



JIMI HENDRIX

the man • the magic • the truth

SHARON LAWRENCE

Jimi Hendrix

THE MAN, THE MAGIC, THE TRUTH

SHARON LAWRENCE

 HarperCollins e-books

Technically, I'm not a guitar player. All I play is truth and emotion.

—JIMI HENDRIX

Contents

[Prologue](#)

[PART ONE: A BOY-CHILD COMIN'](#)

[ONE](#) Johnny/Jimmy

[TWO](#) Don't Look Back

[THREE](#) Flying High

[FOUR](#) The Struggle

[PART TWO: LONDON, PARIS, THE WORLD!](#)

[FIVE](#) Thrilling Times

[SIX](#) "The Best Year of My Life"

[SEVEN](#) Experienced

[EIGHT](#) All Along the Watchtower

[NINE](#) The Trial

[TEN](#) Drifting

[ELEVEN](#) Purple Haze

[TWELVE](#) Inside the Danger Zone

[Coda](#)

[PART THREE: THE REINVENTION OF JIMI HENDRIX](#)

[INTRODUCTION](#)

[THIRTEEN](#) 1971–1989: The New Regime

[FOURTEEN](#) 1990–1999: A Series of Showdowns

[FIFTEEN](#) 2000–2004: Wealth, Power, and Reflected Glory

[PART FOUR: THE TRUE LEGACY](#)

[ACKNOWLEDGMENTS](#)

[ABOUT THE AUTHOR](#)

[CREDITS](#)

[COPYRIGHT](#)

[ABOUT THE PUBLISHER](#)

PROLOGUE

FEBRUARY 9, 1968

I observed the extravagant aureole of carefully teased black hair. The face, with its luminous brown eyes looking directly at me, was gentle. His handshake was firm. He smiled warmly, respectfully even, and said in a low, whispery voice, “Thanks for coming out tonight.”

So this was Jimi Hendrix. The exotic photographs I’d seen in the English music papers offered a somewhat terrifying image. On this night, though, I met a shy, polite human being.

“Sharon,” Leslie Perrin had said on the telephone, “I’ve just arrived from London, and I’d like to introduce you to Jimi Hendrix. He’s very special. And he’s playing near Disneyland tonight!”

For years Leslie Perrin had been a figure in London press and music circles, jovial but shrewd, a stout, chain-smoking, middle-aged public relations expert whose clients ranged from Frank Sinatra to the Rolling Stones. Now he’d added the Jimi Hendrix Experience to his client roster. The motto inscribed on his letterhead read RING ME ANYTIME—DAY OR NIGHT.

“That would be nice, Les, but could we do it another time? I’d love to see you, of course. Maybe for lunch tomorrow? It’s been a tremendously busy week, and I’m not at my best, and with all this rain this isn’t a good night.” I met and interviewed celebrities, particularly major film stars, every day in my job as a fledgling reporter in the Los Angeles bureau of United Press International, then a powerful news organization. Les sounded disappointed, and I felt ashamed of myself as I caught on—Perrin was on unfamiliar turf in L.A., dismayed by the sudden downpour in sunny California, and he needed a ride. I was also remembering that Les was a great pal of numerous journalist friends of mine in London and that he’d been kind and hospitable to me on a recent visit to England. “Where shall I pick you up, Les?”

This is how I met Hendrix, the hottest new star on the international music scene: because, grudgingly, I was doing a favor.

The tires of my blue Dodge Dart squealed on the slick, slippery freeways as we drove the thirty miles southeast from Los Angeles to Anaheim in a steady, gloomy rain. We smoked cigarettes as Les amusingly related the latest music news from Swinging London. Finally we zigzagged our way off the freeway and slowly turned in to the driveway of the Anaheim Convention Center. It held seventy-eight hundred people, and the parking lot was jammed as we maneuvered into a space near the backstage entrance.

I tentatively followed Perrin into the crowded dressing room, where he introduced me to

I tentatively followed Perrin into the crowded dressing room, where he introduced me to drummer Mitch Mitchell and bassist Noel Redding, two quite adorable and gracious English boys. We talked about this latest round of the “British Invasion”—the tag given to the increasing number of English bands touring America in the sixties—and the Experience’s recent New York press reception on top of a midtown skyscraper. Everything they said made me laugh, down to the corny jokes about “That’s what I call getting high!”

