



# ATOMIC ARTIST

and Other Groovy Tales

The Collected Writings  
of Floyd Jones

# Atomic Artist and other Groovy Tales

---

The Collected Writings of  
Floyd Jones

Atomic Artist, and other Groovy Tales: The Collected Writings of Floyd  
Jones

© 2009 by Floyd Jones (All Rights Reserved)

ISBN-10: 1441498222

ISBN-13/EAN-13: 9781441498229

Published by Burnt Mill Publishing Co., Philadelphia, PA

# Contents

1. Atomic Artist .....	6
2. A Really Revolting Romance .....	17
3. The Dream .....	20
4. The Destitute Detective .....	21
5. Vietnam Vet .....	32
6. How Jesus Ruined X-Mas .....	34
7. Thirteen Greasy Truck Drivers .....	38
8. The Evil Brain Lives! .....	39
9. Murderer Mike .....	54
10. How to be a New Jersey Driver .....	56
11. My Vacation with O.J. (or, Horror on the High Seas) .....	59
12. Gilmore & Duke Meet Franklinstein .....	68

## About the Author

Floyd Jones was born in Marion, Ohio in 1969. He graduated from Glassboro State College in 1991 with a degree in Communications. (The college later renamed itself “Rowan University” in an effort to distance itself from him.)

He worked briefly for the TV show *Candid Camera*, and has written, produced and directed numerous short movies, including *The Decapitator* (1995), *A Gilmore & Duke Valentine’s Day* (2001) and *A Date With Jesus* (2003), as well as the feature-length *Bum Man — Hero of the Homeless* (2007).

He currently resides in Philadelphia with his wife, Yuki, and their son, Ryan.

## Atomic Artist

Although there have been many mystery-shrouded occurrences over the years (the Amelia Earhart disappearance, the Iran-Contra scandal, etc.), I believe I can say that without a doubt the greatest untold story of the 20th century would have to be that of my old friend Albert E. Oppenheimer.

When I first met Al, I was a freshman at the University of Pittsburgh — the year was 1968. I was sitting in the student cafeteria, having lunch with a girl who had known Al from high school, when he walked up behind me and patted me on the back. “Hi Lisa,” he said to my companion, and then looked down at me. “Hey, that’s a groovy tie you got on there, man.”

I didn’t know quite how to respond to that, since I wasn’t wearing a tie at the time. After an awkward moment of silence, Al said goodbye and walked away. Although I’ve never known for sure, I think he was tripping on LSD when we met.

Of course, back then the whole drug scene was very popular, especially among artist-types. Being an Art major, it was very important for Al to create the impression that he was a drugged-out wild man for his artwork

to be taken seriously. Unfortunately for him, his artwork wasn't being taken seriously at that time anyway, and for good reason. His paintings were atrocious. Everyone hated them, except Al, who remained firmly convinced (despite what everyone told him) that he was an artistic genius.

I started hanging out with Al shortly after we met, mostly because I had a part-time job at a bakery to help pay my tuition, and didn't get out on the weekends until about one a.m.. By then, most of my other friends were either passed out drunk on the floor of a frat house or were having sex in the back seat of someone's car.

But Al, who was living in a dorm room in a building adjacent to the one I was living in, rarely left his room on weekends. Instead, he would invite some artist friends over and they would sit around playing poker, doing drugs, and singing protest songs.

One night, he happened to glance out his window as I was coming back from work. He leaned out and called to me. "Hey man, you wanna play some poker?" I didn't, but since I didn't really have anything better to do, I went up to his room. This turned out to be a good move for me, because I took him for almost 200 dollars that night. In fact, everyone who played that night won money, except Al.

His problem as a gambler was immediately obvious to anyone who ever saw him play. In poker, blackjack, or any other card game that I ever played against him, Al had a tendency to chuckle uncontrollably whenever he had a good hand. Once, he got four Aces and proceeded to laugh so hard that he fell out of his chair, rolled out the door of his dorm room and down three flights of stairs.

