

CHAPTER 4

On saying yes to hippies, 68ers and collectivists

Many remember 1968 as the breakthrough of the youth rebellion, but for me, the rebellion happened in the summer of 1967, when I broke away from the military and Lotte's bourgeois lifestyle. As we all know, there was plenty of work, but rooms for young people were impossible to find. When I trawled through the room listings throughout Greater Copenhagen, I only found the sad little rooms of single old ladies with shared kitchens and toilets. Instead, I tried renting empty shop premises, and in Pilestræde I came across a lame, eccentric antique dealer who had a shop in a backyard in Vesterbro that I could take over if I paid him DKK 3,000 under the table. I no longer remember the monthly rent, but the premises were extremely disgusting, painted completely black and with colored plastic for the windows, as they had last been a porn shop and therefore also equipped with a counter and high bar stools. Previously, this back house had housed a coffin shop, so I was lucky enough to take it over with quite a few children's coffins that had been used to store the very juiciest porn, which I could now entertain my coffin-loving guests with. It was, after all, a bit of a rebellion for a priest's son, as it was before porn was released, although that sort of thing didn't exactly interest us youngsters in the post-pill era. Two years later, the streets of the neighborhood were the first in the world to be plastered with porn shops as a result of the conservative Minister of Justice Knud Thestrup's own rebellion against the bourgeoisie. It's not easy for me today to understand the rapid change that I and millions of young people around the world went through at that time.

Where did the impulses come from, who influenced us and why were we so easily influenced? I found myself - and was constantly told - that I was very slow, even hard of hearing, to the signals. For example, I continued to be a member of Conservative Youth and go to meetings with the chairman of Conservative Students, Viggo Fischer, while membership numbers plummeted during the period that the party has since described as its worst time of crisis. I tried to hold on to some kind of bourgeois decency and felt, with my Jutlandic mindset, that the young Copenhageners were far too flighty and swaggering. On the other hand, I was probably more open to people than most and immediately filled my rooms with all kinds of scum. And when you move in with those you are prejudiced against, you quickly influence each other, as I have always said in my lectures.

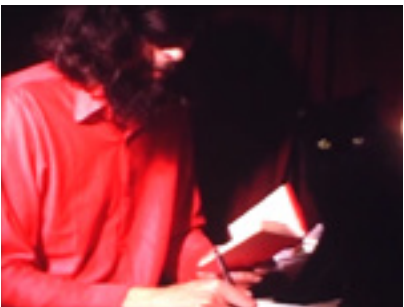
But first I gathered a few odds and ends for the coffin shop, as we couldn't all sleep in coffins. At the antique shop, I had found a wonderful antique Majolica oil lamp hanging from the ceiling in long black metal chains. In the neighboring alleys, there were plenty of peddlers with fun, outdated furniture, where I also found some antique phonographs with large funnels and cranks and a large selection of old 45 vinyl records from "His Masters Voice" - the one with the listening dog. After some time, I persuaded Kjeld, a reliable and colorless friend, to rent a room in the front house. I was most interested in his beautiful Steinway grand piano, which we transported into my coffin room, where it took up almost a third of the space. To me, it was a bit of a Rolls Royce status symbol, and I loved it when Kjeld practiced on it, because I hoped that in this way I could entice some young, beautiful girls from the Academy of Music to rent my other rooms. However, I was sorely disappointed every time they turned me down when they saw the rest of my circus. The only heat was a gas radiator on which I had placed two large strangler snakes in a terrarium so that I could regulate the behavior of these cold-blooded wonders by turning the heat up and down. I'd also found a red squirrel scurrying around the walls at night after I'd wallpapered them with brown hessian. How these creatures got along with the black cat I had inherited from Ole Wivel is beyond me, but we lived together very harmoniously, like in a Noah's Ark.



We eat by the light of an oil lamp and pass the food to a lodger in the bed above



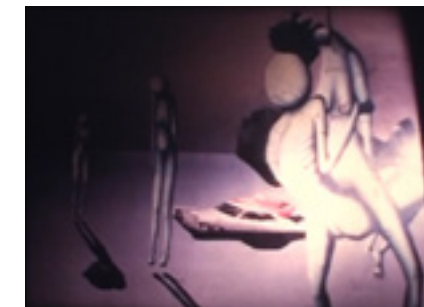
Kjeld entertains on his Steinway or Berthe on one of the phonographs.



Red has always been my favorite color, and for many years I always wore a red shirt to my lectures in the US. But in the red '68s, the shirt would probably be interpreted differently in my short film, when I deliberately provocative sat with Mao's little red one, which I never read, and hammered away on my big black typewriter.



In the midst of this raw hygge, I actually had a bourgeois television next to my bed. But when the discussion was going on in the media about how much it would cost society to switch to color television, I painted my excellent black-and-white TV with these colors to show that it was possible to buy "color television" without financially affecting the poor in developing countries if Viet Cong flags are seen in front of it.



We tried to make sense of Lars Thomsen's "cozy" images by seeing them as symbols of the contemporary genocide against the Vietnamese.

When I worked in the Meat district for a while, I was allowed to take home a beautiful horse head that I wanted to put up in there. But first the meat on the outside had to rot, so I left it out in the yard for several weeks, with the result that there were soon demands to remove the smell from my menagerie, which was driving the neighbors crazy.

Soon I had to build bunk beds for the many beachcombers who poured onto the floors at night. If I will ever be remembered for anything, it will undoubtedly be for immediately starting to build bunk beds to accommodate as many overnight guests as possible every time I got a new home. Especially when, like here, I only had one room to live in. I don't remember hearing the word "commune" before I went to America, so I dare to say that I invented it myself without knowing the concept - just like many others did during the years of rebellion and housing shortages, without realizing that we were part of a trend. At the same time, we were probably more individualistic than previous generations, and to demonstrate our uniqueness, many of us ended up wearing big, thick sheepskin fur coats from the Finnish Winter War, even though these were meant to look the same and blend in with the snow - not to stand out from the crowd.

