Profile: 
Paul Crockett

by Gary Richardson

Truthful I call him who goes into godless deserts, having broken his revering heart. In the yellow sands, burned by the sun, he squints thirstily at the islands abounding in wells, where living things rest under dark trees. Yet his thirst does not persuade him to become like these, dwelling in comfort; for where there are oases there are also idols.

Hungry, violent, lonely, godless: thus the lion-will wants itself. Free from the happiness of slaves, redeemed from gods and adorations, fearless and fear-inspiring, great and lonely: such is the will of the truthful.

It was ever in the desert that the truthful have dwelt, the free spirits, as masters of the desert: but in the cities dwell the well-fed, famous wise men—the beasts of burden.

—Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche
Thus Spake Zarathustra, 1885

Six years ago Paul Gaylord Crockett came to Death Valley, a place whose very name captures the mystique of the desert to which Nietzsche alluded nearly a century ago. Crockett, a home-spun guru possessing a down-to-earth wisdom, was prospecting for gold. There is an old saying among prospectors that "gold is where you find it." While exploring west of Death Valley, Crockett found not only ore containing the yellow metal but also a different kind of unrefined gold. In Goler Canyon, an isolated draw in the Panamint Mountains, he came upon two members of a group calling themselves the "family."

"In the evenings we'd sit around and talk," Crockett recalls. "Then I'd get up in the morning and go back up

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Paul Crockett probes the melted ore that will soon become free gold.
in the mountains. I began to pick up a little bit of the story as we went along each evening. I was just gonna stay a couple weeks. Then after I got to listening to what they had to say about Charlie Manson, I had to stay another couple weeks to see what was really going on. First thing I know, I’d been there about eight months.”

During those eight months of the spring and summer of 1969 Crockett developed a close rapport with two dis-satisfied members of the family, Brooks Poston and Paul Watkins, who told him how they had become followers of Charles Manson. Manson had done such a thorough job of gaining their agreement to his description of reality that Poston and Watkins did not know how to break from him even though he was hundreds of miles away. (Crockett’s knowledge of the way reality is structured by agreement enabled him to understand what Manson was up to.)

“Agreements are the forces we use to locate ourselves in time and space,” Crockett points out. “Everything that we do is from some agreement that we have set up. Everything that we have in this physical universe is something we have laid out and agreed to. Most people never set time limits to their agreements, so they are forces that continue with no end.” An agreement is a line of force which continues in effect until it is fulfilled or otherwise taken down. Crockett told Poston and Watkins that if they wanted to get free of Manson, they had to get Manson to release them of all their agreements to him. When Watkins went to see him in Los Angeles, Manson granted their request; and before he realized what had happened, Watkins and Poston no longer considered themselves bound to the family.

“We make agreements or allow others to make agreements for us from early childhood on,” Crockett says, offering a simple example: “It might be an agreement that Grandma put on us that we didn’t contest. Grandma says, ‘Oh, aren’t you the cutest thing that ever . . . You’re a little rascal, you are!’ We accept it for that day, but it becomes an impulse in our life. We have to become a rascal in order to keep this line of force going which was put there for us.”

According to Crockett, when we make or even tacitly accept an agreement, we put attention into it although we often fail to observe ourselves doing so. The attention we put into an agreement is the power that enforces the agreement. “Attention units,” he explains, “are really extensions of beings and are part of agreements. They’re like the rays of the sun; they come out from the individual of consciousness, Crockett set up a circuit that would create counterbalances in their universe which would make them have to pay more attention to what they were doing instead of watching the images that were formulated in their heads.”

Crockett realized that to enable Watkins and Poston to place their attention back into a world of their own choosing he would have to help them break up the circuitry of agreements they had built in Manson’s world. They had gotten Manson to release his end of the circuit, but they still had to unravel their own confused pictures of the world. Using prospecting in much the same way the ancient alchemist used the search for gold to transmute levels of consciousness, Crockett set up a series of rigorous disciplines to show Poston and Watkins ways to bypass the old circuits by putting their attention into their present activities. This he accomplished by giving them tasks so arduous and different from what they had ever done before that their very survival demanded full attention to what they were doing.

In the summer heat of Death Valley (120 degrees or more in the shade) he had them hauling heavy sacks of ore down steep, narrow, winding trails where one misstep could be fatal. He had them learn the arcane of gold recovery from the operation of the pick and shovel and ore bucket to panning and working the ore into free gold. In a sense the process of extracting the ore from the earth and refining the gold from the ore was an initiation rite into a new reality for the young men. As they practiced it, a new level of awareness began to crystalize within them.

