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Doing portraits on the street or I remember Goya

Robert Clarke

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SUBMITTED BY: Robert Clarke    DATE: 1/28/74

THESIS COMMITTEE:
Chief Advisor: Fred Meyer
Associate Advisors: 1. Lawrence Williams
                   2. Tony Ferri

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DOING PORTRAITS ON THE STREET
OR
I REMEMBER GOYA

A Collection of Encounters by ROBERT CLARKE

MAY 15, 1974
This paper is dedicated to butterflies and others, who are always forgetting and discovering that they are beautiful and that they can fly.
INTRODUCTION

This paper is about doing sidewalk, (pencil and charcoal), portraits. The most expensive standard single portrait being thirty-five dollars. Multiples and custom jobs are whatever price you can work out. How much money you take home depends on the percentage the owner takes. The percentage varies from none, if you can set up on your own, to fifty percent. Maybe the most important point is how cheaply you will do a portrait, since ninety percent of the people are interested in that price. Last year my cheapest portrait was ten dollars.

I talk mainly about Provincetown, Mass., although I’ve also worked in Atlantic City and the people that worked with me have been all over the country.

I’ve tried to avoid judgements about doing portraits. I think the stories say different things to different people. I view the experience as unique, but I can’t decide if there are more good points than bad or vice versa. I don’t think there are. Everything you are about to read is true.
I LIKE PORTRAITS BECAUSE:
they took me out of my ivory tower and sat me down in the real world.
they introduced me to painters who don't teach.
they strengthened my patience, determination, and resourcefulness.
they made me part of an elite community of widely divergent individuals.
they made me a performing artist, i.e. "it's showtime!"
they made some people feel better about themselves.
people who complimented me, often bought my work.
my portraits were nicely framed and hung in a prominent place when the customer got home.
people thought what I did was magic.
once started, the portrait process goes quickly.

I DON'T LIKE PORTRAITS BECAUSE:
so much time is spent waiting, doing nothing.
lots of people can't sit well, (children).
lots of people won't accept the way they look.
the whole process is so repetitive, the drawings and people saying the same things.
I must deal with obnoxious people.
they (portraits) encourage bad painting and mediocre talents.
people who don't know what they are talking about, criticize me and try to tell me what to do.
you make just enough money to try it again next summer.
people passed bad checks and stole things from me.
the hustle, the overwhelming concern for money, makes me view people with a complete lack of interest and view my art with a strange feeling.
THE SEASON

The season runs from Memorial Day to Labor Day. June is very slow and July is only slightly better. These two months are spent trying to break even. The expenses are high because you must work in tourists centers. Everybody prays for good weather in August.

The weekends and holidays are very slow, because the tourists don't have money, even though there are more of them, (this is in Provincetown, in Atlantic City the reverse is true). If the day is too warm, everybody goes to the beach. If it is drizzling, business is good. If it rains too hard, everybody stays inside. If rain is forecast for the week, people stay away from the Cape altogether. Last season a Canadian paper reported that no one could get gas on the Cape. That hurt the French-Canadian tourism, which is a sizable number of tourists on the north-east coast.

THE STUDIO

In Provincetown, there are about thirty-five portrait artists each summer. They are split into eight studios run by four owners. Almost everything is along one street. All but one studio are within the same two blocks.

We had five artists and a frame shop in the back. On the studio walls were sample portraits and most artists had self-portraits on their easels when they weren't working. The music was Muzak because anything else was too distracting. We opened around ten in the morning and closed at eleven at night. A town lar stated that a portrait could not be started after eleven. We usually worked all day except for a few hours in the afternoon. Too many days were spent waiting in vain all day. You knew if you left, things would pick up.

When someone decided to have a portrait done, they sat down and I would do a pencil, charcoal or charcoal drawing. We did only three-quarter views, no profiles. After the portrait is finished it is given to the frame girl who calls the glass and frames and collects the money.

Doing portraits is a lot like working in a carnival. Artists are a sideshow to most tourists and the type of game played between tourist and artist is similar to what goes on at a carnival. The crowd watching an artist is called a "tip". Talking to customers is called "pitching", or "hitting on the tip". A "shill" is anyone willing to sit with the understanding that, unless he buys the portrait, the artist keeps it. People are much less inclined to stop when nobody is working and are practically repelled when five of us are looking at them. Even a minor thing like sitting at an angle to the street, rather than straight at it, is important.

Rules are reduced to practicality. How you dress, general hours, how you work, are a matter of making money. If you make money, nobody cares what you look like, if you don't make money you are out. There is an unwritten rule that no one criticizes another artist, his work or a studio to the public. Infighting exists, but the artists go through
so much together that it is a matter of us against them. There are no
contrasts; some artists may work two or more studios during the season.
The turnover in personnel is high.