As an academic child in high school, I had despaired of not being able to keep up with the working-class children, and since I was good at drawing, I saw myself as a future great artist. For the first year, this discreet middle-class charm could be seen in my shop premises facing Dannebrogsgade, where I advertised more art than politics. From the very first moment, I attracted quite a few aspiring artists, including Lars Thomsen, who was allowed to exhibit his macabre Salvador Dali-inspired freaks on my living room walls, from where bloody eyes and mutilated bodies stared down at us. When we had new guests over, we would raise the mood by playing the avant-garde music of the time - Luciano Berio's "La Visage" or Stockhausen's innovative works - in the haze. Other young artists who have since become quite well known also had their first art exhibitions here. Among them were visual artist Tom Krøjer and lamp designer Erik Mortensen.

Since I was preoccupied with the French New Wave, together with the art patron John Hunov, we had the Danish premiere of a Godard

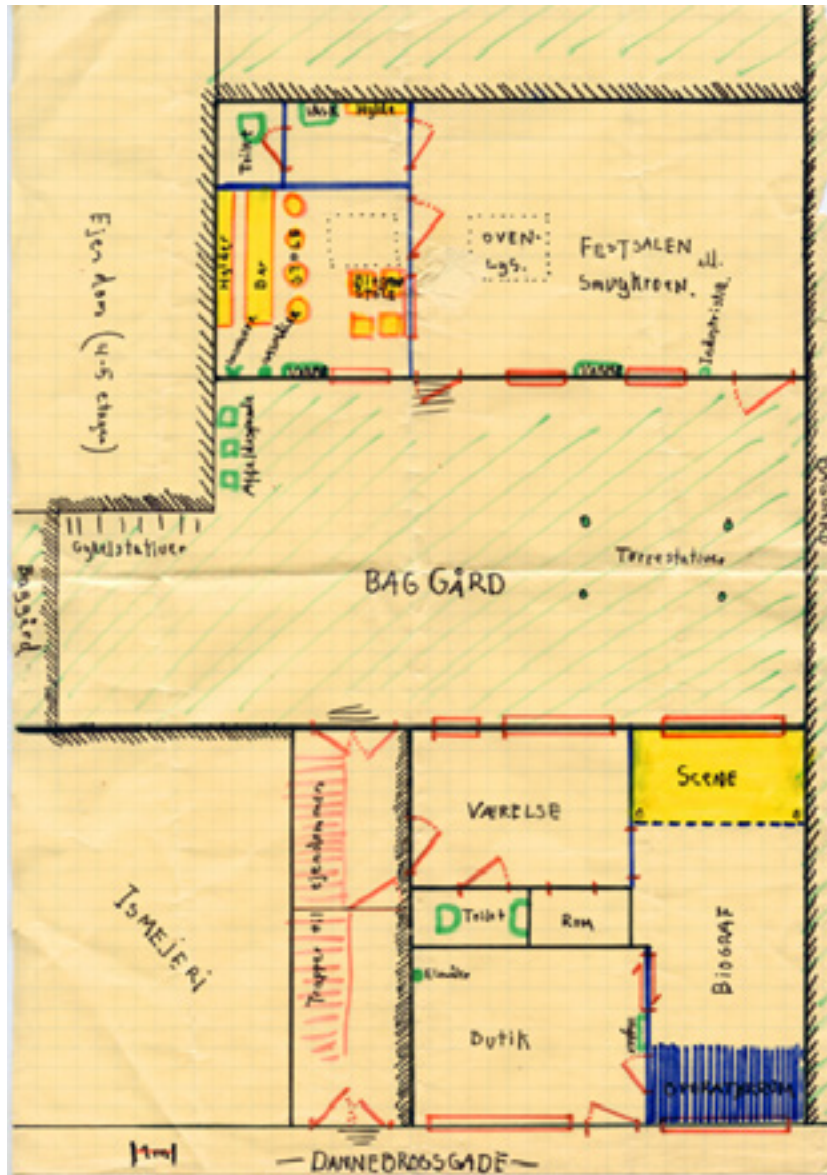
film in our little cinema - which was even smaller than the ice cream parlor next door, but with real cinema chairs I had found in a disused porn cinema. We were disappointed that Carlton wouldn't take it. To my surprise, Erik Mortensen and I are still good friends, but he was incredibly self-destructive in his artistic youth. When we were out drinking, he was always desperately throwing himself in front of trams, so how he survived to do large exhibitions and design lamps for Louis Poulsen is a mystery to me.

Jacob's slum

I'll never forget the day a well-dressed, well-educated black man - an African, I think - saw my ad. After a quick look at my slum conditions, which I imagined must be a step up from where he came from in Africa, he turned around in offense and never returned. The disappointment hit me so deeply that I have a feeling my involvement in the black cause already started here. But apart from those who rented the five small rooms, everyone else stayed with me for free in my large back room, and I don't remember ever inviting any of them myself.

The first was American Steve Washburn, who had fled to avoid being sent to Vietnam and who was undoubtedly the one who influenced me the most in an anti-American direction. He soon dragged other well-to-do American Vietnam refugees with him, and one day even 18-year-old Kristen Godfrey, whom he had met homeless on the streets after she had run away from her very wealthy family in Canada. I had no idea at the time that this strong-willed woman would be my life's salvation from the downward spiral I was digging myself into. Initially by becoming my girlfriend and, by virtue of this elevated status, immediately setting about evicting as many of the other residents as she could get away with - only for new ones to quickly reappear.

