

## I Made Jerry Garcia Put Out His Joint

When I was a young man trying to build flying time and figure out how to make a living flying airplanes, I got a chance to fly The Grateful Dead. How many people can say that? The Grateful Dead needed to be flown from Tulsa, OK to Carbondale, IL for a concert the following evening and, as it turned out, I was the guy for the job.

I remember wondering what they would be like, how they would act? Would they be loud and obnoxious? Would they listen to my instructions? Would they act like divas or be down to earth? How could I make myself memorable and give them a great flight experience?

The next morning brought a clear, bright winter sky with just enough wind to make it a little bumpy down low. My copilot and I flew to Tulsa and arrived with plenty of time to meet up with our clients, The Grateful Dead.

The band showed up as scheduled and it was pretty obvious that they had been partying. They looked "rode hard and put away wet", as they say. Dark circles under their eyes and the aroma of stale whiskey spoke of the night before. One band member introduced himself as Bill and asked if he could sit up front since he had some experience flying as a private pilot.

Shortly after passing 10,000 feet, climbing to our cruising altitude, I got a strong whiff of an odor that I quickly recognized thanks to two years of living in a college dormitory in the early 1970s. I looked around and sure enough, Jerry Garcia was smoking a joint. I stiffened, hesitating for a moment. How would I tell Jerry Garcia to put out his doobie? This was not good. Since Bill was sitting closest to us, I told him that if we got high this was likely not going to end well for any of us.

I did the unspeakable and asked Jerry to put out the joint. Jerry looked at me both impressed with my pluck and irritated by my request. He asked if we could just wear our oxygen masks. I didn't back down. As I saw the situation, we had a choice of taking a chance on getting high and crashing or using oxygen while he was smoking and exploding. Neither seemed like a wise choice. Jerry gave me a look of disdain, then one of resignation. I made Jerry Garcia put out his doobie.

We had a smooth flight the rest of the way to Carbondale. While we were unloading their baggage, Bill came up to me, handed me two backstage passes to that night's concert and said, "Jerry says he's sorry". We had great seats for the concert that night, got a good night's sleep and flew the band to St. Louis the next morning, as scheduled.

Know your core values, stand with conviction, and stick to what you believe in. Whether you are 10,000 feet in the air or in a challenging corporate setting, be a person of principle and meaning.

It's all about risk management.

John Lohmar

[John@AirSafetyInvestigators.com](mailto:John@AirSafetyInvestigators.com)

[www.AirSafetyInvestigators.com](http://www.AirSafetyInvestigators.com)

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