Les took my arm and we stepped outside the door, and there was Jimi Hendrix, in a deep purple silk crepe shirt, velvet pants, and a black cut-velvet jacket; I had never before seen a pop musician dressed with such subtle elegance; Hendrix looked as if he should be invited to pose for the cover of *Vogue*. His face and his voice appeared shy. “I’ve just been tuning my guitar,” he said.

Ten minutes later Les Perrin, who’d gone off to chat with other musicians on the “Invasion” package—which included Eire Apparent, Soft Machine, Eric Burdon and the Animals with the Experience head-lining—returned to smile approvingly as he saw Hendrix and me in animated conversation. I told Jimi that I had already seen the Experience soon after the Monterey Pop Festival when the trio opened for the Mamas and Papas at the Hollywood Bowl. “I thought it was fabulous the way you came onto the stage playing ‘Sgt. Pepper,’ ” I said. “The perfect song to grab the crowd.”

Jimi’s eyes lit up; he liked this compliment, and he seemed to understand that I was simply saying what I thought. I loved music, *knew* music, from Ella Fitzgerald to Tchaikovsky to Ray Charles and the Beatles; my earliest memories involved a home where the record player was alive with wondrous voices and captivating melodies, from Negro spirituals to Gershwin concertos. I had a boyfriend, Ron, a college student in New York and an avid record collector, who was crazy about the new pop music. People who didn’t care about music usually didn’t interest me.

“My mother thought your group was terrific at the Bowl,” I continued. “She liked your songs and also your clothes. ‘That boy has beautiful taste,’ she said. Mother loves fine fabrics.”

His eyes opened wide. “You took your mother to hear us?”

“In California,” I explained, “the Hollywood Bowl has always been a family place, where you bring a picnic dinner and hear music under the stars. It’s a summer tradition.”

Jimi nodded. “Please tell her I appreciate fabrics, too.”

I kept waiting for Hendrix to bring the conversation to a halt, but he seemed to be enjoying himself. So I went on, “My mother collects material, edgings, trimmings; she’s wonderful at sewing.

Jimi seemed delighted to hear this, saying, “If I had a proper place, quite naturally, I’d be collecting all that, too.”

“I only collect records,” I said. “I’ve got hundreds of albums. I started buying them when I was ten, and now one of the best things about my job is that I’m invited to see just about every movie made, and the record companies send me free records.”

“They all must like you a lot!” he said.

“No.” I said. “I think it’s more about wanting publicity. I quit college and did a bit of financing

... I said. I think I'm more about making music. I quit college and did a bit of traveling
land my job. I was naïve, I suppose, because I hadn't realized until recently that when people give you
something free, they just about always want something."

Hendrix gave me a serious look. "Isn't that the truth," he said.

Les rejoined us, glancing at his watch. "James," he said, "I think you're supposed to be onstage.

Hendrix smiled warmly at me. "See you again!"

As he hurried to the dressing room, there was Eric Burdon coming from the other direction. I'd
met him a couple of times before. Exuberantly, he grabbed my arm and said, "Come on, let's go out
front. It's always so excitin' when Jimi plays."

Eric had just finished "warming up" seven thousand young people for the first of two shows that
night. Most of the audience was on their feet eagerly waiting for the Experience. Undoubtedly quite a
few of these kids had witnessed the riveting debut of the Jimi Hendrix Experience at Monterey Pop the
previous summer.

The minute Hendrix made his entrance, the subdued fellow I'd just met turned into the most
lascivious, outrageous, spectacular performer I'd ever seen. His Hollywood Bowl show seemed tame
in retrospect. Now he was ravaging the guitar with his teeth, his tongue, playing it behind his back and
on the floor, in a brilliant display of showmanship and sound. Although I had seen everyone from the
Beatles to the Stones to Bob Dylan, I had never given much consideration to the guitar. Like many
other fans at concerts, I tended to concentrate on the lead singer. But tonight a bold, brightly colored
world of *fresh* rhythms and sound was emanating from this white Strato caster that Hendrix played so
effortlessly it appeared to be part of his body. Yes, I thought, this is *important*. The mesmerized
audience hardly seemed to notice that there were two *other* musicians onstage until an inspired bit of
drumming from Mitch Mitchell grabbed them. For all the spotlight on Hendrix, this was a true
ensemble; the Experience's playing was both tight and seemingly spontaneous, a rare and invigorating
mix. Noel Redding and Mitch Mitchell were the all-important foundation for Jimi; the three of them
together knew how to create magic. Continual ripples of applause now had escalated into exhilarating
roars of approval. The crowd hung on every note, on the soulful, whispery singing voice, the quick,
shy comments into the microphone. A teenage boy sitting behind me said to his friend, "Hendrix is
talking to *us!*"

