# John Cleese experimented with LSD at 65 to understand the experience



John Cleese, the renowned comedian and co-creator of the iconic 1970s sitcom Fawlty Towers, has revealed that he experimented with the psychedelic drug LSD at the age of 65. The 85-year-old actor and writer explained that his decision in 2005 to take lysergic acid diethylamide was driven by a desire to understand “what it was all about.”

Speaking to The Times’ Weekend magazine, Cleese acknowledged that he had been “surprisingly ignorant” about drugs in his youth and had little interest in experimenting with them. However, under the supervision of a leading expert on LSD, he decided to try the powerful psychedelic substance, which is known to distort senses and alter perceptions of reality. He described the experience as extraordinary, although he admitted to feeling scared for about ten minutes during the trip. “The man was one of the world experts on it so I felt perfectly safe,” Cleese said. “I got scared for about 10 minutes in the middle, and he and his wife saw me through that, but it was extraordinary to realise how fertile the human mind is.”

Cleese also discussed his motivations behind agreeing to develop the West End production of Fawlty Towers, a series he co-wrote with his then-wife, Connie Booth, between 1975 and 1979. Despite initially resisting the idea for years, he ultimately agreed to the stage adaptation as a means of securing financial stability. “This is about getting myself a nest egg, so I can get a place in the sun. Because I have a problem with British weather,” he told The Times, adding, “If there’s a crisis, you can throw money at it. That’s the best thing about money.” He further noted that his age and height—he is 6’4”—make flying commercial flights uncomfortable, and having financial security would allow him to avoid flying economy class.

Their sitcom Fawlty Towers, which ran for two seasons consisting of 12 episodes, was inspired by a real-life hotelier, Donald Sinclair, who was notorious for his abrupt and rude behaviour while running the Gleneagles Hotel in Torquay. John Cleese and Connie Booth met while studying drama in New York and married in 1968; they co-wrote and starred in the series but divorced in 1978 before the second series aired.

In addition to his work on Fawlty Towers, Cleese is currently engaged in multiple creative projects. These include writing a new television series set in the Caribbean, centred around Basil Fawlty’s daughter, who has spent her life working in hotels and embarks on a new venture with her father’s assistance. He is also developing both musical and non-musical versions of Monty Python’s Life of Brian, as well as a comedy film that explores the theme of cannibalism.

The legacy of Fawlty Towers has continued to spark discussion. In 2020, the BBC decided to remove an episode titled "The Germans" from UKTV due to the use of racial slurs. The episode involves Basil Fawlty making repeated references to Nazis, which upset a German family staying at the hotel. Despite this, Cleese has confirmed that the upcoming West End production will include the controversial scene featuring Basil’s delusional fixation on the Second World War, which was precipitated by a head injury.

It will be 50 years in December since the first episode of Fawlty Towers was recorded at the BBC studios, underscoring the enduring influence of the show in British television history.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.bendigoadvertiser.com.au/story/8953236/john-cleese-tried-lsd-at-65/> - This article supports the claim that John Cleese experimented with LSD at the age of 65 to understand the experience. The story highlights his curiosity about the substance despite having been relatively ignorant of drugs in his youth.
2. <https://www.thecourier.com.au/story/8953236/john-cleese-tried-lsd-at-65/> - This article confirms that John Cleese took LSD despite having little interest in drugs during his younger years. It also mentions his decision to try LSD under expert supervision.
3. <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x9in574> - This video provides a visual confirmation of John Cleese discussing his LSD experience, further supporting the story of his experimentation with the drug at age 65.
4. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fawlty_Towers> - This Wikipedia page provides detailed information about Fawlty Towers, including its inspiration from real-life hotelier Donald Sinclair and the roles of John Cleese and Connie Booth in co-creating the series.
5. <https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-53444079> - This BBC article discusses the controversy surrounding the episode 'The Germans' from Fawlty Towers, which was temporarily removed due to racial slurs and provides context to Cleese's statements about the series.
6. <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0068090/> - This IMDb page provides information about Fawlty Towers, including its episodes, production timeline, and the credits of John Cleese and Connie Booth as writers and actors, corroborating details about their work on the series.
7. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-14656537/John-Cleese-LSD-scared-65.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data