pass. On the radio this cat keeps

telling you so you won't forget, and you can hear him, his voice, and you know if it's worth it or not by the way he sounds.

So when you hear Jerry Rubin, for example, or Dave Dixon, rapping about some event you've just heard about, and they're excited, running it down, giving background, repeating the information over and over all thru the day and night, you know it's going to be good and you make sure you get there. Especially if the effect of the dance is to set up a defense fund so you have some source of help if and/or when you get busted.

I don't know about you, but I always feel better when I go to a dance and know the money's not going to the creeps who own the joint, especially when it's at the Grande. In fact, there was a weird snatch attempt made on some of the benefit money by the bald-headed greed-sucker on the door you know who I mean—which amounted to some \$910, but good old Uncle Russ cleaned up for his partner once more and all the money was restored to the community fund. You know Uncle Russ he's the one who charged you \$5.00 a head to see Procol Harum and the so-called Flying Burrito Brothers last weekend. And \$3.50 for the 5.

But Russ is beautiful in his intentions, anyway, even if it's hard to match them up with what really goes down sometimes. This time he was golden. He thought he was donating the use of the Ballroom as the Grande's part in the community affair, but when his partner got done the community paid \$500 rent, \$200 for police, \$70 to the Hard Core who work there for \$5 a night apiece (yes, even on weekends when it's \$5 to see the Procol Harum they still get \$5 a night apiece, and Toni Wright. the manager of the place, has to buy light bulbs and toilet paper for the Grande out of his own little wages and hope to get reimbursed by the Glantz. That's not the half of it, as they say. Now there's no more light show and no more postcards even, not to mention posters, but the prices are still going up. Looks like it's time for something a little different, maybe? We'll see.)

Anyway, it's still good that the people can rent the Grande Ballroom for a benefit for only \$500 on a Tuesday night. Like Glantz would say where else could you do it? (That's called monopoly capitalism, by the way.) What we need now is for some people to set up the LSD benefits on a regular basis, Russ and Glantz willing, so that there will be a continual flow of money into the fund as long as people are getting busted.

And there seems to be a lot more of that shit going on right now, as if they wanted to get it all in before the people take their power away from them. The police, that is, and the courts, and the prosecutors and the judges, and the bondsmen, and the lawyers who are getting rich on the people's misery and won't do anything to change the fucking system. There are some beautiful exceptions, and I think people know who they are by now, but the rest of that whole network is rotten as ratshit in a sewer. Creeps!

With a community bail fund you start to develop political power, however. If we could get some more lawyers who are into community consciousness rather than suburban playboy consciousness then we'd have something. I'd like someday to charge the police, judges, prosecutors, bondsmen, lawyers, and other crooks with conspiracy to repress and defraud the people and bring in thousands of plaintiffs in the suit, all filing for appropriate damages just as we have been damaged by these scum.

I know a lot of our readers out there don't like to hear this shit and would rather pretend that their plastic peace symbols will save us all, and I know there's a lot of other people who would rather pretend that we don't have any political consciousness and are only doing this shit for a joke or a trip or something, whatever their twisted understanding of the White Panthers might be, and I know there are more people, or maybe the same ones, who want to believe that the people and bands around here are just opportunistic pop stars carrying on revolutionary activity as publicity gimmick or something, but all those people are full of shit. They can't understand this, but they're as bogus and as harmful to the people of the community as the police and the courts.

But I can't get caught up in this shit. If I ever listened to those people I would've stopped doing my work a long time ago, because they were telling me the same shit even then. But I wouldn't listen to them, because they didn't know what the fuck they were talking about.

I would urge you not to listen to anybody don't listen to me either but dig what kind of work they're doing. Who do they live with? What kind of work do they do (and I don't mean, do they have a job, but what is their WORK?), and where does their money go, and is their ass on the line at all times, that is, out there on the line like yours is? What do they look like? Where do they hang out? What kind of music do they listen to? How and when and where and why do they get high? How do they fuck? All these things will tell you something about their culture.

Anybody can say anything in America, but when you listen to what some dude says in the context of his cultural scene then you get the whole sense of what he's saying. No words are absolute only flesh is absolute, because it defines itself. "Power is the ability to define phenomena and make them act in a desired manner" Huey P. Newton, Minister of Defense, Black Panther Party.

And now for the round-up: At the LSD benefit Tuesday, February 4th, 1969, some 1500 people heard Denise Martin sing, saw and felt the UP explode in a dynamite rock and roll frenzy, saw films of the Haight St. riots of 1968, witnessed a magical rite with the incredible Stooges, chanted "OFF THE PIGS" with the Black Panthers in the Newsreel flick of the Panthers by the Panthers, dug Ken Mikolowski read his "Instructions" poems (tear them off the back page of the last *Fifth Estate* and paste them to your wall—or any wall you see, make it yours that way), heard me read some crazed poems in a totally crazed manner, and took part in the culmination, the only possible ending for that holy night the MC5 show.

The stars of the show were the people—all the people all the people—especially Susie S. who took all her clothes off somewhere near the end and joined the 5 on stage grinning over the piano, bare ass naked. But we won't rest until everybody can take their fucking clothes off and grope and roll all over the floor in piles of flesh, magic holy free breathing flesh energy group-grope frenzy! And if anyone ever asks you what'll ever come of rock and roll, or what's the next thing, you tell them GROUP-GROPE, baby!

Because that's what community is all about. And when or if you get busted and need help for bail, or need to know a lawyer's name and number, or a bondsman, call LSD—Legal Self Defense—and they'll tell you what they can. If you are in a band or write or whatever you do and want to get into this thing call LSD and tell them what you can do and when.

The more get together the stronger we are and the closer we get to freedom. If we have a fund to get people out of jail and on their feet immediately upon arrest then the arrests won't be so hard on us and we'll have a place to fight from. And when you can make them stop busting you, then you have demonstrated some power. Talking'll get you nowhere.

Goodbye.



John Sinclair
Rock & Roll Dope
1969

<https://www.fifthestate.org/archive/73-february-20-march-5-1969/rock-roll-dope>
Fifth Estate #73, February 20-March 5, 1969

fifthestate.anarchistlibraries.net