



# Orange Sunshine: The Brotherhood of Eternal Love and Its Quest to Spread Peace, Love, and Acid to the World

*Nicholas Schou*

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**Few stories in the annals of American counterculture are as intriguing or dramatic as that of the Brotherhood of Eternal Love.**

Dubbed the "Hippie Mafia," the Brotherhood began in the mid-1960s as a small band of peace-loving, adventure-seeking surfers in Southern California. After discovering LSD, they took to Timothy Leary's mantra of "Turn on, tune in, and drop out" and resolved to make that vision a reality by becoming the biggest group of acid dealers and hashish smugglers in the nation, and literally providing the fuel for the psychedelic revolution in the process.

Just days after California became the first state in the union to ban LSD, the Brotherhood formed a legally registered church in its headquarters at Mystic Arts World on Pacific Coast Highway in Laguna Beach, where they sold blankets and other countercultural paraphernalia retrieved through surfing safaris and road trips to exotic locales in Asia and South America. Before long, they also began to sell Afghan hashish, Hawaiian pot (the storied "Maui Wowie"), and eventually Colombian cocaine, much of which the Brotherhood smuggled to California in secret compartments inside surfboards and Volkswagen minibuses driven across the border.

They also befriended Leary himself, enlisting him in the goal of buying a tropical island where they could install the former Harvard philosophy professor and acid prophet as the high priest of an experimental utopia. The Brotherhood's most legendary contribution to the drug scene was homemade: Orange Sunshine, the group's nickname for their trademark orange-colored acid tablet that happened to produce an especially powerful trip. Brotherhood foot soldiers passed out handfuls of the tablets to communes, at Grateful Dead concerts, and at love-ins up and down the coast of California and beyond. The Hell's Angels, Charles Mason and his followers, and the unruly crowd at the infamous Altamont music festival all tripped out on this acid. Jimi Hendrix even appeared in a film starring Brotherhood members and performed a private show for the fugitive band of outlaws on the slope of a Hawaiian volcano.

Journalist Nicholas Schou takes us deep inside the Brotherhood, combining exclusive interviews with both the group's surviving members as well as the cops who chased them. A wide-sweeping narrative of sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll (and more drugs) that runs from Laguna Beach to Maui to Afghanistan, *Orange Sunshine* explores how America moved from the era of peace and free love into a darker time of hard drugs and paranoia.

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