A year ago I'd assumed that all the excitement about the Experience was purely press agency and
hype. Now I understood why all the major British guitar players couldn't stop talking about Hendrix.

Backstage after his performance, Jimi reverted to the same gentle person I'd met two hours
before. He struck me as a *creature*— more of a spirit than a person. Without knowing precisely why,
I felt that I was in the presence of someone unique.

Les Perrin murmured something odd as we drove back to Hollywood: "I hope you'll get to know
Hendrix. He could use a friend." Meanwhile in the rear seat of the car, big, beefy Chas Chandler,
former bassist for the Animals and now Jimi's co-manager, was grinning as he re-counted the
thousands of dollars in cash he'd collected for the gig. The rain beat down harder, but I drove faster.
The car was a nervous wreck until Chandler put all that money in the hotel safe.

I didn't know that Les Perrin had given Jimi my telephone number, so a week later I was surprised to hear from my answering service that "a Mr. Hendrix called to thank you for attending his concert." He'd left the number at his latest hotel, and when I returned the call, he thanked me again. Gee, I thought, Les must have given me quite a buildup as someone worth knowing in L.A. Did Hendrix want to visit a movie studio or *what*? The other musicians I knew from England always urged me to show them where Elvis lived and take them to see the movie-star hand and footprints at Grauman's Chinese Theatre on Hollywood Boulevard. But as we continued our conversation, Jimi didn't seem to want anything except to talk. When I asked him about life on the road, I was astonished at how openly he spoke of the troubles he was facing as an instant superstar.

His tone was tense, almost desperate. "The group's gotten so big so fast. I'm making everyone unhappy. I don't want to overshadow anybody."

I didn't know how to respond. The music world had clutched Jimi to its heart. His success appeared unlimited. I would have expected him to say he was on top of the world.

I remembered a Track Records advertisement of congratulations in an issue of *Melody Maker* several months back—ALL HAIL KING JIMI. On the cover the self-taught Jimi Hendrix was pictured accepting his trophy as "World's Best Pop Musician," his head bowed, an expression of deep humility on his face. Now I reminded him of this. "What a fabulous honor. It must have made you feel great!"

A smile colored his voice. "Oh, yes!"

We spoke of new records being played on the radio and of films. He told me that he admired Marlon Brando, James Dean, and Sidney Poitier. "I don't have much time to see movies," Jimi said, "but I do love them. The last one I saw was *In the Heat of the Night*. Very cool movie. Did you see it?"

"It was terrific," I said. "Poitier's a great actor! What I want to know, though, is why Brando and Dean? *The Wild Ones*, *Rebel Without a Cause*—is this how you see yourself?" I was joking, laughing as I spoke. He laughed, too, briefly, and added quite seriously, "Yeah, I relate to those movies. I dig those films a lot. I'd like to get a red jacket in honor of Jimmy Dean, in fact. It's so sad that he died so young, isn't it?"

"Very, very sad," I said.

In mid-March, Hendrix telephoned me from New York, telling me that he'd seen my byline on a UPI feature in the newspaper. I was startled on two counts—hearing from him again and learning that he read newspapers. Most musicians I knew did not, except for stories about them.

Jimi sounded weary. "We've been touring or recording for almost eighteen months. Since I showed up in London in the fall of '66, I've met hundreds of people besides the fans; that part of it is generally cool. But trying to keep up with radio and record-business people in each country—promoters, agents, program directors, press, publicity, and blah-blah-blah—it's uh... uh—"

"Difficult?" I interrupted.