Hal, my boss, has three rules and three degrees of enforcement. He
cautions against "clubhousing" (talking with friends, ignoring tip). He
gets upset when we are reading, because the potential customer has a bar-
rier to overcome. The highest crime of all, though, was to stand or sit
in the doorway and look out at the street. With a barrier like that, no
one is going to have their portrait done. Standing and looking into the
studio, on the other hand, is fine because people see someone stopped and
they stop also. Everything is done to get people to stop and look. No
trase in front, sample portraits well lighted. Artists in front of self-
portraits when not working, artists names on chair backs when they are
working, at least one artist working when possible. No price list except
for frames in back. Having the artist explain personally is much more
conclusive to a sale.

TALENT

Getting someone to stop is an achievement, but getting them in and
out of the chair quickly and happy is what separates the men from the
boys, as they say.

The best portrait artists I've seen work can take someone who is
determined not to sit and get them in the chair. Nothing any other artist
could say to them would get them to sit. A good hustler has a tempo, a
kind of uncontrollable confidence. To another artist, who has used lines
from the hustle, it sounds like it won't work, like it is too phony. The
pro is fascinating to watch because nothing stops him, and I don't mean
he hammers the customer. It is finesse, looking for the weak spot and
turning the resistance into excitement. We all do it to varying degrees,
but the real pro can get the ones we would say are hopeless.

About now some of you are thinking that we are very mercenary. The
whole point of doing portraits on the street is to make some money, not
to further your career, or spread the artistic word. There are some ben-
efits to having so many models and all the praise is a cheap thrill for
the first week or so, but unless you sell portraits, you lose money and
sit around a lot.

Many people think the key to being a good portrait artist is some
type of charming talent. The key is being steady. By steady, I mean
sitting all day and doing nothing while the guy beside you is doing one
after another. Steady when the child in the chair is crying. Steady
when the portrait falls apart or the customer is unreasonable. Steady
when you can work all day and not be destroyed for the next two. If
you can do this, you don't have to be good, only passable. I've found
you need infinite patience, a lot of faith, and no nerves.

At this point I should mention skill. On the street, portraits
range from $1.75 profiles to $50. pastels. How well you can draw
and flatter really doesn't count if you have a cheap crowd. The public
Twenty-five minutes had the workers only patientsately great drawing Very contact This they make as much to liked his knew on a spent would often spend four to six hours on a portrait. All the artists I knew liked his work and a lot bought his work, but Chuck was hard pressed to make as much as a fair to poor artist. It wasn't just the time he spent on a portrait that held him back, work habits were part of it, but great drawing is not a guarantee.

There are three artists I must describe on the other extreme. Two worked only in full face pastel, one only in charcoal profiles. All three had the ability to get people to sit who would not sit for anyone else. Twenty-five minutes was the maximum time spent on a pastel and three minutes on the charcoal profiles. The portraits had a likeness in most cases and the customer was usually happy. Esthetically they were definitely average, but all three were top money makers.

So you need a certain amount of charisma, a certain amount of will and patience, and a certain amount of skill. Without these three things people don't last.

PITCHING

I think the best crowd are families staying for several days. Single types don't usually sit. I draw lots of kids and lots of women.

As people walk by, there are different ways of picking out customers. Some artists look at the shoes. Good shoes meant a good possibility, they said. Some use a shotgun approach and ask everybody they see. This is kind of desperate. Many times the whole thing hinges on eye contact. Very few people come looking for a particular artist. Very few take the time to figure out which artist did what. The strangest thing to me is, very few seem to care. If they are looking at you, that is your cue to speak. If you wait and they look in someone else's direction, they hit on them. You don't hit on a customer when they are looking at, or standing in front of another artist, unless he doesn't say anything.

Being able to talk to people without scaring them away is something you can learn only by doing. There is a time to press and a time to start up and let them think. When working with others there must be a team effort or you cancel each other out. If you don't want to do a child, you mention someone else in the studio. Before handing a photo back, you show it to somebody else. If someone is out you make an effort to set up an appointment.

Assume that someone comes in and looks around. I might say something original like, "would you like to have one done?" Then I might mention the guarantee which says, if you don't like it, you don't buy it. Sometimes strangers in the crowd encourage the prospect. The best situation is when they sit because of the last portrait I did.
Some artists like to talk to the subject continuously, others are indifferent, and some are hostile. Each approach has its advantages. If the subject is self-conscious I will tell them to relax, that the people are watching me work, and not looking at them. I tell the subject that he may take a break at any time and not to force an expression. If I talk too much, it throws off my concentration, and encourages them to be critical, and it breaks the pose. Sometimes I have to use conversation because they start to fall asleep or get very bored. If the subject is a child, you usually have to talk to them so they will move or less face you. They may also be frightened. If the child is too young to talk to or doesn't want to talk, I have to use animal noises, mirrors, or I tell them to look out for a magic puppy that might appear at any second from behind my head.

People are conditioned to expect a polaroid smile. They want to look TV, happy, unusually pleasant. We must continuously explain that this is impossible, that they must sit for at least half an hour, that no one can hold a smile for half an hour. We tell them that we draw a natural expression with a start of a smile.