Crockett kept close watch over their progress, making sure their attention was fully absorbed in “right now.”

“When I began to see that their attention was fanning around, that they were splitting their attention, putting it on the trail every once in awhile so that they could gaze off in the yonder and watch the pictures that were going in their heads,” he recalls, “then I’d give them a sack with a whole bunch of rock in it and tell them to carry that down the mountain. This extra weight would create counterbalances in their universe which would make them have to pay more attention to what they were doing instead of watching the images that were formulated in their heads.”

Adding yet another counterbalance, Crockett recommended that his apprentices develop a goal. It was time for them to apply what they were learning about the direction of their attention to yet another dimension of reality—the future. “We live in a world of the past, the present, and the future,” Crockett told them. “If you live in ‘right now’ all the time, you aren’t gonna do anything because nothing exists in just now. You have to have something to do, someplace to go, something that is out of now into the future.” Since both Watkins and Poston had some familiarity with music, they agreed to Crockett’s suggestion that they begin a new line of force in music with his help.

About that agreement Crockett recalls thinking to himself: “Good god! What do I know about music?” But I remembered that every person is something more than a tuning fork in the universe. Every person has his own music—the things he listens to, the things that harmonize in his universe. So I thought, ‘I don’t need to teach him anything about music if I can get him out. Then he’ll play his own music.’”

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Paul Crockett sometimes uses seemingly unorthodox methods to extract gold from the ore discovered in the desert. In the evenings, after they had exhausted themselves prospecting the mountains, Poston and Watkins learned to project sound, one note at a time, as they had learned to direct their “attention units.” They learned to bypass the “mechanical functions” which block the self-expression of many musicians who learn prescribed structures and styles of music by imitating the patterns of other people. Watkins and Poston began to play their music, developing an original style they call “conscious music.”

Poston and Watkins founded the music group Desert Sun, which has come to learn the laws that govern reality, and understanding of which enables one to create, to express oneself. The sun, of course, is the heavenly reality, and understanding of which is the by-product of what you've been told or shown. True knowledge is veiled by the terms of use-ness of this by-product is called science, philosophy, and esoteric systems. “I studied under no man,” he is quick to point out, “but I studied with a bunch. I would study the Upnishads; then the Tibetan Book of the Dead might be my bible for awhile, or the work of Edison and Tesla, or the teachings of Socrates. But whatever I studied, I tried it to see if it worked; I didn’t just mouth it.”

Crockett admits that much of his interest in mysticism and ancient wisdom had been stimulated by his minister father’s preachings about the prophets of old and their miracles. “I had a front row seat every time the church doors opened,” he recalls. “My dad used to preach quite a bit about Solomon: Solomon got wisdom because he asked God for it, and God gave it to him. I began to wonder why, if He gave it to a guy then, He wouldn’t give it to you now. I had to find out why they could perform miracles then, and men seemed unable to do them today. I discovered that somebody came along and said that this will never happen again, and it gave everybody a license to be lazy. People’s agreement that it will never happen again is the wall that separates them from their God, which is their.”

Crockett is particularly adamant about our misunderstanding of our godhood, or godhead. He feels there is a definite need to remove the mystery in which knowledge is veiled by the terms of occultism. “The higher law or ‘godhead,’” he explains, “is the attention unit in its pure form. When you bring it down into the material universe with impressions, pictures, etc., it is no longer the attention unit; it becomes thought patterns. It may have started out as an attention unit and finished up

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in the material world as a bad feeling. If it passes the emotions in its pure form, the attention unit is the power that will move the existing form. But in nearly all physical forms it is stopped. Energy is brought down out of godhead and into personality where it is tied up in emotions, conflicts, etc. When we disavow that we are gods, we have separated ourselves from our source, which is us. It takes a great deal of energy to make ourselves separate from anything.

“We’ll never be able to find ourselves by starting at the material end and working back to godhead,” Crockett concludes. “But if we are gods, then it’s not too difficult to see what we should be able to do by taking the energy of the godhead and turning it into all the elements of personality. By viewing from the world of action to the world of reaction you can see where the stops come in—opposition, encroachment, enforcement. Contention is the mode of life for most people—the only way they have of feeling that they are alive. Contention is created in the stress of attention. The attention unit is the real life force; our feelings are actually the disintegration of our energy.’’