"Damn right it's *difficult*. I feel like I live on a roller coaster. I don't mean to whine. I'm just tired. Throw in all the little dramas in the band and the management and all the mind-blowing legal

bull, and it definitely takes away from the music. I'd like three hours to concentrate only on writing a song." Having gotten it momentarily off his chest, he turned cheerier. "Nothing wrong with me that a solid week of sleep can't cure! I was thinking about that when we talked about movies. Whenever there's time to get rested up, I'd like to go see ten movies in a row!"

"Why don't you arrange for time off to go home and see your family? Tune out for a while," I suggested.

Hendrix's tone completely changed. "There's nothing for me in Seattle," he said flatly. "It's so beautiful, but I couldn't stay there. They didn't understand then. And they don't now."

As he spoke, I could never have known how desperately Jimi needed a confidante, a sounding board, an actual friend who wasn't involved in his career. Nor could I have guessed that in the next years I would see him in a variety of places, situations, and especially moods—ranging from joy to fear.

Jimi held little back in our conversations. It seemed that so many feelings had been bottled up inside him for such a long time, so that when he spoke, he would sometimes rev up into high gear, just pouring stuff out. I was a good listener, often asking questions as he retraced his life, but only occasionally commenting. There were moments when I was startled and dismayed by his candor. He wasn't crying on my shoulder or asking for pity, simply unwinding was how I saw it. I was impressed by the way he spoke with inherent sensitivity of special moments and creative discoveries in his musical life. We shared a few cynical laughs over some of the absurdities and disillusionments in the business side of his career as well as my own. I felt that it was important to remember everything he said about his troubled formative years, his disappointments, his dreams, his goals, and his joy in and passion for music. Still, who could forget such a strong and vibrant mind and how he expressed himself?

Seeing and hearing the pleasure he received from "practicin' up, workin' with words and sneaky riffs," it always made me feel privileged to be present for a few of those creative times.

I deliberately waited years to write this book, not sure that I wanted to revisit the tender and tortured territory of the "Hendrix Years" and also convinced that the perspective of time and added life experience would surely make me see Jimi from a different point of view. But I was *wrong* about that. My intrinsic sense of who Jimi Hendrix was and what he's all about remains the same now as it did then.

Jimi was the greatest musician and the least boring person I have ever known.

SHARON LAWRENCE

Los Angeles, November 2000

PART ONE

A Boy-Child Comin'

Johnny/Jimmy

She loved a good time. There were few of them in her short and wretched life.

Lucille Jeter shook off the gloomy blanket of wartime anxieties that troubled all the adults around her, and despite her family's admonitions, she ignored the tedious drip... drip... drip of the Seattle evening rain to go out and dance every chance she got.

The sweet-natured and naïve "baby" of the Jeter family, Lucille had a brother and three older sisters. Their parents, Preston and Clarice, were typical of many of the black residents of Seattle in the 1940s, men and women who had migrated west, seeking a better life but frequently disappointed. Born in Virginia, Preston Jeter possessed education but few opportunities. He worked, at various times, as a miner and as a longshoreman. His wife, Clarice, a native of Arkansas, brought in much-needed income toiling as cleaning lady and housekeeper. Welfare checks sometimes entered the picture. Mrs. Jeter's Pentecostal religion was both her rock and her social life; she worried and prayed about Lucille and her always fragile health. Lucille was inclined to overdo.

The sight of the pretty, tiny, pale-skinned black girl kicking up her heels and the sound of her giddy laughter as she was tossed into the air captivated Al Hendrix. It seemed that she would never get enough of the bright lights and spirited jitterbug rhythms. Lucille loved her music!

The exhilarating nights on the dance floor didn't last long. Weeks after the couple's first meeting, Lucille became pregnant and hurriedly married twenty-two-year-old Al, an attractive if not handsome bantam rooster of a man, standing barely five foot two. She told her mother that she liked the way Al smiled at her.

Her young husband was an American citizen raised in Vancouver, British Columbia, who had settled in Seattle several years before to try his luck as a lightweight boxer in the city's Golden Glove competition. Al's father, Ross Hendrix, was an Ohio native who grew up to become a Chicago policeman and eventually, making an exotic switch, took a job as stagehand for a vaudeville troupe.