Despite the fact that Al was such a terrible gambler, he continued to gamble every night, and naturally continued to lose. Even more naturally, I started cutting class to visit and engage in high-stakes wagering with him, and soon was able to quit my bakery job, move into a posh off-campus apartment, and drive to school in a new Mustang. But, all good things come to an end, and after only a few weeks Al had lost every cent to his name.

My last recollection of Al from our college days is of the art exhibition held at the University sometime during the second week of December, 1968. Al was showing seven of his paintings at that exhibition, and was hoping to sell at least four of them, which was his only hope of paying his tuition for the following semester.

“If I sell all seven, we’ll play some three card monte tonight, eh?” he whispered to me as we entered the exhibition hall.

Of course, not one of his paintings sold. A critic from the Pittsburgh Press reviewing the exhibition wrote:

“Mr. Oppenheimer’s selection of subject material (seven paintings of Josef Stalin sitting on a toilet, alternately wearing a top hat, a derby, a baseball cap, a miner’s helmet, a clown’s wig, a fez, and a yarmulke, but otherwise exactly the same) is almost as poor as his technique ... this man may well be the worst artist ever.”

The next day, Al packed up his belongings and moved back to his parents’ home somewhere in central Pennsylvania, and I was not to see or hear from him again for more than twenty years. In those next twenty years, I went on to earn a doctorate in psychiatry, get married, have two children, and open up my own private practice in uptown Pittsburgh.

As I said, I had no contact with my old friend over that period of time, but I did read about him several times. In 1977, after almost ten years had passed since I had seen Al, I happened to be thumbing through a copy of *Time* when I came upon an article entitled “Albert E. Oppenheimer: The Next Picasso?”

Needless to say, I was stunned. This man, an old college buddy, a guy whose paintings had inspired more than a few art lovers to vomit back when I had known him, had just sold three paintings for more than \$100,000 each.

This news did little to change my day-to-day existence, however. I mean, sure, I was surprised, but I hadn’t had contact with the man for nearly a decade, so it wasn’t like I was going to look him up and give him a call



or anything. For all I knew, he might not have even remembered me. Besides, I was doing well, and after such a long time had passed since I'd seen him, I really felt no compelling desire to see him again. I'd had closer friends than Al even back in the days when I saw him all the time.

And so it went like this for ten more years. I went on about my own personal business, and about every third year or so I'd come across a few articles about Al, or see him being interviewed by one of those moronic talk show hosts, like Phil Donohue or Oprah Winfrey. I always read the articles and watched the talk shows he was on whenever I happened to come upon them, but I never really gave them much thought once they were over.

Now, at this point, you're probably wondering where this story is headed. So, I knew this guy in college, and he was a lousy artist, and now he's a great artist - big deal, right? Well, if that was all there was to it, I would have never written this thing to begin with.

\*\*\*

In the fall of 1987, I was in the seventh year of my private practice, and was expecting to earn about \$300,000 that year. It had been a long time since I had had a vacation, though, and after a while psychoanalyzing a bunch of lunatics starts to take a toll on you.

So, my wife and I were planning a short vacation in Jamaica when a funny thing happened — Albert E. Oppenheimer walked into my office. He had gone right past my secretary, who was busy phoning the police when I first saw him enter the room. “Jim,” he asked, “remember me? We went to college together.”

“Al! Yes, of course I remember you! It was only, I don't know, maybe a year or two ago I saw you on Oprah.”

“You saw that, huh? Cool. Well, uh, there's a reason why I'm here. I need to talk to you about something.”

“Sure, anything,” I told him. “Doris,” I called to my secretary, “there's no need to call the cops. This man's an old friend of mine.”

Doris, who was peeking into the room from behind where Al was standing, acknowledged this and went back to her desk in the lobby.

“Please, sit down.” He took a seat across my desk from me, and I continued. “You’re lucky you caught me when you did. I was just finishing up some paperwork on my last patient, and I was gonna head out of here a little early today. I’m going down to Jamaica this weekend, and I still have a little packing to do. So, what brings you here, Al?”