When a person first sits down, they may jokingly refer to a double chin or something. I take that comment very seriously. Hardly anybody is happy with a portrait that looks like them. A resemblance is necessary, but it must somehow be slightly dramatic. When I draw a middle-aged or older woman I let out all the stops and flatter as much as I can without losing the resemblance. If it is a man of the same age I'm usually more realistic, unless I know he wants to be flattered. A younger person's treatment depends on the conversation I have with them.

Most people sit O.K. They can be talked back into position and make a real effort to sit through the whole portrait. Some are too nervous or drunk and the portrait should be stopped as soon as possible. Children sometimes pose like champions, but usually they get bored real fast. I try to draw the eyes, nose, mouth and then the rest isn't too difficult to guess at. I also try to avoid doing children in the evening.

AFTERMAI

There are times when no matter how good the portrait is, everything collapses. The artist may be driven to the point of tearing up the portrait, drawing flies on noses, or bouncing a crumpled up portrait off the forehead of a customer. Sometimes people want to play games of reverse snobbery. They aren't interested in the portrait, they just want to be the center of attention. Sometimes it is a series of vague comments: "I look so sad" "I look so old" "my child has such a bubbling personality" "He doesn't look like himself today". A little of this goes a long way. Some artists will make one change and then charge extra for any others. Some block out the rest of the face and fix one feature at a time. This is no way to correct a drawing, but the customer has nothing to complain
about since he checked off each feature, I find that people will work themselves up to complain. By the time they get back to me they are almost screaming. I listen, ask what they think is wrong. Then I have the subject sit down in the chair. I explain that the portrait should be viewed this way, that to have the subject just stand in front of them outside or back at the motel, will be very different. If they are intent on a smile or teeth, I explain that unless it is natural, it will look pasted on or turn into a grimace. If they point to a particular feature I may shave it down or build it up. This is usually enough. Last season I was lucky enough not to have any rejects, but I have seen excellent portraits bounce and horrible portraits glide by with praise.

The big moment when the subject gets up is always strained. First they are a little shook up from sitting still for much longer than most expected. Usually they ask someone in the crowd what they think and usually the crowd says that it looks just like them. This reinforcement eases the doubt and the subject starts to be more confident. It is vital that this moment be handled smoothly. If doubt is building up in their face, I ask with a positive attitude, what is wrong. A touch-up at this point can save a lot of trouble.

Sometimes as I am finishing the background or taking the portrait off the easel, the customer or parent will start to reach for it. I stop them with a short explanation of how delicate it is, as I move it away from them and to the frame girl. Once it touches their hands, unframed, the mystique evaporates. It becomes much harder for the frame girl to sell glass and a frame. It can become the difference between a souvenir and a piece of art.

THE FINISH

The frame girl must sell a frame and also deal with any criticisms that weren't brought up in front of me. All portrait artists are slightly apprehensive until the job actually leaves the studio. We are familiar with the frame girl coming out and discretely telling us there is some sort of problem.

A good frame girl has a solution to any problem that the customer might bring up. Frames are not sold by saying how lovely they are. All customers get that pitch every day and immediately reject it. Very few customers ever had anything framed other than an 8X10 photograph. They don't know prices, they are cautious, they think they can do better shopping around. The frame girl must answer these doubts before they come up and be convincing about it. Sometimes the people come back to me and ask me if it is really worth it. I tell them that I don't make any money from frame sales and that the fact is the same frame elsewhere will cost more for several reasons. Even if this is handled well, most people just can't believe frame prices and we get an amazing number of people who have a brother or brother-in-law who runs a frame shop back home.

You might think after all of the maneuvers I have described, that finally after the frame is sold, everyone can relax. Not true. This
is the time when the artist and the studio really get burned. The people with the bad checks and bad charge cards can be very ordinary looking and very smooth. I'll mention some of the best later in the paper. The frame girl must be paranoid. Almost every time I've seen a frame girl trust someone we get a bad check, bad card, or they slip with the portrait.

NOTE: In the section that follows, R.C. refers to another artist in our studio and not to myself. Jim, Tom, and Chuck V. are the other artists in the studio.
LATE JUNE

Woman: That picture on top there, what is that? Is that paint?
R.C.: That's pastel, they are all pastel.
Woman: Gee, it looks like a photograph.
R.C.: Well that is because of the technique, it is the technique, not the material that is important.

Young couple standing in doorway, looking and pointing at portraits.
No: Would you like to have one done?
Couple speak in French to each other and walk away.

I do two brothers ages two and three. One wiggles and squirms and I handle the cash because the frame girl hasn't showed up yet. I compute a tax of eight cents instead of eighty three cents. The father points it out for me.

When people are waiting and a possible customer makes a remark, sometimes the people waiting laugh, as if to say, "boy do you believe those people?" Twenty minutes earlier they were the same way.

2nd of day: Oh, do I look like that?

Boy of about eight years: Look at that one, it looks exactly like a person.

Nancy, who is temporarily working beside me, receives a $50 tip while I am working on a double. My double tipped me $5. Tips are very rare and Nancy's was staggering, no one would believe her at first.