Refined as she still was at the time, she didn't like the fact that the others could lie around and watch us having sex together - some of



My floor plan of the entire menagerie, while there was still a bar from the porn cinema era in the back house to the left. In the "banquet hall" I lived with all my lodgers. The front house I first rented the room to my classmate Kjeld, while the artists got the shop and the cinema. Later, the Maoists rented the entire front building.

them even from the ingeniously elevated bunk bed I had built over the blue sofa Lotte and I had bought in our duplex only a year earlier. Through the hashish fumes, I couldn't see that there was a problem. "Well, they don't have anywhere to move to," I protested. But in her red-haired temper, she even started throwing knives at me to get her way. On one occasion, when I ducked quickly, the knife dug deep into the wooden wall above the door, above which I had also hung my crutch from the Life Guard as a proud trophy from my victory over the military. With this menacing sword of Damocles hanging over my now happy head, I learned that the most important of my cherubs throughout my life were often the ones who initially attacked me with "flaming swords", guns and verbal threats, but in reality meant me well. And sure enough, Kristen managed to get most of them chased out for a short time by threatening them that they could be nailed to the door themselves.

It was in this setting that I now tried to live up to my disappointed parents' expectations of getting a high school diploma by completing it at the National Student Course. Every evening at 5 p.m., I took the heavy steps up Frederiksberg Allé to the course on Münstervej, where I quickly fell into the same unhappy pattern as at my old state school in Esbjerg. Now with the difference that I had to work from early morning, as SU was only introduced three years later to remedy the "social inequality" that I could clearly see in the class. Some of us worked so hard all day long that we practically slept in class. Two-thirds of us dropped out quickly, and I can't help but admire those who did. Perhaps most notably Flemming Moesgård, who worked all day as a butcher but wanted to study medicine instead. How he found time for homework in the middle of his life with marriage and children is beyond me, but he later became a consultant surgeon at Herlev Hospital and once came to one of my lectures at Rigshospitalet. And Vagn Alstrup, who often came to see me, went on to become a leading researcher and author before he was shot dead during a robbery in Africa in 2015.

Every morning I would arrive at 6 am in Kødbyen, where I would sit in a glass cage all day and accept payment from butchers all over the city. When I returned home in the afternoon, my house was so crowded



The only picture I have of Steve Washburn, who had a transformative impact on me in two ways. Firstly by dragging Kristen Godfrey, above, home with me and secondly by raising my awareness of Vietnam.

that it was impossible to do my homework, and when I returned from the course at 11pm, they had all been drinking and smoking so much that they partied all night around my bed. Now my home also became a favorite place to hang out for my schoolmates. Most of them lived in small, boring rental rooms with older ladies where they couldn't party. But two things puzzled me from that time. Firstly, how I even found the time to write long diary entries every day, and secondly, how almost nothing of the external politics is mentioned in my diaries. Each page of the diary consists of long lists of who came to my house and drank Priest's Thoughts, Nun's Blood and Ox's Blood (as the wine was called back then) or just beer or a cup of tea. Even my old high school friends from Esbjerg, most of whom studied at DTU and lived in boring dormitories, found it interesting to come to my place under the pretext of buying hashish "inside Jacob's bulge".

Most of us since so reviled 68-ers continued outwardly to appear with all the bourgeoisie we were surrounded by. Only one of them was as long-haired as me, just as Erni from my new course class, in her barefoot beauty's fluttering home-knitted dresses, also appeared quite hippie-like. I experienced the same tendency when I arrived at Berkeley

four years later, from where so much of the cultural revolution had emanated and inspired us all over the world, but where perhaps 95 percent of the students were still deeply bourgeois and simply did their homework just like previous generations. Only musically did they seem to keep up with the fads of the time, while I also seemed reactionary when I continued to play my parents' classical music, such as Carl Nielsen's "The Fog is Lifting", during their visits to my dense hashish fogs. I felt no need to buy the revolutionary music of the new era myself, because my friends all had a demonstrative need to play it for me. If only to get me out of my West Jutland peasantry by bringing all their own records and, in the sharing economy of the time, leaving them with me.

It was probably the Maoist Per Bonde who left me my first two new records in exchange for storing some of his hashish, and I'm probably not the only one who associates the music of youth with the boyfriend you experienced it with. I still get emotional when I hear "When a Man Loves a Woman" by Percy Sledge, which I associate as much with Kristen and 1967 as Procol Harum's "A Whiter Shade of Pale" with Lotte and 1966.

I'm not going to try to sociologically depict this time when all of us 68ers really started to change, because others have already done that. Rather, I want to depict how many of the stereotypes of the time went over my head, who, as always, said yes to what came without much reflection. One of the stereotypes was how we were all having sex left and right, but most of my schoolmates were in just as steady relationships as before. For many young people, a sexual relationship starts with an encounter in the nightlife, and when I think about how few nightclubs we had back then compared to today, I have no doubt that today's young people are far more adventurous than we 68ers were.

I've made notes in my diaries about all sorts of things. For example, I have noted down all the 217 cinema films I had seen, from childhood Morten Korch in the village's traveling cinema to the political rebellion films that largely contributed to my exodus to the United States. And there are notes on all 20 relationships I had from the age of 18 to my departure at 22.



With Kristen Godfrey and a random lodger on the garbage bins in the backyard in the fall of 1967. I have no idea who took these only pictures from the Dannebrogsgade era, as I only shot a single film from there myself.



Kristen with some of our guests at the lakes - truly for some fresh air. The girl in front was 16-year-old runaway Norwegian hippie Anne Louise. I woke up several times when she was dancing above me in my bed (though I had no relationship with her). Suddenly one day she disappeared, and it wasn't until 50 years later that she showed up at my lecture and invited me home.

With only about five sexual relationships a year, I again felt left behind by the wild activity I saw around me in the few nightclubs. But it wasn't just because I wasn't good enough to dance. No, being the redneck that I was, I always ended up consistently and patiently taking all the ones the others didn't want. I was too reluctant to take the initiative, so I always stood around until just before closing time at five in the morning, waiting for some drugged-out girl with the same problem to get it together and take a shot at me. I couldn't bring a new date home to my own crowded slum and demonstrate my drunken impotence in front of so many people. No, the exciting part for me was exploring other people's more normal homes. Here I found their life stories - in settings they themselves had created and decorated in the spirit and music of the time - far more attractive than the indifferent sexual relationships that inevitably followed in an unconscious state in the morning.