Al took off his bright orange, horn rimmed sunglasses and set them down on my desk. He still dressed like a hippie — a tie-dyed shirt, ripped blue jeans, and a headband with a peace symbol on it. He began rubbing his eyes and forehead as though he were suffering from a migraine. “Well, Jim, I’ve got problems. You’re the only psychiatrist I know. I mean, I’ve thought about seeing someone else, but I can’t trust just anybody. I’ve got to be certain — absolutely certain — that everything I tell any psychiatrist remains completely confidential. You’re the only person I can trust.”

“I see. Well, ummm, how soon were you expecting to get started with this? You know, I’ll be leaving tomorrow, and I’ll be gone for a week.”

Al looked down at the floor and sighed, but didn’t answer.

“I’m happy to see you, Al, and I’d be more than happy to go out and have a beer with you or something, but if you want me to psychoanalyze you, you’re gonna have to wait.”

At this point Al leapt out of his chair & over the desk, and started to choke me. “THIS CAN’T WAIT, MAN!” he screamed. I struggled and got his hands off my throat, and he backed away.

“What the hell are you doing?”

“Look, I’m sorry, man, but this is too important for you to just shrug off. What I’ve got to tell you is of international importance, so you’d better listen. As a matter of fact, you’re involved already. I think I was followed here.”

In my mind's eye I saw a little flag pop out of the top of Al's head. On the flag were the words "Paranoid Schizophrenic". I've seen these cases a million times, and I knew the flag was right.

"Followed by who?" I asked.

"I don't know," he responded, lighting a cigarette and nervously looking out of the window of my 12th story office. "Maybe the government, or the mafia, or the KGB. I can't be sure."

One thing about looney-birds (as we psychiatrists call them) — their stories almost never really make sense. His story, at this point, seemed as realistic as a David Lynch movie, which only reinforced my early diagnosis of him. I decided, however, to let him continue, provided he could condense his story enough so that I could still get home in time for dinner. Friday night is lamb chop night at my house, and I was hungry. I figured that if his story was too unbelievable, I'd just have him arrested, but if he could tell me a story I believed, well...

He proceeded to relate to me the most fantastic story I have ever heard. I would never have believed it, except that he always seemed to be able to back up his claims (partially at least) with papers which he would pull out of the small knapsack he carried with him, whenever I seemed to doubt what he was telling me.

It seems that after he left the University of Pittsburgh, Al stayed with his parents for only a few weeks. He then joined up with a band of hippies and went out west with them to form a small commune in the Arizona desert. After a few weeks, they ran out of money and the commune members all went their separate ways.

Al, while hiking through the desert on his way to Phoenix, stopped to paint a picture of the desert landscape, but just before his brush touched the canvas, he blacked out. He awoke a while later, finished the painting, and moved on.

Upon arriving in Phoenix, he needed money for food, and so naturally tried to sell his painting of the desert. Astoundingly, not only did his painting sell, it sold to the renowned art critic Wendell Bachmann, who,

by miraculous coincidence, happened to be walking down the street on his way to the grand opening of a new art gallery in downtown Phoenix. He took one look at Al's work and, declaring it a masterpiece, proceeded not only to buy it, but also to make sure that it was shown to the public that day at the new gallery.

The painting was a success there as well, and the director of the new gallery promptly commissioned two more paintings from Al, which he produced on the spot. "Now," Al said to me, "this is the most important part of what happened to me there in Arizona. I found out two days after I sold those paintings that the government had been testing nuclear weapons very near the area where I made that first painting."

He had made a good deal of money on that first batch of Arizona paintings, and he used some of it to buy a car and get an apartment in his favorite town, Las Vegas. Soon, however, he would again be in financial trouble. The paintings he was doing in Las Vegas weren't of the quality of his Arizona pictures, and people quit buying them. Added to this, of course, was his gambling addiction, and so you can see why he was soon out of money entirely.