Two photo jobs: Middle aged man and twenty-eight year old airline stewardess, both from the same family, both dead.

BLANK DAY

Double of a French-Canadian couple.

Did portrait of middle aged woman with a natural frown.

We were discussing different ways to make money as an artist. Tom works in Puerto Rico in the winter, but is finding it to be more of a problem every year. He likes doing straight portraiture, but like almost all portrait artists I've known, would like to get off the street. Eventually he wants to be working out of galleries. R.C. works in Miami in the winter. He does portraits via the Playboy Club, restoration work for a frame shop, designs for a nation-wide firm, and murals
in homes. Frank does 11X14 watercolors. With that size, he doesn't waste paper and he can work fast. He says if you spend over half an hour on one, you can't make any money. He sells them in bulk at $10 a piece, to forty galleries across the country. When he was in New Orleans, he would set up outside a mansion and do a watercolor. The owner would come out and soon he was painting for the mansion and all their friends. In St. Petersburg, he would do the same thing with yachts. Hal used to take Art News, Art in America, American Artist, etc, and enter the shows that he was interested in. After the show was over, he would receive the results and the names of the judges. After a while, maybe three years, his notes would show which judges preferred "Rivers" type or "Motherwell" type paintings. An idea which received enthusiastic response, was for all of us to go to Rio to do portraits.

Did two girls in color and one in charcoal, ages seven, four and nine.

Tom and Frank claim California is bad for portraits. Tom said the people buy something like a name print instead. Frank said that if they did want a portrait, they would go to Disneyland and get the cheapest possible, Las Vegas is bad because the hotels discourage it, they want the money. The people who do want them, want them done on black velvet. The best place in this country, they felt, was the south where there is still a desire for the relatives on the wall and "old" money. Miami has forty or fifty artists. The smaller towns are good because the people talk each other and the artist ends up doing everybody. Tom said Farmington, N. Carolina was very good. Frank had people driving three hundred fifty miles to Amarillo, Texas. Mexico requires a work permit or a bribe. Tom discovered this while drawing in Juarez. He was arrested and put in jail. While there he started talking to the captain, who was waiting for a bribe. He wasn't actually in jail yet. When Tom suggested that he could do the captain's portrait, all the medals came out and he posed. Tom formed an H on the guy's forehead with highlights. It is a reference to a Spanish saying, meaning he has no mind.

Saturday July 1st; Nothing all day.

While working on a color portrait of a girl in her twenties, a little kid comes up behind each artist and asked if we wanted to buy a poppy.

Tom got a dog photo job. It was a white terrier, poodle type on a red chair. The head was tilted. We were commenting on how unreal and weird the dog looked. Just after I made a comment on how it looked stuffed, the owner, a middle-aged woman, said, "Don't make fun of my baby." I melted away.

I go through the prices for a woman with two kids.
Woman: How much for two?
He: The price is per head, I have to draw two people.
The father shows up, says, "Thirty dollars?" Nah.
I do a small charcoal and make eight dollars for the day.

**JULY 4th**
Several comments of the, "did you do your self-portrait?" nature.

I did three kids ages, two, three, and four. Then I did a color of a tremendously large lady, who throughout the portrait kept saying, "I don’t want it, it’s my husband’s idea."

Hal told me about the time he had the prices listed and on the bottom had "mats-$1.00". A guy sat down and said, "I’ll have the mat." Hal gave him a mat. The guy says, "What’s this?" Hal explains and the guy leaves.

The evening was very slow so I did a shill. Many times they want to buy the portrait anyway. I’m surprised at the number of people who are willing to sit. This one turned out to be a twenty-one year old, sunburned guy who was a Jehovah Witness with thirty-five cents.

I drew a four year old, a 16 yr. old cousin of the four year old, and a young couple.

**BLANK DAY**

I went to a Hensche demonstration today. Henry Hensche is a teacher on the cape. He studied for a long time under Hawthorne. For forty some years he has been totally concerned with color and affects of light. He runs a school in the summer and several portrait artists go to his classes every year. He is emphatic about using, what he calls, the true color relationships. He is definitely a purist.

As I came into the studio, I find R.C. working on a color of a standing, screaming, eighteen-month-old child. I did a three-year-old girl for my only portrait of the day.

I should mention at this point that my sample was a portrait(double) of Raquel Welch and myself. I know that sounds goofy, but the whole idea in the minds of the customers is being able to recognize the portrait and consider it striking. Raquel was sometimes mistaken for Sophia Loren, but most people knew who she was. Since I was sitting in front of my portrait, they could compare my picture with reality. It was a little confusing for some people though.

Women looking at my sample: I recognize her, but not him.

A real tourist type group stops: How much to have one done? We go through
the prices and guarantee. Group: Oh, I already had mine done by Duffy. Duffy is a caricaturist.