He married one of the dancers in the company, Nora Moore, the daughter of a full-blooded Cherokee mother and an Irish father. Nora and Ross Hendrix decided to give up the traveling life and make a new start in Vancouver. In quick succession Nora gave birth to two sons, a daughter, and finally to James Allen Hendrix, generally known as Al.

Since his education had ceased in the seventh grade and he was unprepared for any skilled work Al turned to the love of dancing he'd inherited from his mother to making a few bucks here and there in dance contests. His specialties were tap dancing, jitterbugging, and solo improvisations. Although Al later was to refer to himself as a member of an important show business family, Mama Nora worked long hours in the kitchen of a Vancouver restaurant after she left vaudeville; as a teenager Al was a waiter there.

When he married Lucille, Al had perhaps only three things in common with his sixteen-year-old wife: They both were the youngest children in their respective families, they each loved to dance, and they had a child on the way. Within days after their marriage on March 31, 1942, Al kissed Lucille good-bye. Drafted into the army, he was sent more than fifteen hundred miles away to Oklahoma, and then on to Georgia.

Lucille was barely seventeen when she gave birth to her first son, Johnny, on November 27, 1942. The birth took place at the home of Dorothy Harding, a good friend to Lucille's sister Dolores. Relatives and friends joked about how strange it was that these two short people had conceived such a graceful, long-limbed baby.

Raising a baby was no joke, and Lucille was unprepared to handle the transition from dropout schoolgirl to mother. Through an army snafu, she was not receiving any of Al's military pay. Not long after Johnny was born, Preston Jeter died of a heart condition. As a result, Clarice was plagued by financial problems. She loved Lucille's baby, but she couldn't take care of him and also work five days a week. Clarice and her daughter Dolores were deeply concerned about Johnny's welfare as he was shuttled around a circle of relatives, friends, and even complete strangers in homes in and near Seattle. Week to week Johnny never was quite sure who was "in charge"—a phrase that stayed with him. He slept on pillows, in baskets, and in other people's beds; a real baby crib was a luxury Johnny seldom knew. Lucille floated in and out of Johnny's life, the "Mama" he adored—even if the young girl couldn't support him or manage to take care of him for more than a few days at a time.

When he was almost two and a half years old, Johnny was taken in by a church acquaintance of his grandmother Clarice. This woman became ill and unexpectedly passed away; her sister journeyed from California to Seattle, where she met and was charmed by little Johnny. It was a fateful meeting, and while he eventually forgot her name, he never forgot her. She volunteered to take care of the boy in her wartime home in Berkeley, California. Lucille had no objections.

Johnny now lived in the finest house yet, a simple bungalow several blocks away from the University of California campus. He felt comfortable and secure, and he blossomed under the warmth and concern of the woman who had rescued him, not to mention the attention of her eldest daughter, who was approximately twenty, and two lively teenage children. He would later recall how he loved being read to, always eager for the next story. Johnny's vocabulary increased dramatically during this happy respite from the insecurities of Seattle. "They called me a little chatterbox," he said to me, smiling at the thought of those long-ago memories.

Al Hendrix had given some second thoughts to his marriage, particularly after he heard that Lucille had been seeing another man; he was considering divorcing his young wife. Weeks after his discharge from the army late in 1945, he traveled down the West Coast to Berkeley to take his first look at his son. Johnny did not quite connect the photograph of his father in uniform, prominently displayed in the living room, with the non-uniformed young man who was inspecting him now. Al stayed with Johnny's guardian angels for a few days, met two of the boy's neighborhood playmates, and when Johnny apparently had become used to him, he packed up the boy's belongings. The two of them embarked on an exhausting, eight-hundred-mile train trip back to Seattle. Years later Johnny remembered how he cried and sobbed when this unfamiliar man he now was to call Daddy disciplined him midway through the journey: "I want to get off this train! I want to go *home*. You leave me alone. I want my *family*."

"I just bawled," he said. "I knew they loved me, that they would *miss* me."

Although the details faded, Johnny never forgot this substitute family. "They, that time has always been like a cozy little dream in my mind," he would say as an adult.