It goes without saying that these women, who felt rejected and discarded when the smart, attractive and intelligent had long since been snatched up by their male counterparts, felt very much 'left over' because of the failures they had suffered in life. I was always so gripped by their stories of rape, incest and all sorts of mental health issues that it didn't help my sexual appetite. Funnily enough, in my diary, their names, ages and problems are usually accompanied by the words L.B., F.B. and A.B., which is code for Laurit's Betjent, Fingerbøllet and Andy's Bar, where us losers could go and find each other in the nightlife when most bars closed around one or two o'clock.

Another place where I felt like a complete failure was at Rudolf Berg's STD clinic in Tietgensgade. For the two or three times I ended up there, I often sat in the waiting room opposite the more attractive types who I remembered had rejected me. The girls might sit there blushing slightly, while the boys boasted that they were "jubilees" - that is, the honorary title you could pin on yourself when you had been treated for gonorrhea seven times. That it was taken so lightly in those years, before the more incurable STDs came on the market, says a lot about our freedom and carefree attitude, which later generations have probably envied.

So even though I had to learn to live a much looser sexual life in my later vagabond years in the USA, in retrospect I have to admit that my life has been a complete failure, as I never managed to become a "jubilarian".

I also think that the myths of posterity about the sexual licentiousness of the 70s collectives have been exaggerated wildly. I only got to see a few of these communes before I went to the US, but my impression was that the people there were in steady relationships, while it was in the dorms that things got wild. For example, I loved it when my cousin Anne at Grønjordskollegiet invited me to their monkey parties, because they all had single rooms where you could express yourself freely and quickly swap partners. In my diary, the abbreviation "G.K." as one of my best scoring spots, because I could borrow a room there if I had a date that I couldn't freely express myself with under the many eyes of my own slum collective. The biggest social problem I experienced among the women who picked me up at G.K. was with a Kierkegaard-studying religious scholar who declared himself a sufferer of nymphomania. I perceived it as an intriguing religious problem, as I had not heard the word in West Jutland, and therefore willingly let myself be seduced to her room on the 3rd floor to hear more about it. However, her suffering was so great that it was not in my power to remedy it. I felt so bad about this that I never went back to her and avoided anyone who reminded me of her.

Lisbeth, Linda and ...

One dreary rainy morning in the winter of 1968, Kristen Godfrey suddenly stood up and said "I think I will go to Italy today, I am tired of the Danish weather." I asked how this 18-year-old girl was going to get there, knowing she had no money. "I'm hitchhiking," she said and then left. I was speechless as Italy was something very distant to me, having only been there on a camping trip with my parents after weeks of driving. In that way, she was the first person, besides Thorkild at the folk high school, who taught me that borders and countries were something you just crossed without money and problems.



Silly photo booth picture with Lisbeth from 1968.

While she was away, Steve took me to Pilegården in Pilestræde. In my diary, two women are recorded on the same date in January 1968 under P.G., and they were both instrumental in making me a true '68er by sharpening my social and political commitment. That evening, I found myself sitting next to a sweet little girl with long reddish hair who needed to tell me her story of suffering. Her name was Linda. It was early in the evening, so I wondered why someone was already trying to pick me up. It had to be serious, so I decided to walk home with her. But at the other end of the room sat an unusually beautiful girl with short-cropped hair and was heavily courted by men. She was chatting away and enjoying the attention, but at the same time she was smiling across the smoke-filled room at me, so I was annoyed that I had already let someone claim me. Lisbeth, as she was called, had apparently long since found a solution to this problem, because at one point she got up with one of the men she had scored to leave. But on her way out, she stopped by and gave me a kiss and a note with her name and address. "I expect to see you again soon," she said. I was optimistic that this could be a serious relationship, whereas Linda would probably just be one of the usual one-night stands.

It wasn't, because that night Linda told me about the social distress she and her boyfriend had been in when they had a child together, which had led him to commit a bank robbery for which he had been jailed for eight years. I later found out that he was in the prison that Lisbeth's father was the director of. There is no doubt that my relationship with Linda in her small apartment in Jægersborggade with a screaming child by our side would have ended after a single night if her desperation had not shown me a previously unknown social need in the lowest working class, which I had so far been blind to in the midst of the welfare state's boundless security and optimism. When Linda had supported her boyfriend in the bank robbery where he had robbed DKK 45,000, I felt a certain fascination at suddenly living with a kind of bank robber and questioned her about how they had planned it all, while at the same time hoping that Lisbeth's father would not release him prematurely so that he would find me in his bed.

Linda felt completely alone with the baby, and even though we were complete opposites socially, I started hanging out with her wherever she felt at home. Not least in the smoky beverages around Istedgade, where her father was a pianist for dancing Greenlanders and socially disadvantaged people. The depth of these people's individual problems was roughly inversely proportional to their loud urge to make racist statements about "negroes", but I couldn't help but like them. It was a world so different from the one I knew from my previous nightlife among the bourgeoisie scum, and in many ways I feel that there is a straight line from Linda to the many black "welfare mothers" I would later end up living with in the US.

Lisbeth, on the other hand, was a two years older pedagogy student who had been seduced into communism by a former boyfriend who had been to Cuba. I could feel that the ravages of time were eating away at my former conservative views, but going from there to sleeping with communism was still a big step.

And when, through my semi-criminal "intoxication" with Linda, I began to feel social indignation, it was further sharpened by Lisbeth's categorical and convincing explanations. The very prohibition of being able to say "my boyfriend is a communist" somehow had a strange attraction to me, even though Lisbeth never convinced me. Perhaps because I felt that it was mostly a fad among the pedagogy students who had been fascinated to see how fantastic the kindergartens were in Czechoslovakia with teachers who all had to learn to sing and play without becoming die-hard Stalinists.