One of the other studios has two artists in it. When they close for the night, they put all the samples inside and put fishnet over the entrance. Last night someone lifted the net and put a cotton candy cone on one of the artists' pastel trays. Naturally this screwed up the pastels.

Yesterday, my wife saw a caricature being done of a baby. I still can't figure that out.

I did a young girl's portrait. She looked at it. I said, "How do you like it?" She said, "I don't know. It seems kind of weird, but my boyfriend loves it, so I guess it's OK."

One of my samples was a double of Pat and Bill Loud. I used them because he was smiling with teeth. They were older than most samples. They were famous, but still ordinary. It was in between the sample portraits that nobody knew and the ones done from photos that everybody knew. Anyway, we put our names on little cards on all our samples. That way customers theoretically could look at our work and pick the style they wanted. It hardly ever worked that way though.

1st woman: Look, the Louds.
2nd woman: No, that's Clarke.
1st woman: It's the Louds, Pat and Bill.
2nd woman: But it says R.J, Clarke? Oh, I get it! Clarke, that's who did it.

I did two photo jobs for a young guy.

I did a sepia on white paper of a girl. I thought it was good, that it was accurate and a good head. She said, "It's pretty close."

I did a father in sepia. It was a very hot day. The guy was very uncomfortable. It went OK though; he liked the portrait and I liked doing someone who had an old face with real features.

I finished the day with a two year old and then a lesbian couple.

Two girls.

We use a small mirror when working. When you put it up to your eye and turn your head you can see the subject and the portrait in progress. It is a good way to see it fresh and to catch mistakes. It seems like everyone asks about it. Tom had a little one with an embossed design on the
back. He was accustomed to having them lifted in Puerto Rico, but was surprised when the mother of the child of a portrait stole his last one.

We had this little hallway beside the studio that was used to hang pot-boilers. A potboiler is anything other than a portrait. Frank had some watercolors up. R.C. had two large heads done with rapidograph dots. One was a male profile made up of female torsos, the other was a female profile made up of male torsos. These were offset printed and were going to be mass produced. R.C. also had some still life arrangements done in oils. Jim did several sunsets which sold almost as fast as he did them. Tom had a few landscapes and I had one of sailboats in a bay. The fact that a lot of these were done from postcards, didn't seem to bother anyone. We thought it was a little strange that people wanted that, but everytime Jim sold another sunset, we stopped wondering about it.

Several artists have worked for a guy in California and Flordia, named Jack Kaufman. When things were slow, he would have them work on "tits a go go". This consisted of doing life sized pastels of individual breasts. These were put in little frames so the customer could do creative things like, mix or match sets, or put one on the inside of a door and another one outside. Incredible, but true.

When the standard exit line is, I'll be back, you assume that you won't see them again. I did a sepia of a girl who actually came back.


__________________________

Appointment from yesterday. Two sisters.

The building we are working out of has a strange story. It is brand new, in a good location, but it only has two tenants. A candy store and us in the front of the building. The rest of this barn-like structure is empty. The reason is because no thought was given to crowd psychology. No one wants to go into a place they can't see into or a place they can't get out of easily. At any rate, someone is setting little fires in and around the building. Last night was the fifth. Hal was nearby and managed to get pastels and samples out of the firemen's way.

Hal runs another studio a couple of buildings down the street. The other day Bob's sample of John Wayne fell off the door. He put it back up, it seemed to be OK. Later, as Bob was pointing to the Wayne sample, talking about frames, the bottom side of the frame falls off. Bob catches it and turns to the opposite wall quickly mentioning other types of frames available.

__________________________

One color and then it rained.
Jim is working on a little girl about ten years old. Things are going OK the entire family is standing in the doorway watching the portrait. Suddenly the girl cries and runs from the chair. The parents ask what's wrong. The girl says, "You're talking about me, I know it!" The father denies it but the girl is still crying. Father, "Knock it off! Right now!" She stops crying, but is now terrified. I know exactly what the girl was talking about. People who watch don't understand how much is at stake. The artist can do only so much as far as calming the subject. All the child needed was a little reassurance. Instead, the father panics because people are now watching him, and bullies the kid into staying in the chair. A simple, "It's alright, we love you," would have eliminated the problem. Some kids are absolute monsters, but this kid was just scared.

One charcoal all day.

Double. single follow-up. Double.

Someone did a portrait from the other studio and the woman was determined to use Saran Wrap instead of glass.

Many times a family wants several done, but doesn't want to wait till one artist does them all, as they split among two or more artists. This creates a strange competition. Now you have more than the usual barriers to overcome. Now it becomes a question of who will be done first, which can be a good and a bad thing. Which one looks better, mine or his, and which one has the nicest backround colors. By themselves, each portrait would probably be fine, but put together it can become a disaster.