When Johnny was nearly four, his father applied to have his name legally changed to James Marshall Hendrix. It bothered Al that Lucille might have named the baby after a boyfriend. The boy was told that he was now to be called Jimmy. This disturbed and confused Johnny, who'd been learning how to sound out and spell "Johnny" from a child's alphabet book he'd been given in Berkeley. "The kid," as he was often referred to, was now loaded with names. His aunt Dolores, Lucille's concerned and supportive sister, had earlier nicknamed him "Buster."

Later Johnny/Jimmy spoke of the first years of his life as "full of confusion," and he did not easily discuss his childhood memories. There was a period before he started school when he and his mother and father all lived in Aunt Dolores's small home as part of her own growing family. "My auntie always tried to make things better," he said. The Hendrix marriage was an on-again, off-again union. Occasionally, to remove him from increasing parental tension, Jimmy was sent across the border to Vancouver, British Columbia, for brief stays with Al's mother, Nora Hendrix. In January 1948, when Jimmy was six, his parents produced another son, Leon. Not quite a year later, Lucille gave birth to a third son, Joseph.

Lucille felt trapped. She was too young to be the mother of one child, much less two and then a third; she couldn't handle being tied down. Al was increasingly bossy, short-tempered, and tight with money, always a problem for many residents of Seattle's Central District. There was no more romance—or jitterbugging—for this couple.

Jimmy's father was always telling him, "Don't get in the way" or "Don't make a fuss" or "No sassing from you!"

The boy swiftly learned that being quiet and dutiful occasionally helped to avoid loud, unpleasant volleys of fighting. Al told Jimmy, "That woman's a *mess*." He hated to hear his father talk ugly about his mother as much as he trembled at seeing her intoxicated, stumbling and shaky. Al was no teetotaler himself, and his eldest son often sobbed into an old pillow as he tried to sleep while ugly, noisy battles raged a few feet away from his bed. "Sometimes," Jimmy later told a friend, "I would lie there and ask myself over and over, 'Who am I? Why is this happening? What can I do?' "

One nightmare of an evening, Lucille left, never to return. “Jimmy baby,” she told her son, “I have to *escape* this!”

For Jimmy his mother’s words, her tears, remained an indelible memory.

The couple divorced in December 1951, with Al asking for and receiving custody of the children. He wanted and arranged for Joseph to be “fostered out.”

Al warned Jimmy and little Leon to stay away from Lucille. “She’s a drunk. She’s no good!”

“*No good.*” These words, too, haunted the little boy—who became the man Jimi Hendrix—for the rest of his life.

Don't Look Back

Seattle displayed nature's bounty in abundance, but the weather never could be counted on. In a matter of minutes, the breathtakingly lovely, shimmering blue panorama would often morph into gloomy gray, punctuated by intermittent threatening torrents of rain. "Changeable" was a good word to describe young Jimmy's existence; sunny, happy moments were mixed with hunger, abuse, neglect, and the intermittent ugly sound track of his parents screaming at each other.

After Lucille Jeter Hendrix left, the pattern that had existed from Jimmy's birth continued; he and his father moved from one low-rent perch, even from one gritty flophouse, to another. Little Leo had been sent to stay with relatives and in several foster homes, returning to Al and Jimmy at intervals. Between the ages of three and sixteen, Jimmy lived in fourteen different places and was pulled in and out of a dozen schools.

"As early as I can remember, I thought about running away," he recalled. "But there was nowhere to go in Seattle, except sometimes to visit at my aunt Dolores's house or to see Aunt Dorothy. She was not really my aunt, but I thought of her that way; she paid a lot of attention to me. I knew I shouldn't really run away, because then I'd be ducking out on my little brother."

The highlight of his early years was taking the ferry to Vancouver to visit his father's relatives. "I always looked forward to seeing Gramma Nora, my dad's mother, in Vancouver, usually in the summer," he said. "I'd pack some stuff in a brown sack, and then she'd buy me new pants and shirts and underwear. I kept getting taller and growing out of all my clothes, and my shoes were always a falling apart disgrace. Gramma would tell me little Indian stories that had been told to her when she was my age; I couldn't wait to hear a new story. She had Cherokee blood. So did Gramma Jeter. I was proud that it was in me, too."