"At first I thought there must be something about that Arizona air, or just the desert or something," he told me. "So I drove back down there and went into the desert for a few days and painted a few more pictures — and just like before, I blacked out just before I started to paint." Afterwards, he took his new batch of work back up to Phoenix, and again the paintings sold.

Al then left Phoenix to return to his apartment in Las Vegas, and within a few months had lost all his money at the Casinos. So, like before, he again left for the Arizona desert, but by this time the government had ended its nuclear testing in the area. "That was the one time I went out there and didn't black out, and it was also the one time I couldn't get anyone to buy my desert paintings," he told me.

At that time, Al was flat broke, and since he was unable to find a buyer for his most recent artwork, he was forced to spend a night in a shelter for the homeless in Phoenix. "And that's where I finally figured it out, Jim. I had read all about the nuclear tests that had been going on out

there in the newspapers, so that was already in the back of my mind. But when I was in that shelter, they had a TV on, and I was watching it, when the most amazing thing happened.”

“What was that?” I asked.

“*The Incredible Hulk* was on!” Al exclaimed, jumping out of his chair and raising both hands into the air.

“Well, that is amazing. Incredible even,” I said calmly as I reached for the phone to call the police.

“Don’t you get it? If radiation could turn Bill Bixby into Lou Ferrigno, why couldn’t radiation transform me into a great artist?”

I put the phone down.

“Every time I was near a high level of radiation, I produced great paintings, but when I wasn’t around the radiation, the stuff I was doing was awful. So, it became apparent to me right then that the only way for me to continue my career as an artist was to go around from place to place — wherever they had a reactor — and cause small nuclear ‘accidents’ along the way.”

It was 1978 when he was struck by this revelation. He had already developed a reputation as an inconsistent genius, but was still unknown enough that he could go most places and not be recognized.

So, onward he went, back to his home state of Pennsylvania, to the nuclear power plant at Three Mile Island. Now, I won’t bore you with all the little details of how he did it, but suffice it to say that Al managed to break into the facility, touch off a minor catastrophe, paint a few pictures, and escape without being caught.

Just like before, Al’s radiation-aided pieces sold, and for outrageously high prices. He undoubtedly would have lived out the remainder of his life on the money from those pictures if not for his gambling habit. Although he no longer lived in Las Vegas, his new home in Pennsylvania was within driving distance of the the new Casinos in Atlantic City, and

he could be found there frequently from 1981-84. By late 1984, he had lost all of his money gambling again.

Realizing that security had been beefed up in American nuclear power plants, Al decided to go abroad — hence the Chernobyl disaster.

“No way. I don’t believe it,” I said when he told me this, as I had said many times during our conversation that night — but then he showed me his passport and a copy of the New York Times, which showed a picture of a mob of people in Chernobyl, and in the background you could see Al walking down the street (heading for the airport), carrying several paintings.

“Then, of course, the same thing happened. I sold the paintings and lost — well, a lot of money gambling.”

“What do you mean by ‘a lot’? You didn’t lose it all like before?”

“No, not this time. See, I figured that I was due to hit a lucky streak soon, but I didn’t want to take a chance of losing everything like I had done in the past, so I hid \$100,000 in a suitcase and buried it in the woods a few miles from my house, and borrowed money from loan sharks so I could keep gambling. Now that I’ve lost all the money they gave me, I have to give them the money I buried or they’ll kill me.”

That was his story, which brought us to the point where he had come to see me. “Jim, I have no intention of giving that money up. I’m going to go get it and move to Brazil. But before I go, I need a favor from you.”

“What’s that?”

“Well, I need some help with my gambling problem. Obviously, it’s caused me some trouble over the years, and I don’t need the same things happening to me once I get to South America.”

That said, Al got up and walked over to the door. “Come on, let’s get out of here. I’m not sure if this place is safe.” I got up, grabbed my coat, and followed him downstairs and out of the building, where we quickly hailed a taxi and sped away.

“Okay, where to?” the driver asked.