The latter was confirmed to me that same year when we both went to a demonstration against the Soviet invasion and subjugation of Czechoslovakia's experiment with "socialism with a human face". Lisbeth made me better at putting my experiences with Linda's proletarian life into a political context, but it goes without saying that my fascination with sleeping with a "bank robber" and a "communist" at the same time was not exactly conducive to loving sexual relations. So in that respect, I probably failed in my relationship with both of them by seeing them as templates and not as people.

However, my relationship with Lisbeth evolved. When it was time to graduate after the first year of my student course, I was so far behind in my homework that I tried to save the exam by moving in with her in Jerichausgade. But it was like getting my fingers even more in the pie. Because here we were surrounded by Carlsberg's brewery workers in the now demolished neighboring apartments with thin partitions between us. Not only did some of the working class of the time make noise around the clock with loud arguments, but they also partied incessantly. And when brewery workers partied, it wasn't with beer, which they could drink ad libitum all day long at work, but with wine and stronger spirits.

When Lisbeth had a television, I also started to really feel the '68 impulses from the outside. Besides Dubček's experiment with socialism in Czechoslovakia, which infected leftists all over the world, the Vietnamese Tet Offensive made everyone start to believe that they could really beat the Americans. And right around that time, the world was struck with horror at the My Lai massacre.

But I was most shaken on April 4, when I remember sitting in the kitchen when we heard that Martin Luther King had been assassinated. I had followed his and the blacks' civil rights struggle throughout my high school years, and even Lisbeth, who was always so mouthy, was completely speechless. We couldn't help but approve of the desperate race riots that immediately broke out in hundreds of American cities, and now everyone, well into the bourgeois ranks, started talking about how the US was heading towards fascism. Not least because of all the democracies that the US had overthrown and replaced with military dictatorships throughout our youth - most recently the year before in Greece with the help of the CIA. On top of all this, there was the month-long May Day uprising in France, where day after day we sat glued to the television and followed this new French revolution, where the suspense for a long time was whether de Gaulle would commit a coup d'état to use the military to put down the rebellion.

This student rebellion quickly spread to the whole world, including Copenhagen, with demands such as "Break the Professorship" and "Co-determination Now". Although neither Lisbeth nor I were students, we were completely caught up in the atmosphere and had to join the rebellion ourselves. So instead of moving in with her in an attempt to calm down enough to graduate, there was no doubt that the books had to be replaced with cobblestones and paint. Quite literally, because I don't forget how Lisbeth was scolded one day at the seminary for showing up with cobblestones instead of books in her bag, and we were now shuttling between the American, Soviet and Greek embassies, all located in the same area.

I have since watched several movies about what motivated millions of nice, bourgeois French students to suddenly take to the barricades. I have no doubt why we did it. When, to our regret, we didn't swing together sexually, we could at least compensate by making revolution together. Because we could mindfuck each other when we sat drinking red wine in her beautiful red velvet sofas. No one could exaggerate situations like Lisbeth by putting everything on edge, but at the same time see the fun in them when she retold them. My parents didn't like her very much, as I think they felt she was using her charm to seduce me away from my civic duties. Although Lisbeth actually had a petty bourgeoisness in her that I



From my short film with Lisbeth, where I tried to capture her seductive, blushing gaze, which I loved.



On a canal cruise with Lisbeth and "Ole Wivel's cat", which Lisbeth also loved. We were both devastated when it ran away after two years.

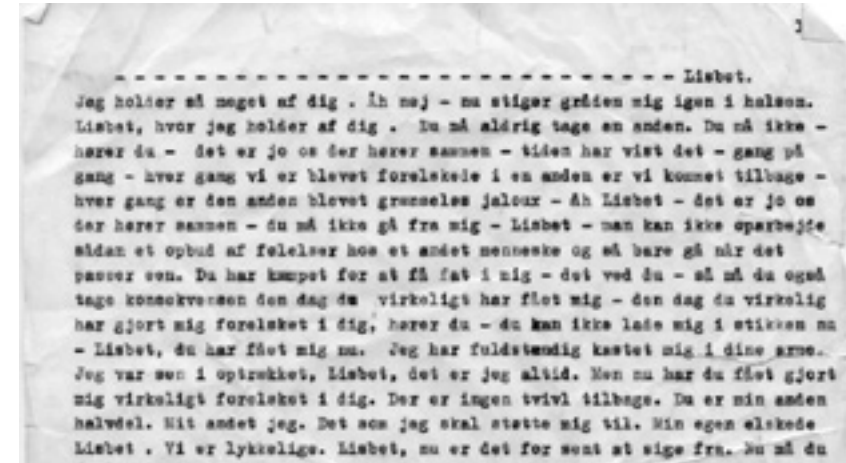
sought refuge in a time when everything was in turmoil.

Musically, I associate our comfortable red velvet revolution with The Velvet Underground and their sexy "banana record", which we heard over and over again that spring along with The Doors' "Waiting for the Sun". Gasolin also played a role for us because of their famous first wooden cart, which we had borrowed to move furniture ourselves. Or maybe this is one of the many tall tales Lisbeth later told me with her tendency to exaggerate. In any case, this Kristianshavner story had little to do with our eventual downfall, because in our later years, we met every evening after student courses at Fingerbøllet in Wildersgade.

It was the intellectual meeting place of the time for, among others, students from the newly started Film School nearby, which was also occupied during the uprising. Lisbeth, who like most people didn't see any particular intellectual light in me, soon became deeply fascinated by several of these smart students and couldn't be dragged home before closing time. By then she had charmed her way into so many beers that we usually couldn't cycle home, but had to walk the long way home to Carlsberg after the sun had risen and only a few hours before I had to go to work. My job was now in a carpet cleaning company far out in Amager, so I had to cycle back the same way soon after returning home. Needless to say, it was impossible to do homework this way, and soon I started leaving Lisbeth with her homework, which she increasingly found excuses to spend the night with.