He was closer to Clarice, who frequently took him to the small Pentecostal Church of God in Christ on Sunday. "I learned hymns there," Jimmy would recall. "I can't remember all the words now but I can still hum the music." Clarice Jeter also introduced her grandson to one of his favorite

pastimes—"going to the show," as he phrased it. Jimmy was excited to walk into a movie theater the and always thereafter. Early on, in his imagination, he envisioned himself as an actor. He liked it when Clarice would tell him about how she also had taken his mother to church and to the movies "when Lucille was little like you." Jimmy listened eagerly whenever his grandmother shared her memories with her youngest child.

Since Jimmy's birth Lucille had lived a shaky life. She was fragile physically and emotionally, wanting to be "grown-up" like her siblings, but Lucille wasn't cut out for demanding physical work, and jobs in Seattle were in scant supply. Working briefly as a waitress, for example, she showed difficulty lifting and carrying a heavy tray of dishes across the room. Sweet and pretty, Lucille was susceptible to men who complimented her or encouraged her to come out dancing and drinking with them. Taverns and beer joints were never difficult to find in the Central District, and the music was always hot on and around Jackson Street. Lucille made poor choices in men, who came and went or were told to "get lost" by her family. Her mother and her sister Dolores felt increasing anguish over Lucille and helped her in every way they could. "When I went to church with her, my grandmother prayed for everyone she loved, but especially for my mama," Jimmy recalled.

He saw his mother infrequently but often heard reports of her loose life and her drinking, some of this told to him by his father. He cried in bed and in a closet, where no one would see him, feeling embarrassed and frightened for Lucille. Still, he was always excited about spending time with her, nervously hoping "that my mama would be okay, and that maybe she wouldn't be drinking anymore."

Despite the fact that Jimmy attended ethnically mixed schools and that the Central District was home to Yesler Terrace, one of the first fully integrated public housing projects in America, Seattle as a whole, like most cities in America during the 1940s and '50s, had its ugly pockets of racism. Young Jimmy both heard the word and was referred to as "nigger" countless times. As was his nature, he generally shrugged it off. Although recognized as a "bright child with an interest in art," Jimmy got only mediocre grades, and he often was tardy. Many times he was sent to school with a cup of milk as his only breakfast. Lunch was a hit-or-miss proposition.

"Al neglected the boy," a onetime resident of the projects remembered. "Then we'd notice him paying a little attention, and the next thing you know, the kid was all alone again. Al stepped out to have a few beers, do a little gambling and some flirting. Al liked the ladies."

Another neighbor of the Hendrix family was to say of Al's sons, "Leon was barely walking, and my wife and I would see just one light on in the evening, the two boys all alone. Sometimes we'd take a plate of hot food over on occasion or leave a bottle of milk on the porch. Jimmy never asked for food, but he certainly didn't turn it down. He'd say thank you three or four times; he was very shy. Through the window we'd see Jimmy holding Leon on his lap and feeding him. It was a sad situation. Once in a while, Jimmy and I used to throw a baseball back and forth. I gave him an old mitt I'd had for years, and he got so excited about that. Eventually they moved a few blocks away, and there were stories that Al was feeding them horse meat. Several neighbors around here made a point of inviting Jimmy in from time to time, after Leon was put in a foster home. Al Hendrix was not too happy about it; he didn't seem to want Jimmy being friendly with the neighbors."

His son told me that when Al lost his temper or had been drinking, "my father often beat or slapped me. *Hard*. I tried to keep him from doing it to Leon."

- [download online *Druids: A Very Short Introduction*](#)
- [download online *Descartes: A Guide for the Perplexed* \(Guides For The Perplexed\)](#)
- [download online *Ringworld Throne*](#)
- [click *Biology* \(9th Edition\) here](#)

- <http://metromekanik.com/ebooks/Druids--A-Very-Short-Introduction.pdf>
- <http://fitnessfatale.com/freebooks/The-Graduate--Graduate--Book-1-.pdf>
- <http://nautickim.es/books/Fury--Women-Write-About-Sex--Power-and-Violence.pdf>
- [http://tuscalaural.com/library/Miniature-Gardens--Design---Create-Miniature-Fairy-Gardens--Dish-Gardens--Terrariums-and-More--Indoors-and-Out.](http://tuscalaural.com/library/Miniature-Gardens--Design---Create-Miniature-Fairy-Gardens--Dish-Gardens--Terrariums-and-More--Indoors-and-Out)