Crockett is a self-made man. He has a keen understanding of the institutions which shape the prevailing attitudes and patterns of society, “the agreed upon reality” as he calls it. “I spent the first third of my life getting educated,” he says, “the second third finding out what I got educated to, and the last third getting de-educated.” During the ‘50s and ‘60s he operated a small repair business and bicycle shop in Carlsbad, New Mexico. The business provided a testing ground for his studies of the laws that govern man and the universe: “In one town I got to see people grow up and have kids. What I saw fit so well with the law I was taught, that I could see what they did and how they wound up where they were.”

From his observations Crockett has seen that most people are where they are today because they consider that they themselves know nothing. By agreeing to the patterns of perception and behavior laid down by parents, schools, churches, governments, we allow ourselves to be programmed, like robots. “The agreements that we have that say we can’t remember, that we don’t know anything and we have to go to school to know something, become walls or corridors in time and space in which we can function, but which limit us in our ability to do. They are created by us or for us because we do not know how to accept or reject what other people say to us. Most people do not have the ability to say, ‘No!’ This inability is formulated on the idea that Mama and Daddy know best, that knowledge is in the schoolhouse or in the church house, and that wisdom is the possession of our leaders.’’

Crockett’s is a cosmic perspective, from which he sees individual human beings as alchemical stations in an electronic universe. Adopting the call-letters of his name, each individual transmutes the energy of his godhead, locating it in time and space, locking his attention down in the elements of personality. Through personality one enters into agreements with other personalities, thus creating the complex circuitry of the “agreed upon reality” in the physical world. Contention points, which stop us from presenting ourselves to one another as gods, act as capacitors and resistors to constrict the flow of energy and hold it for future use.

In time, with our energy deeply involved in maintaining the circuitry of our agreements, absorbed at points of contention and blown out by the cross-circuits of disagreement, we forget our godhead. Forgetting its source we endow the material world to which we have transferred our attention with importance. We are no longer free beings able to postulate and perceive, to build location points in time and space at will. We are no longer able to act, to do; we become automatons dominated by the machines of personality programmed in a forgotten past, able only to react, to be manipulated. We lose our creative ability and blame what is created on an outside god. Having forgotten our true God we fear the timeless void, the unknown, and cling to the idols we have made.

We are trapped in a world of our own making. Is there no escape? “Consider that we are a god,” Crockett says. “A god supposedly has the ability to do anything at any time under any set of circumstances. In other words, a god in his full dominion has the ability to create. There would never be anything in the realm of a god that was important because there would be no scarcity. One who knows, knows this. Only a personality could have anything that was important. We create the elements of personality because we’re lazy. These are machines based on belief, faith, if’s, and’s, and but’s. They are our alibi for not being what we are. But personality is a tool that we use; it is not us. When we quit tying up our energy in contention points, personality dies. To achieve freedom expect anything and act without resistance to it. Jesus said, ‘If a man tells you to go a mile, go two.’ All he was saying is take the point of contention out of it. ‘But great is the man who can do these things.’”

Paul Crockett sits at the kitchen table drinking coffee, smoking Pall Malls, and playing solitaire with an old deck of cards as he spins out his yarns. Crockett constantly reminds his listeners that knowledge cannot be stated because the moment it is fixed in words it becomes data. Locked down, it does not exist as knowledge anymore but as belief. “If you see what I’m talking about,” he urges, “you should be able to do it.”

In the desert behind his house, Crockett has set up a small furnace, where he can often be found in the early hours of the morning melting down another batch of ore. He throws in a handful of flux, a few ounces of lead, stirs and probes the molten mass. Soon, he says, he will hold in his hands as free gold the precious metal detected by x-ray refractions and various assays.

Desert Sun, practicing in the nearby garage, will soon release their first record album. They are fulfilling an agreement made with a gold prospector in Death Valley, an agreement to give music back to the people and:

Make the world a better place to live.
My life is all that I’ve got to give,
Making the world a better place to live.

Been in the city too long;
The country life’s where I belong.
What is there left to do
But make the world anew?
I know there’s something
That I came here to do;
And now, at last, it comes into view:
Make the world a better place to live.
Making the world a better place to live,
My life is all that I’ve got to give.*

“Make the World a Better Place to Live” © 1972 by Desert Sun, words and music by Brooks Poston, Paul Watkins, Gerald Hauser.