Actually, in the spirit of the times, this shouldn't be a big problem. At Fingerbøllet, I often met Kristen, my other girlfriend, who still occasionally stayed with me in Dannebrogsgade, while living with her other boyfriend, Søren. As long as they only "came home" once in a while, this sharing economy of freedom could thrive. But suddenly, in the midst of the already overwhelming feeling of powerlessness during exam time, Lisbeth could no longer come home. Had I lived in the crowded Dannebrogsgade, I probably wouldn't have even noticed, but here in our wonderful togetherness, I was completely unprepared for the paralyzing feeling of loneliness and was gripped by strong jealousy. I began to conjure up a fantasy about how much I loved Lisbeth and didn't want to lose her. At Fingerbøllet I tried to persuade her to return home, but now I saw her with a guy called Erik Sløjfebinder. He lived in an attractive apartment right behind Fingerbøllet with a shared backyard, and just the thought that she had conquered our hot spot made me extra jealous.

In the same backyard, Erni, my hippie classmate whom I was also in love with, had moved in with Allan, a friend of my folk high school friend Thorkild, as she had left her Lars around the same time. In the growing feeling that everyone had ganged up on me, I tried to send messages through Erni to Lisbeth to return. I started drinking out of self-pity, and I drank more and more to get the courage to go out



----- Lisbet.
Jeg holder så meget af dig . In nej - nu stiger gråden mig igen i halsen.
Lisbet, hvor jeg holder af dig . Du må aldrig tage en anden. Du må ikke -
hører du - det er jo os der hører sammen - tiden har vist det - gang på
gang - hver gang vi er blevet forelskede i en anden er vi kommet tilbage -
hver gang er den anden blevet grænseløs jaloux - Åh Lisbet - det er jo os
der hører sammen - du må ikke gå fra mig - Lisbet - man kan ikke oparbejde
sådan et opbud af følelser hos et andet menneske og så bare gå når det
passer ven. Du har kæmpet for at få fat i mig - det ved du - så må du også
tage konsekvensen den dag du virkelig har fået mig - den dag du virkelig
har gjort mig forelsket i dig, hører du - du kan ikke lade mig i stikken nu
- Lisbet, du har fået mig nu. Jeg har fuldstændig kastet mig i dine arme.
Jeg var søn i optøkket, Lisbet, det er jeg altid. Men nu har du fået gjort
mig virkelig forelsket i dig. Der er ingen tvivl tilbage. Du er min anden
halvdel. Mit andet jeg. Det som jeg skal støtte mig til. Min egen elskede
Lisbet . Vi er lykkelige. Lisbet, nu er det for sent at sige fra. Du må du

This draft is probably one of the most self-indulgent things I've ever written, but it says something about the desperate feelings I was suddenly getting myself worked up about in those days. I don't think I ever got to show it to Lisbeth.

there. After that, I don't really remember what happened and have mostly been told by Lisbeth and the other witnesses. But one night, in a huge fire, I climbed up to the roof above Fingerbøllet and Erik Sløjfebinder's house and could see them in the bed below me from the skylight. I don't know if it was conscious or not, but they remember that I suddenly came flying down through the window like a Batman with shards of glass all around me.

After the shock, with the assistance of guests at Fingerbøllet, they forcibly lifted me into a taxi and took me to Rigshospitalet's emergency room. Here I was held by some nurses, but suddenly I tore myself free and started running towards the revolving doors at the end of a long corridor. Instead of opening them, I jumped - solely to impress Lisbeth as an old high jumper - through the small glass panes that sat just over a meter up on the large wooden doors. I got through unscathed and fled down Blegdamsvej, where I tripped in the dark and fell into an excavation. Here the police caught up with me and caught me, after which I was handcuffed and taken to the psychiatric ward at Frederiksberg Hospital and anesthetized. I remember the actual jump through the glass panes of the large swinging doors, , and the deeply impressed Lisbeth has since entertained people with "how amazing a high jumper Jacob is - through glass panes!"

Deeply confused, I woke up in a straitjacket on the closed door to find the man lying in the hospital bed opposite me in convulsive laughter. Again and again he exclaimed: "How the hell did you, Jacob, end up here?" He was one of the many hash wrecks who had come to stay with me in Dannebrogsgade, where he had always seen me as the only restrained and responsible one when the others were doing all their experiments and acid trips. Not once had they seen me stoned, he said, slightly annoyed, which in turn made me feel inferior and lost behind a carriage. I tried to hush him for fear that others would recognize me in the large common room, but I think it was at least an hour before his hash-psychotic laughter calmed down.

In the afternoon, my father showed up from West Jutland, summoned by Lisbeth. Naturally, he was deeply concerned about his son, whose downfall in the hash den in Dannebrogsgade he had been following from a distance for some time. I experienced that whole week as a dissident in Brezhnev-era psychiatric institutions, as they gave me a heavy dose of pills that made me completely forget Lisbeth. When I was released one sad, foggy day and moved back to Dannebrogsgade, my feelings had changed. Emotionally, after my stay in the closed ward, I was no longer a security junkie. Lisbeth came back to me quickly after her little affair, but even though I let the flowers she had given me as an apology wither for a whole year on my desk with a note saying: "Flowers from Lisbeth, do not remove," she meant nothing to me anymore. From then on, the relationship only took on political dimensions, although after demonstrations and parties she would occasionally spend the night at my place.

Many years later, a psychologist concluded that two of the mental disabilities I've been carrying around ever since stem from that experience. For example, I learned never to give myself so much in love that I could be hurt again. And I learned that people are only on loan. I don't think I've ever been seriously jealous since, and in all my subsequent relationships I've given my partners as much freedom as was practically possible.

Because each time I discovered that, after external challenges, the relationship was much better afterwards, reaching new, unknown and redemptive dimensions. In the love market, I became both a liberal and a socialist at the same time, and without this psychological flaw I would never have been able to make "American Pictures". I think of all the times in my vagabond years when I was on the verge of ending up in a marriage of security and even wealth, but ended up burning the bridges behind me in order to get "further down the road."