Because of the large amount of bad checks, bad charge cards, phony I.D.'s, we try to have at least part of the portrait paid for in cash. A lot of people won't take checks, or charge cards over fifty dollars (Master Charge insures up to fifty dollars, after that you are on your own) and I don't blame them. Hal just had a woman get a color portrait with an expensive frame. She paid by check, took the portrait, left town, stopped the check via the bank, and screwed Hal out of a frame and glass and the artist out of a portrait. Something like that happens all the time, and I can't help but laugh when people get indignant and say, "you mean you don't trust me?" Unless they are in Massachusetts, you have to go to their state to collect on the bad check, if you can find them. Tom did a job in Puerto Rico, where the liked it so much she said, "I'm going to put something extra for you here," as she wrote the check. Naturally it bounced shy high. Tom explains he will detour through New Jersey to collect on that one.

I was doing a married French teacher from West Virginia. Her mother and mother-in-law were sitting behind me. I said, 'We can take a break
whenever you want." She said, "OK, what did you have in mind?" The rest of the portrait went like that until at the and the mother or mother-in-law mentioned coming back next year with the husband.

People will come back after five years and ask an artist if he remembers them. Sometimes they will, many times I can't recall the first one of the day. I do remember my first pastel, it was an older guy with steel rimmed glasses and a harelip.

Double later in the day. No rejects yet.

Jim is doing a kid on the parent's lap. The parent is talking to the kid trying to keep him from crying. He starts counting with the kid. They count to one hundred twice.

Did a mother in her twenties, very pretty, with short brunette hair and no makeup. She sat like a rock. I spent too much time on it, two hours, and wasn't happy with it. The husband liked it. It was a good likeness, but a model that good is a shock.

I did a four-year-old girl which almost bounced.

The evening was really slow and a couple of the guys were working on pot- boilers. Tom was doing a really red, red sunset and before he was finished a woman bought it. He had been joking with me about it as he was working on it, about who would buy it.

A single sepia and three children in one sepia.

I did a sepia of a girl with a leather porkpie type hat and then a single color.


Two doubles.

I did a black girl who had nice features, but extensive eye makeup and her hair in a cone. She got up every five minutes and moved her head constantly. She liked it and her girlfriend liked it.

R.C. was working on a family. They had a baby who could not sit, so several Polaroids were taken. Wife to husband, "I don't know, does that look like her?" One of the kids made two attempts to wreck my pastel tray.
R.C. did an English couple who said any way he wanted to do the portrait was fine with them. He did most of their bodies and a detailed white dress for the woman.

I did a St. Bernard from a photo. It was kind of fun as a change of pace.

I did a couple on brown paper. They sat because they liked Raquel and the detailed treatment.

Sepia of a young couple and a large color.

R.C. had a good day yesterday, but lots of static today. Charcoal came back from several days ago. He kept calm and they went away happy.

I did a large color of a gay guy.

R.C. starts the day with a second touch up on a color triple. The people don’t know what they want and finally, somehow, R.C. manages to end the fiasco. Then a woman comes in and demands another picture or her money back. R.C. does another picture and she goes away. Some days have to be taken as a test of will.

A girl points to R.C.’s sample of him and a blonde girl and asks if it is Russ and Flo.

R.C.: What?

Girl: Do you know who that couple is?

R.C.: Lewis and Clark.

The other day a little girl saw the sample and said, “Oh, look, Brigette and Berney.”

Nothing.

One sepia of a little girl. Appointment for double.

Parents will ask four year-olds if they like their portrait. The kids will say things like, “Where are the feet?”

Jim did a double color and the frame girl only charged them for one. The couple didn’t say a word.
My double appointment fell apart. I started it first thing in the morning. The girl complained about her mouth, then I did the man much too large. Somehow they bought it. Then I did two four year olds in a row, which was enough to last a lifetime. Finally a blonde girl sits down and tells me that this is her second time, that she didn’t like the first one. She liked the one I did though.

AUGUST 1st
Double color. Color of mother with huge head, but easy to draw. She liked it.

Master Charge sent a thirty-seven page pamphlet of “hot” Master Charge numbers.

Charcoal. Head was too big.

A guy walks in with his wife and two kids.
Guy: Well you guys look like you could use some work.
Tom: Sure.
Guy: What do you charge?
Tom: Twenty-five dollars.
Guy: No, you’ll have to do better than that.
Tom: Well we have one for thirty-five.
Guy: No, I mean something cheaper. Don’t you have something around ten or twelve?
Tom: Yes, we do a ten dollar charcoal.
Guy: Oh, yeah, I just remembered, my sister is an artist.
Tom: Oh, come on now. Then Tom describes the guarantee.
Guy: Well, we are going to look around a little bit. Where did you go to school?
Tom: The Cape school. It’s the old Hawthorne school.
Guy: (dumbfounded) Well we’re going to look around. Don’t be mad. Don’t be upset.

I did a blonde woman, a man with a mustache, a junior high boy, and a gay guy. While I was working on the boy, a woman came up behind me and ask if I ever left a portrait unfinished, because she liked it at the point I was at.

I finished the day with a sepia double.

I did two brothers in color, a sepia double from Toronto, and a color of a beautiful girl from Montreal. A very good-looking girl is difficult, because the slightest mistake stands out.

