



A Long Strange Trip: The Inside History of the Grateful Dead

By Dennis McNally

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The complete history of one of the most long-lived and legendary bands in rock history, written by its official historian and publicist—a must-have chronicle for all Dead Heads, and for students of rock and the 1960s' counterculture.

From 1965 to 1995, the Grateful Dead flourished as one of the most beloved, unusual, and accomplished musical entities to ever grace American culture. The creative synchronicity among Jerry Garcia, Bob Weir, Phil Lesh, Bill Kreutzmann, Mickey Hart, and Ron “Pigpen” McKernan exploded out of the artistic ferment of the early sixties’ roots and folk scene, providing the soundtrack for the Dionysian revels of the counterculture. To those in the know, the Dead was an ongoing tour de force: a band whose constant commitment to exploring new realms lay at the center of a thirty-year journey through an ever-shifting array of musical, cultural, and mental landscapes.

Dennis McNally, the band’s historian and publicist for more than twenty years, takes readers back through the Dead’s history in *A Long Strange Trip*. In a kaleidoscopic narrative, McNally not only chronicles their experiences in a fascinatingly detailed fashion, but veers off into side trips on the band’s intricate stage setup, the magic of the Grateful Dead concert experience, or metaphysical musings excerpted from a conversation among band members. He brings to vivid life the Dead’s early days in late-sixties San Francisco—an era of astounding creativity and change that reverberates to this day. Here we see the group at its most raw and powerful, playing as the house band at Ken Kesey’s acid tests, mingling with such legendary psychonauts as Neal Cassady and Owsley “Bear” Stanley, and performing the alchemical experiments, both live and in the studio, that produced some of their most searing and evocative music. But McNally carries the Dead’s saga through the seventies and into the more recent years of constant touring and incessant musical exploration, which have cemented a unique bond between performers and audience, and created the business enterprise that is much more a family than a corporation.

Written with the same zeal and spirit that the Grateful Dead brought to its music for more than thirty years, the book takes readers on a personal tour through the

band's inner circle, highlighting its frenetic and very human faces. *A Long Strange Trip* is not only a wide-ranging cultural history, it is a definitive musical biography.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The Grateful Dead forever changed popular music by ushering in the psychedelic sound of the 1960s as they valiantly toured almost nonstop for three decades and consumed loads of illegal substances. Yet the most fascinating, and revealing, thing about the Dead is their fans the Deadheads: tie-dyed, drugged up and devoted in a way that makes Beatlemania look rational. What did the Dead have that fellow San Francisco bands Jefferson Airplane, Quicksilver Messenger Service and Moby Grape lacked? As author McNally (*Desolate Angel: Jack Kerouac, the Beat Generation, and America*) explains in this entertaining and well-written book, the Dead built up their loyal following by treating fans as equals, as "companions in an odyssey." After improvisation, writes McNally, "the single largest element in the Dead's *weltanschauung* was their pursuit of group mind under the influence of LSD...." As the Dead's publicist for more than 20 years, McNally packs this 600-pager full of intimate details otherwise unavailable, such as the time the group's janitor vetoed a suggestion from multimillion-dollar promoter Bill Graham as too "commercial." On the other hand, McNally clearly dodges the more unflattering and controversial aspects of the musicians' lives offstage; indeed, every living member of the original lineup provides glowing endorsements on the book's back cover. But perhaps McNally thinks the Dead's underside has been done to death; in any case, with a little prettifying he still manages to pen the most exhaustively researched book on the band to date.

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From Library Journal

McNally has been the Grateful Dead's official historian since 1980.

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From [Booklist](#)

McNally, Grateful Dead historian and publicist for more than 20 years, is well suited to write the group's biography as comprehensively as anyone could, and, naturally, he writes from a very positive, supportive perspective. He says the Dead's music is "an incredible document of American electronic folk music in the late twentieth century." And you thought it was just music to get stoned and dance to. "But the primary legacy of the Grateful Dead," he asserts, consists of its "stylistic and social influence on other bands, the philosophical underpinnings that Dead Heads will carry with them to their graves, and the recorded music that the band left behind. No other American band . . . united the improvisational nature of jazz with rock modalities in quite the same way." So, there you have it. Those looking for a detailed history of the Dead and/or such sweeping pronouncements will greatly enjoy this account of how the band has been truckin' all these years. *Mike Tribby*

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

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Have you spare time for the day? What do you do when you have a lot more or little spare time? Yep, you can choose the suitable activity to get spend your time. Any person spent their spare time to take a go walking, shopping, or went to the particular Mall. How about open or read a book called A Long Strange

Trip: The Inside History of the Grateful Dead? Maybe it is for being best activity for you. You understand beside you can spend your time with your favorite's book, you can wiser than before. Do you agree with the opinion or you have additional opinion?

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Jennifer Wetzel:

The book untitled A Long Strange Trip: The Inside History of the Grateful Dead contain a lot of information on the item. The writer explains your girlfriend idea with easy technique. The language is very clear and understandable all the people, so do not worry, you can easy to read it. The book was written by famous author. The author will bring you in the new era of literary works. It is easy to read this book because you can keep reading your smart phone, or gadget, so you can read the book within anywhere and anytime. In a situation you wish to purchase the e-book, you can available their official web-site and also order it. Have a nice learn.

Kenneth Cunningham:

In this particular era which is the greater person or who has ability in doing something more are more valuable than other. Do you want to become one among it? It is just simple method to have that. What you are related is just spending your time not much but quite enough to experience a look at some books. One of the books in the top collection in your reading list is A Long Strange Trip: The Inside History of the Grateful Dead. This book that is certainly qualified as The Hungry Hills can get you closer in becoming precious person. By looking upwards and review this publication you can get many advantages.

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