If some of this moral outrage can be traced back to the upheaval Erik Sløjfebinder caused for me in May 1968, then I am in many ways deeply indebted to him. It is often only late in life that I realize who I owe the most to. Pain makes you evolve, and without such knowledge, how would you survive the pain and then look back on it with joy? Of course, the experience has made me good friends with Erik Sløjfebinder, who laughs every time I thank him for his contribution to "American Pictures". When the movie about my life, "My Life in Pictures", premiered at the Folkemødet on Bornholm in 2016, he was the first person in the theater. "Why did you come all the way over here for that movie?" I asked. "Well, I thought there would be something about me in it," he replied, laughing.

One lump too many

After my terrifying sidestep into bourgeois togetherness, I felt reassured that safety was not expecting anything from anyone and letting it all flow freely around me - the exact opposite of the horrifying loneliness I had felt in togetherness when Lisbeth didn't come home at night. A loneliness that I had desperately tried to soothe through the abuse of Carlsberg's golden beers. Here in the warming company of up to 20 overnight hashish smokers, I had no need for the painkillers of loneliness, but could keep my head above water and even gain a sense of responsibility by looking after them and the place. In my letters and diaries, I have noted every time these - today's nice high school teachers, directors, doctors etc. - came to enjoy a coughing breath of 68's freedom. I even have letters from my equally righteous brother, Niels Jørgen, asking if I could send some more hashish by post to his clubmates in Esbjerg Athletics Association, or if they could



In my short film about the Dannebrogsgade era, I sit and smoke a hookah with Berthe, but it was probably mostly to show that I was up to date with the mischief of the time.

spend the night with me during their competitions in Copenhagen.

In fact, during those years, I often felt that I was the only honorable citizen because I didn't smoke weed myself. After several unsuccessful attempts in the summer of 1967, Steve had finally managed to get me so high that I was afraid of being run over by tram 5 in Nørregade. I didn't like this feeling of not being in control and may have felt that my head was spinning confused and slow enough already. On the other hand, I enjoyed being the only person in charge who was able to hold my head up high and think clearly and resourcefully when everyone around me was in their hour-long laughing fit. Even in the most depraved environments I've since found myself in, I've always been amused by this need people always have to feel decency in themselves by looking down on those who are even lower down. For example, the junkie who stabs himself in the thigh but looks down on the one who has to stab himself in the neck. Or the Ku Klux Klan, who look down on the neo-Nazis as the real scum bags.

Even the police could live with our '68 laws when they frequently broke in and woke us up in the morning to search the place. For when it was the immigration police who came to find the American Vietnam deserters I was trying to give sanctuary to before they were sent to their deaths, I noticed that the officers didn't even notice all the large hashish clumps and hashish pipes I had lying on the table. And when it was the narcotics police, we breathed a sigh of relief. Partly because they didn't take the Americans with them, and partly because they usually only looked for stronger stuff like morphine, opium and LSD, while

they at most complained a little if the hashish clumps were too big - or so cut to take some small clumps in their pockets for their own consumption. Where there is action, there is waste, I learned each time with a little annoyance and relief.

Only once did things go really wrong with the trade. One day the police found a lump of hashish the size of a brick behind some books on my desk. I have no clear recollection of how such an irresponsibly large piece came to be there, but I certainly satisfied my need for excitement by being dragged to the police station where I was charged with dealing hashish. The one explanation I'm most inclined to believe is probably the one I gave the police about the two Maoists in the front house. Per and Alex, as they were called, financed their Maoist revolution through the hash trade, and either they had left the lump there without asking me, or more correctly, they had asked me if I would store it for them when the police chased them for their "USA out of Vietnam" overpainting of the S-trains, and the whole thing had therefore become a little too hot.

The other explanation goes back to the morning when it wasn't the police who woke us all up early, but the postman who came to hand me DKK 12,000 in compensation for the "injury" I received in the Life Guard. Like a bolt from the blue. DKK 12,000 was a lot of money back then, and the many witnesses in the house that morning may have persuaded me to spend some of the money on "a little hashish for home use". But I also remember that in an attempt to live up to my family's onerous demands to go "the way of the book", I spent most of the money on investing in a large book collection with all sorts of fine books by Sartre and Dostoevsky. That way, I could decorate one side wall above the Steinway grand piano and appear a little more bourgeois and intellectual. In other words, another attempt to live up to my father's expectations. When he announced that he was coming to visit, I quickly unloaded all the residents for a couple of hours and "cleaned up", because I feared my father more than the police, of course. Maybe I also bought the books to use them as an even better hiding place for hashish clumps, because it goes without saying that I never read a single one of them in this drunken stupor.

I remember feeling a little annoyed about my yes policy when I didn't smoke hash myself. Or rather, I didn't inhale the smoke, just as I learned not to do so when hitchhiking in the US, where young people always passed a joint around in the car before asking where I was going. I couldn't speak proper English when I was stoned, which was embarrassing when the next ride was typically with a "straight" banker or someone I wanted to photograph - that is, observe in a cool way.

I needed the rest of the money now in an attempt to escape the problem before the trial was due to begin a few months later. Kristen Godfrey was going to spend Christmas with her wealthy parents in Tunisia, where her father worked as a doctor, and she immediately suggested I go with her. They had a luxury villa right next to the presidential palace in Carthage, where her father volunteered as a doctor during Christmas. Together with Kristen, I traveled in primitive bumlet trains, where we made fires to keep warm in the December cold between sheep and chickens, and then we rode camels far into the Sahara to the Algerian border. Having a girl dancing in front of me on the desert ship is one of the sexiest things I've ever experienced. We stayed with the Bedouins in oases and learned how to observe the fast during Ramadan - and the joy of joining them in the night, gorging ourselves on food and then falling down burping from exhaustion. And then it was so much more convenient when the fast was broken at night and permission was granted (as prescribed "Lâ hayâ' fid-Dîn" - there is no shyness in Islam) to have sex on goatskin surrounded by shouting, one-eyed and half-blind people, than sex among all the smoky, hungry eyes that always rested on us at home in my compared to this luxurious backyard slum. Yes, there were plenty of opportunities for new visions. Especially the tea-drinking Arab culture with its mournful violin music in the densely built souk made a strong impression on my first trip outside my European navel-gazing.