Jim did a double portrait with a sunset on the bay behind them.
Two sepias of brothers, four and seven. Color of teenage girl.

I waded through a triple color photo job. Double color.

Small double, large double, single color.

John, at the other studio, does a family of five with the mother last. The four people are crowded together, filling up the paper and the mother sits down. She has a huge beehive hairstyle. John sort of twists it into an S shape that only partially blocks out two people. You must plan ahead on group portraits.

Two colors and a black and white.

R.C. did a fat kid with a baseball hat. They bought it, then went to another studio and had another one done. Then they came back here for a touch up.

R.C. talks to a woman about a portrait. She hesitate then says, "We just don't have the wall space." It's sixteen by twenty inches.

Two large colors, a small color and a sepia. I also sold a sample.

One small black and white.

A double color and sepia of two brothers.

A small charcoal and a color of teenage girl. The teenager didn't like it at all, but it was a good portrait.

Color of mother and child. Color of sister of same family. R.C. kicked double charcoal to me.

A small double color portrait came out well. Eleven year old girl with a natural smile, she liked it.
A family was asking the prices. The two kids started crying because the boy didn’t want it done and the girl did.

Did a large color of middle-aged guy in white sweater, very pale, but nice pose. I made a basic drawing error and overworked it. I should have toned down the white sweater, because it killed the cream highlights in the face.

Did sepia of lesbian. Kept it loose, barely used stump to blend. She and her girlfriend liked it and I liked it.

Sold a double photo job. The photo was too small and more work than it was worth.

The wife of the man in the white sweater came out real good. Then they rushed out to catch their chartered plane.

Jim got twenty-five dollars for a simple copy of a cartoon. It took him about ten minutes to do. The customer had flown in for the day in his private plane.

I did a portrait of a guy and as I’m finishing I hear one of his kids say that he should have kept his beard.

Me: Did you have a beard?

Him: Yeah, I shaved it off last week. (He gets up and looks quizzical at the portrait)

Me: Well, it’s like people who wear glasses all the time and then have the portrait done without them. Then they can’t understand why the portrait doesn’t look like them. (As I’m saying this he reaches around the easel and picks up his glasses)

Did brother, five, and sister, four, in color. Sepia of teenage girl.

Hal is doing a double, so to speak, of a guy and his tuba. It’s not the big marching band type, it’s about three feet long. It’s a strange portrait.

Tom does a great photo job of three kids. The relatives are complaining because the one girl has her "photo" smile. He goes around with it until they get tired of hearing their comments.

As a man is walking by, he turns his head, asks the price, gets an answer and continues without missing a step. All within the space of 15 feet.

Color. Color of man with beard. Little girl eleven years old.

Girl with black hair. Four year old girl. Audrey Hepburn type follow up. A follow up on that.
A man with his family stops says, "Can you start it in black and white and if I like it, make it color?"

As I start working on a young boy, who looks like a young Richard Chamberlin, his mother and someone else start harassing me. I've barely started to sketch when I hear, "It doesn't look like him, that eye bothers me," etc. Finally the mother leans over my shoulder and comments on the nose. I said, "It's about one third done, it takes half an hour, in twenty-five minutes you can worry." She backed off and improved after that. The other kibitzer continued and I could have turned him on, but that night have stirred the mother, so I tore down on the portrait and the mother loved it. She preceded all of this with, "Well they never really make it look like them."

I did a color of a lawyer as soon as I came in. He had glasses, gray hair and sat well. It was one of my best portraits all summer. He tipped me twenty dollars.

I did a fifth grade teacher from Mass, with long black hair, that turned out good. Then I had a ten-year-old that sat like a rock. Finished with a girl in her twenties, who was a surgical assistant.

I started a double of a couple and finished the woman. She gets up and I'm all set for the man to sit down, but he doesn't, instead he starts getting his money out. I said, "Not yet, I still have you to do." Then they say they only wanted her done, well, I could have sworn I heard them say they wanted a double. In any case I'm left with her in the lower left corner of the paper. I played around with the background and out it down, but it still looked strange. They bought it, and seemed happy, but I know that portrait will return some day to haunt me.

I did three color portraits today.

A girl comes up to R.C, and asks how much it costs. R.C, says thirty-five dollars. The girl asks how long it takes, he says, little over an hour. She says, "Not bad for an hour's work." Her father is a mechanic.

Color of a little girl and a double sepia.

(I'm really getting sick of people saying, "Who did your portrait?")
A car drives up and stops. The father leans out of the window and asks the prices. We tell him, he thanks us, and drives on.

Triple charcoal, double sepia, sepia.

I did a color of a teenage girl, a ten or eleven year old girl, and a five year-old girl.

I sold my potboiler of the sailboats in the bay. I sold a photo job where I did an F-106 jet fighter in color for a guy from the Pentagon. That evening a guy is looking at Raquel and then he asks how much for one like that, pointing to it. I start to explain a double and he says, no just her. I give him a price and tell him to pick it up in two days.

One color.

