

Borrow My Skull



Alex Hampshire

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WE ALL SHINE ON



2026

Alex Hampshire

for Jerry and Bob



Hey you. Over there. Yeah, you... skater kid. Borrow my skull for a minute. Catch a wave. Take a breath. Stand your ground. Be your flavor but learn to respect The Dead, man. Don't you go try & turn it around. As soon as I heard the words "Listen, soy boy you're through here" I knew I was decent. Dig it. Be free. Get bent. Get involved. Do not leave me alone if you claim to be my brother's keeper or one of the twins. Hold this beer. All for one & tea for two.



Hey... kid... are you delusional kid? The 1969 album "Live/Dead" didn't even bring commercial success. No. That didn't come until "Workingman's Dead," but you probably wouldn't care, would you? You don't care about The Dead. You haven't been fully forthcoming so why would you care about the beginning and the end of just about everything? How could you wonder about the universe if you always need a machine, man? What are you even listening to? Probably rap. Maybe emo. You're just like my students. Yes, you remind me of my students. They don't listen to music, OK? Thanks for nothing. Don't get it mixed up. I don't care.



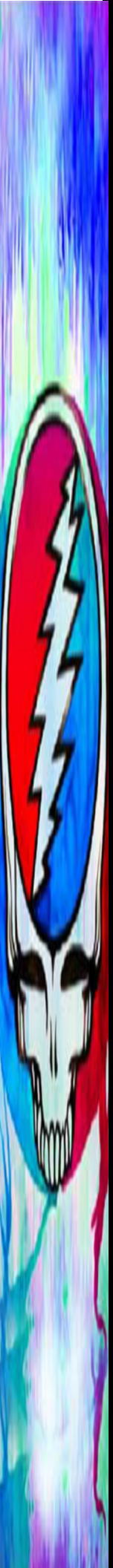
Thanks for having me over, man! Appreciate the IPAs and your unbridled enthusiasm. It all adds up to professionalism, man. I teach a lot so my brain hurts, OK? You don't have anywhere near the influence of The Dead. I brought some beer. Who has the real shit in this shoebox of a neighborhood? I live pretty far from this little shoebox so show me your finest, you hear? I want good shit. Let's hear good shit. Let's listen to what matters. The Dead. I KNOW what a superb record is when I hear it, especially when I'm out West vibing at Red Rocks. I saw where it went down and you weren't even born yet. Ask someone else who has more wisdom. Ask yourself. Ask The Dead.



Hey, skater kid. What exactly do you call yourself anyway? I have a title! What do you even call what you listen to? IT'S FUCK MUSIC. That's right! You like fuck music because you're just a toy. You're just a little skater kid. It's none of your business how the war was won or who fought or what happened because you weren't there, man! You were just a skater kid. So call up your "ride or die" if you don't have any warrants and hop along with your freak train. If you're high quality you're also probably somebody's bitch. I was one once. A slob on the inside yet groovy on the outside. Still somebody's bitch.



You don't realize the importance of The Dead because you are averse to change. If you prefer analog sound to digital of course you'll just argue about how you hate old things, real things, and important things, why don't you fess up and get real? You're telling me The Dead are the worst? Do you just prefer to be a skater kid? The Dead are the only band that matters. I was there, man! I don't know who raised you. We respected elders and leaders before 1990. We communicated with The Dead at a show in glistening Ontario. They sold beer and not a soul was drunk. 21 & tripping. That night The Dead hit the stage. Jerry smiled and reached into his back pocket. He pulled out a limerick I refused to recite. Yep. You were there if you matter to me.



Your call, Junior. Try asking your elders about The Dead for once. Try asking, don't be a bitch. What about "Sugar Magnolia?" "Blossoms blooming head's all empty and I don't care, saw my baby down by the river." It's not your call anymore. Yep. That's right. The Dead, man. They're real. On tour now with Modest Mouse. New guitarist even, look it up. They have evolved. Have you? Why don't we just put on Eyes Of The World? No? Why? Because it isn't fuck music, so it's okay for you to ignore The Dead. Don't you like vinyl?



Do you even have CDs? What are all these tapes doing here? You like tapes? Why? The only decent medium that is truly worthy is a mint chip re-pressing like the one Arista did that I bought for my son when he turned 10 in Haiti. He didn't know what music was until I showed him The Dead. So my 10 year old son doesn't listen to The Dead! He doesn't like fuck music. Not on my watch. I went to see The Dead so I felt a sense of entitlement. What happened? I don't remember. A lot happened. I had to get a ride home from a towny girl who played the harp. She had stories. You know what I mean. She didn't listen to fuck music because she fucked The Dead so I fucked The Dead too.