“Take us down to 10th and Main,” Al responded. “I’m staying in a hotel near there,” he whispered to me. “We should be safe there, and you can call your wife from my room.”

Once we stepped out of the cab, though, trouble started. The sound of gunfire seemed to surround us. Al and I both dove to the pavement, as did nearly everyone else in the vicinity. A few bullets hit the windows of our taxi, which had not yet begun to leave when the shooting began, and broken glass rained down on and around us. After only a few seconds, the shooting stopped.

As we got up we could see, about 20 yards in front of us, two men in dark, pinstriped suits lying on the sidewalk, their bodies riddled with bullet holes. Hearing some commotion behind us as well, we turned around and saw two more men wearing dark suits lying on the ground. They, too, had been shot to death.

“You see that guy ahead of us?” Al asked me as he pointed to one of the dead men. I nodded. “I met him in Atlantic City. His boss is one of the guys I borrowed money from.”

“Yeah? Well, what about those guys behind us?”

“I’m not sure. G-Men, Russkies maybe. No way to tell.”

“They must’ve accidentally shot each other while trying to shoot us,” I said. “We sure were lucky.”

“Yeah. Come on, let’s go before somebody else starts shooting at us,” Al said, tugging on my arm to get me to move. Instead of going to Al’s hotel room, though, we stopped at a nearby bar — reasoning that if his enemies knew he was in town, they may have booby-trapped his room.

At the bar, we ordered a couple of beers, and Al asked me what I thought he needed to do to kick his gambling habit. “For some reason,” he told me, “I seem to be jinxed. Even if I get all the right cards, it doesn’t seem to help, because it’s like everyone seems to be able to read my mind, and so no matter what kind of hand I’m dealt, I always lose.”

“Well, I’m not sure what you should do, Al. I mean, it’s been a long time since I saw you gamble, but I’d say your problem isn’t that you’re unlucky.”

“You think I’m not unlucky? Why, I’ve probably lost close to two million dollars in Casino gambling alone!” he said indignantly.

“I understand that,” I replied, “but from what I’ve seen, I really don’t think your problem is bad luck.” At that, he just rolled his eyes and groaned. “Look, what’s your favorite game to bet on?” I asked.

“Poker. Five Card Draw.”

“Okay. Now, I remember when we used to play in college, and you were right about one thing — everyone always knew when you had a good hand.”

So I proceeded to explain to Al that if he were able to maintain a straight face, he might actually start winning some money. He doubted me at first, but we played a few hands of Five Card Draw right there at the bar (using a spare deck of cards that he always carried with him), and he won fifteen dollars from me.

Then, armed with his newfound knowledge of how to be a better gambler, Al thanked me and left. His one final request to me was that I never tell this story to anyone, because he didn’t want anyone to know where he had gone into hiding (1150 DePerez St., Sao Paulo, Brazil — it’s the little red house on the corner), but this story is just too important for the public not to know.

So, now that you’ve read the whole shocking story (which I swear is true), I hope that you will remember never to buy paintings from artists who hang out on street corners, particularly if the artist is glowing and has three hands.

**THE END.**



## A Really Revolting Romance

If you've ever ridden a rollercoaster ten minutes after eating five chili dogs and scarfing down an entire boxful of laxatives, then you know what José felt like when he was dating Helga. Sure, taking a dump in your pants while travelling upside down at 60 miles per hour is no fun, but the wonderful aftertaste those chili dogs leave in your mouth make it impossible not to go back for more.

Their first meeting was so romantic — like that old movie, *Love Story*. (On second thought, it was probably more reminiscent of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*.) It happened on a cold and rainy Sunday in Detroit, at McDonald's. A disgruntled employee had decided to secretly include a free cockroach with every hamburger, and before long everyone in the place was throwing up.

And then the alligators came in! Some damn fool who lived in the neighborhood had been raising them since they were just little lizards, and on this day he decided to take them out for a milkshake. Of course, what *they* were really interested in was *human flesh* — and they got plenty of it!

## Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