Sold the copy of Raquel. Did the lawyer's wife and got a five dollar tip.

By this time, I'm turning down kiddy jobs that look like they are going to be trouble. Tom talks to a family with four kids. They want two triples done, so Tom and I split the job. I saw the two teenage daughters and thought that was it. Tom does the father and I do the mother. So far, everything is fine. Then I realize Tom is going to do the teenage girls and I'm faced with a four-year-old girl and a six-year-old boy. As soon as I started, the mother took off. I was barely able to finish the kids.

I did a double color and a color of the daughter of a former portrait.

Henry R. is an artist who works down the street. His partner and he are the biggest money makers on the street. Henry's work resembles the Breck hair portraits. A woman went up to Henry and said, "Mr. R., I just love your work, I think you are the best caricature artist in town."

A black guy comes to Hal's other studio and wants to pick up a portrait he paid for, but didn't like. It was done two years ago by a black artist who died last summer of a heart attack.

A Hari Krishna was arrested for obstructing traffic when he gave the hard sell to some people in a car.

R.C. did a kid who knew he was dying of cancer. R.C. thought his attitude was amazing.
Two mothers lean around the doorway. The one mother asks if we know an artist who wore purple and white. He did her son two years ago. I'm thinking, come on lady, are you kidding; when R.C. starts saying, "Oh yes," he says, "He wore purple and white, right?" He says that the artist was "Logan of Hollywood," but that it was more like three years ago.

Hal does two black poodles with a maroon background. A guy walks down the street with FAGGOT printed across his T-shirt.

SEPT. 3rd
Labor day. Blank day.

A family stops. The father asks how much. I say twenty-five in color.

The father says, "If you would do it for twenty I'd take it." I say twenty-five.

A good example of Tom Mooreism takes place. A woman walks up to us. She looks at Tom's empty chair, then at me.

Woman: Are you Tom Moore?
Me: No.
Woman: (looking at R.C., who is even farther away from Tom's easel) Are you Tom Moore? R.C.: No.
Woman: Well I was just wondering. I knew an artist named Moore, but I can't remember his first name.
Me: (pointing to Tom's self-portrait on his easel) That's Tom.
Woman: Oh no, that's not him. He didn't do portraits, but his name was Moore.

A man walking a black puppy on a leash, stops.

Man: How much to do the dog?
R.C.: To do what to the dog?
Man: To draw his picture, dummy.
R.C.: Forty dollars.
Man: How much, I didn't hear you.
Man: Forty-five, you went up five dollars. How come? R.C.: Because I'm a dummy.
Man: A dog doesn't have two heads you know.
Tom: (who can't pass up a pun) Well the dog's head would be one and he is trying to get ahead. That would make two. (Read this again)

Kim (another artist) returns my sunglasses by taping them to my self-portrait.

Hal, R.C. and Tom started talking about Joe Borsky. Joe was an artist who worked in P-town several years ago. Joe had a theory that we are overwhelmed by visual information. To eliminate this overload while working on a portrait, he made a "reality" hood. He had a leather shop make a funnel that he could wear over his head. This would concentrate his vision to a one-inch circle. This way he would not be distracted by the surrounding color and detail. He would examine the subject, then duplicate that
same square inch on his paper. The only drawback was that he looked like a giant anteater. When Phyllis, Joe's boss, fired him, he sat in front of the studio and fasted for two days. He went home at night though.

At the end of the day, the artists left in town, went to the Cellar Bar for a farewell, since many were leaving the next day.

My last day. Three color.
Turned down two impossible photo jobs.

TRANSLATIONS

"Do you have anything smaller?" = Do you have anything cheaper?

"Do you ever do two on one?" = Can I get it cheaper that way?

"How much for just the face?" = Can I get it cheaper that way?

"Do you do them in oil?" = I have no intention of buying one, but I don't want to look cheap.

"We want to look around first." = We're looking for someone cheaper.

"I could never sit that long." = I can't afford it.

"Do you do profiles?" = I can't afford the full face.

"No, I really like the black and white better." = The color is too much money.

"How late are you open?" = I'm going down the street to have it done.

"Did you ever have anyone refuse one?" = I changed my mind and why is the crowd shaking its head?

"Do you always draw what you see?" = I expect to be flattered.

"Is that me?" = I hate it.

"Do you do this in the winter?" = Do you really know what you are doing or am I an experiment?

"I just had one done." = I didn't have one done or I don't like it but, I bought it and it's too late now.

"You're the artist." = I don't like it, but I'm not going to argue.

"Where did you study?" = Are you any good?

"What do you really like to paint?" = Are you sincere about this portrait?
"We're going to have some breakfast first." = Goodbye.

"We will be right back." = Goodbye.

"Not right now." = Goodbye.

"I don't have the patience." = I'd like one, but I don't want one.

"Look at the character in that face." = Look at those wrinkles.

"There's something about the mouth." = I don't think I'm going to buy it.

"I'm an artist myself." = All of the above.

"It looks just like a photograph." = I'm impressed.
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