

I Guess That's Me (A Reflection)

Lee Frank

Looking Back At Me

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Looking Back At Me

This last chapter is not the last of me, not the me I'm trying to present with these three distinct views of myself. The next book, *Borderline Genius*, will furnish one more look at me, one emphasizing what we call the mind. But before I move on, before I get, excuse the pun, mental, I have a few more visuals, a few more looks at who I might be. Prior to showing the rest of me, I need the mention the me not here.

Although based on the photographs presented here, I realize this view of myself, this book, is far from complete. Somewhere, out in that world beyond the sphere of my knowledge, are more photos, more views of myself. I know nothing about how I appear in these other views. Yet these other pictures of me did, do, and will affect the way others see me. Which is another way of saying *this* view, the one I offer here, is but one of many. It is only one snapshot, incomplete, one truth among many.

“The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,” is something I cannot claim for this book. I have, you should imagine, many pictures of me not shown here. Are they essential to the truth I’m trying to present? I think not. But that’s just my opinion. Is what I have presented here the truth? As you can probably guess, I have the ability to alter any photograph with my computer. Given their age and treatment, I’ve had to clean up a few from necessity. I claim only that I’ve not significantly altered the content of any photo included here. This is, as I’ve said, just one truth.

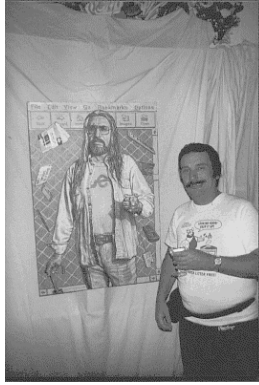
One last view of me comes not from the camera but the eye of an artist. I mentioned Jeff Whipple in *My Life In Bars* as a writer. He is also an artist. (Surprised? Then you don’t know much about people like e. e. cummings and George Gershwin.) When I saw the portrait of our friend Pam that begins this chapter, I knew I needed to have one of myself. But soon after painting hers, Jeff went to New Mexico for a couple of years. When he returned, he mentioned doing some commissioned portraits while he was out West. I jumped at the chance and suggested we make a deal. Deal made, portrait painted, now what? How about a party? Officially known as the Unveiling Party, it took place on Saturday, June 29, 1996.

While I have a great many photos of both the portrait’s development and the party, space is limited here.

[Click on this link for a quick look at ten photos from The Unveiling Party.](#)

On the next page is Dennis five years after the photos of him at my Dad’s eightieth. Comparing the two doesn’t fully make the case for his remission. As I said, he got progressively worse for two more years after the earlier picture. Perhaps it’s just as well you don’t see him in that

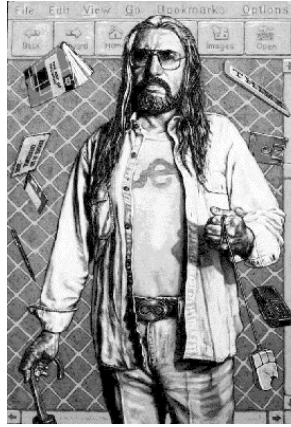
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state. I'll simply say you've seen better looking corpses. The photo here is only short three years from his nadir. He still looks good but no one is willing to bet this improvement is permanent. Nor take it for granted.

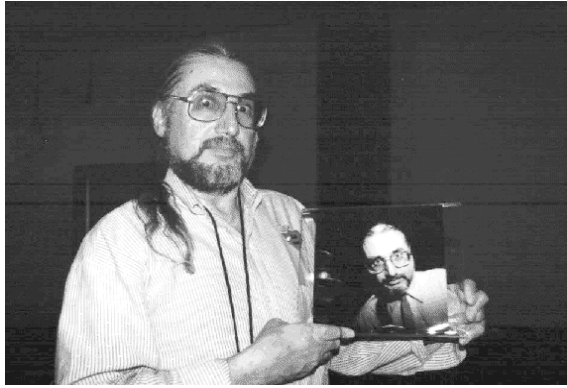


The portrait and I at one of Jeff's openings. The deal included my lending it to Jeff for shows. Fortunately, he has so much work he only borrowed it for this one show. And please don't think it merely sits quietly on my wall. It also appears on my Website (illustrating both the above mentioned opening and the Unveiling Party). In addition, I use it as a business card for my Website and the occasional postcard. I'm working on the T-shirt.



A few words of portrait explanation. The background is how my Website, known as The Fence, appears on a Web browser. (In HTML language, <BODY background = "back0001.gif">) The small book upper left is The Art of Thought by Graham Wallis. Below it is a sign from Ma Bell saying "Sorry — Temporarily Out of Service," a midnight acquisition following my exit from the Army. The pen is a special Fisher Space Pen—made with gold from the Spanish galleon Atocha—and given to me by its inventor, Paul Fisher. In my right hand is an umbrella. It signifies two things. I no longer carry a cane, but am always prepared with umbrellas. (I have two in each car and two in the house.) The black object above the mouse is my tape recorder, a constant companion since the early eighties. The "THINK" sign, is official from IBM. The undershirt is the no longer available Lee brand T-shirt. (Note the lettering matches the Lee sign for the party.) The infinity belt buckle was artistic license. The hair down, not up in my usual pony tail, is also the artist's idea. It was also Jeff's idea to float these objects around me. Which means? Perhaps it symbolizes my juggling many things at the same time. As for the look, he asked me to look serious. This is my serious look.

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Another item needing work is the last book in this series, *Borderline Genius*. So I'll end this one now with a photo that sums up what the book is about. It's kind of a paraphrase of *Casablanca*, sort of a "Here's (me) looking at me."

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