But everywhere, poverty and disease - especially the many eye diseases and blindness - struck a deeper chord in me, and inspired by Dr. Godfrey's volunteer work, it brought my childhood Albert Schweitzer dreams to life. I was wracked with guilt over the escapist life I'd been living so far, and rather than escape into the world right now.



One of the incredibly hospitable Bedouin families we stayed with in an oasis on the other side of Gafsa.



After the dark haze of Vesterbro, it was a rush of liberation to ride uplifted 500 kilo meters into the vast white desert light of the Sahara.



Who can avoid - riding a donkey with palm branches waving around them - having powerful spiritual visions?

I wanted to go home and do away with our entire pseudo-clutter and help create a more just world.

I had my hair cut short, and when I showed up for the trial, I was so neatly groomed in a suit, white shirt and tie that for once my mother would have been utterly proud of me. To this day, I have no idea whether I was facing a jail sentence or, as a first-time offender, a hefty fine, but I gave such a dazzling defense speech about how I had undergone a profound transformation of my life after having "a powerful vision in the desert" that I was completely exonerated. Well, I did use such a crazy expression, and who knows if the high judge, like the police, was in tune with the visions of the time? In any case, this was the beginning of a reckoning for me, which socially led me directly into my most extremist deroute, not unlike the one we experience today with so many young people going straight from cannabis abuse to radicalization.

Predicates

In my growing involvement in poor countries, I began to simultaneously react against what I increasingly saw as the youth rebellion of the privileged, even though I myself was a product of it and harbored it. And at the same time, I admired its often incredibly articulate solidarity with what they called the "working class" and the "exploited" poor countries.

But did I ever manage to integrate with the Danish "hippies", "68ers", "youth rebels" and "collectivists", whom I developed strong prejudices against, especially in the US, amidst my simultaneous love affair with them? In Denmark and the US, there were good reasons to rebel against the bourgeoisie's hollow platitudes about supporting the mass murder of four million Vietnamese and the oppression of millions of poor people in our colonies, semi-colonies and domestic ghettos in the name of democracy. But for the vast majority of us rebels, it all amounted to nothing more than hollow declarations of solidarity and peace without any attempt at a real lifestyle change for the benefit of the poor - other than, for example, a brief period of Third World-inspired garb and dilapidated cabins on the Lord's field in Thy.

Most did not give up their privileges, and many took over the best executive villas in Hellerup's most expensive neighborhoods, from which many of them had moved. I think there were only ten of these so-called collectives in 1968, but there were thousands across the country shortly after I left Denmark in 1970.

What I already sensed was that they simply continued the parents' togetherness in a more collective setting and replaced the parents' arguments about money and child rearing by now ravaging each other with a true rule regime, which they called democracy. They introduced endless group meetings with delegation of duties on things that did not interest the individual and often ended up in something resembling the worst excesses of Maoism in self-criticism, where you had to take a daily position on "how are we doing with each other?" While the European collectives probably placed more emphasis on international solidarity, I felt liberated for a short time in the American collectives with "Escape to America" away from this European tyranny of rules.

In many places at home, it ended up in fascist conditions, where the mentally strongest ruled and used the left-wing platitudes of eloquence to pedantically put the weakest in their place. I experienced such conditions frequently when I returned home after five years in the US and started giving lectures in many of these collectives, such as Tvind and the Svanholm collective, where there was an incredibly bad non-communal atmosphere.

So I have my reasons for reacting violently every time the media has since called me a "hippie" and "old 68er". Can you really scold a person for being a "hippie" and "68'er" when they didn't really smoke hashish and didn't wear hippie garb, but perhaps appeared to be a bit of a wolf disguised in military sheepskin coat? Someone who wasn't able to fuck freely and loosely to the right and left and who had no idea who the Steppenwolves were (until I saw the movie). In other words, a person that the whole hippie era and the 68s simply went over his head. And then you can perhaps, within reason, do it anyway, as I was, in a way, a pioneer at the same time. Because before most collectives even emerged after 1970, I was already in the process of closing my own.



When I moved into my commune in the summer of 1967, I was a neat, short-cut, conservative young man. When I moved to the US in March 1970, I was a long-haired, radicalized and angry young man.

And while most people had to introduce this dehumanizing tyranny of rules and endless group meetings in order to make the relationships work, we lived together with up to twenty people, almost in one big pile in the same room, without me or any of the others in the pile of people ever even thinking of calling it a collective. Completely free from rules and lengthy entrance exams about who was to be admitted, I or whoever happened to be standing at the door never asked any questions to those who knocked on the door and wanted in. We accepted people as they were - for better or worse - without trying to change them.

Just as I experienced in the 80s when I seamlessly accommodated 66 Arab refugees in my apartment in Købmagergade with a similar "yes" policy, I believe that you can create the right positive framework with your inclusive example, which makes everything run smoothly without rules and group meetings. Of course, there is always someone who, like the slightly high-flying upper-class daughter Kristen, creates a little self-justice, but I don't like to use the word "anarchy", as we then already move into strict ideologies that easily lock us into new rules, but maybe that was exactly what we had lived together under in Dannebrogsgade.

While most young people needed to find answers and a foothold in the boxes and identities of the time, I, with my weak foundation, let myself be blown hither and thither by the identity-seeking young people I met along the way - until I ended up defining my lack of standing as saying "yes" to everyone. Which leads to the thought that maybe I managed to integrate with the hippies after all, because I was in fact the only real hippie and collectivist, while all the others were still conformist students doing their studies? Or was I just a boring average student, while all the others were real hippies? "The answer, my friend, is blowing in the wind."