Hey, skater kid meet psilocybin boy. Do you listen to yourself thinking when you hear me talking or is it just me? Don't go getting upset. It's just a swirly pattern as a variable with a beaded lampshade as the constant. Get your head out of your vert ramp and feel the groove for a second. Two tabs and you should be good. I was pretty good before I wasn't. Now I'm here. Be here now and be free if you like the breeze. It's just a swirly pattern and a beaded lampshade.



Quality of life means quality of home. I've been so thrilled to see what The Dead are up to these days. Pins and needs. Edge of my wicker chair. Supposedly, there is a reunion coming up. Implausible? Not so much. I first saw The Dead play with my old lady's crew. They were dead freaks. I went to a concert. Something happened. It was not like a mind-blowing far out, just a calm and slightly beautiful, iridescent far out. Not exactly a choir of angels, but some incredibly holy, pure, spiritual light. Must have been a lifetime ago. I knew if I related to them I must be pure, real, and dead myself. I was right.



Relax skater kid. Think about how silly you sound when you talk about how you hate The Dead. It's skater talk. Relax a little. Ease up, okay? Maybe if you lightened up you would find new popularity. You don't know what you really care about if you don't care about The Dead. Let's go downtown and do some shopping and find a good hi-fi turntable. We'll go downtown. I'll help you find a new needle for your new turntable, man. If I show you the way, maybe you can pretend to care a little. Judging by your entrance, I can tell I'm likely wrong.



I get boring. I feel badass. People listen. They never had a proper father so they listen to me. The reason they listen is I can't complain. The reason I can't complain is because people listen. After all, I am a boring badass with a full arsenal of trippy three-color prints full of echo, flash, ornery, and roar. I sell these prints for a silly hello-goodbye. You're getting older. Soon you will look like me. We'll look the same in the end. Don't get so worked up.



The Fisherman and The Homeowner don't scare me when I go fly fishing. Guess what I found? A message of hope. You made it through a whole storm in your motorized wheelchair. Such is the bitterness of the double shot with a splash of almond milk. Value as inquiry. Recognition of merit. "Turn me on my backside please." Don't forget *someone* managed The Dead once. Collective, threat, action, and coercion - all of which are more therapeutic when it comes to the edge of the storm. White squall calling all sheet metal maniacs. An upsetting part of a good apartment where one is filmed reenacting the life of another. Dry goods. Yeah, I know. You think you know what you're doing but it's all *too* familiar if you actually think you'll get paid.



We're both alive and listening to a live 1971 recording of The Dead.
I only rent my house out on weekdays. You can see it if you want.
Do you expect us to care if you think we aren't doing what we should be?



There was a quiet sort of place below where the Highway People were eating lunch once near Pasadena. It was sort of quiet even though you could hear several faraway shrieks from passersby. Very quiet. I once ate an avocado wrap and overheard a tambourine in the distance. They were shrieking at my naked body which was only naked because I heard the true call. That was a while ago, this very day. Sometimes people need drugs more than food, like yours truly.



Compromise for choices and choices for compromise. Cake & Thai stick. So willingly deferrable once an occurrence has taken place. The world only lasts if it is defeated by The Dead and eventually joins The Dead. Theatre definition of assault: I lift my shirt above my knees but immodesty is prioritized over fear of God. Fear of destiny is usually possibly found gleaming around casually. Keep doubting the power of the song and tambourine. I heard you skater kid. You go, "you haven't even seen my John Cena impersonation. I was seen on camera giving a high-five to God."



In the beginning, there was common sense which was fundamentally good and for some provided comfort but for others provided a shield of vulnerability. In the end, there was The Dead and all of their worldly knowledge. Good things are possible given nothing goes wrong. I still enjoy your stumbling. The briefest experience, the bigger reward. Nothing went wrong and you would only think so if you were lost. No matter how you look at it, from Deputy Dog to Union Rep. The briefest experience is somewhere in a field with good dreams jamming 'other side through the center.'



Calmly, I remind myself of the scent of vetiver, mixed with the thought that I was once a toy. A fingerless glove. Why do you constantly work without the promise of renewal? Why get attached without reward? Loss of compass? Mix up of spirit? Vetiver spreads into the air with you and me and The Dead.

