

Dissertation/Thesis Title Line #1

Dissertation/Thesis Title Line #2

Dissertation/Thesis Title Line #3

by

Author Name

A Thesis/Dissertation Presented to the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies

and the School/College

Southern Methodist University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy/Master of Science/etc.

in

Field

Conferral Date

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Buffy Summers

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work could not have been accomplished by the wisdom of my wonderful advisor, Prof. Rogers, along with his many colleagues in the Department of Greatness here at SMU. I'm also forever grateful to my family for being so patient with me and my friends for reminding me to take breaks and go be great instead of just reading about greatness all of the time.

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis/Dissertation

By Author Name

Prior Degree #1

Prior Degree #2

Many people know Jack Handey from his time dispensing wisdom from the hallowed halls of Saturday Night Live. Beyond these brief glimpses afforded to late-night viewers, Handey shaped the field of Greatness through his academic works published over the last two decades. Examining the themes of these works and their evolution over time provides a window into the state of our society – what was great, and what could be even greater.

This dissertation analyzes three of Handey’s most popular works, and asserts that greatness has not diminished over time as some have claimed, but merely has shifted to a new paradigm.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES	vi
LIST OF TABLES	vii
CHAPTER 1	1
1.1 Jack Handey's Early Years	1
1.2 Beyond Bouvet	2
CHAPTER 2	3
2.1 Journey to New York	3
APPENDIX	5
BIBLIOGRAPHY	6

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	An early piece of artwork by Jack Handey, age 17	1
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LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	Popularity of the name Lorne since 1900.	3
Table 2	Popularity of the Name “Lorne” by Year, 1962–1972	4

This is dedicated to Crookshanks, my best friend and a genius in her own right

CHAPTER 1

Who is Jack Handey and how did he become so wise? Jack's story begins long ago, when he was just a boy in search of answers.

1.1 Jack Handey's Early Years

Young Jack did not appear to be anything special to friends and family. Of course they loved him because he was family, but few would say they saw early signs of wisdom in the child.

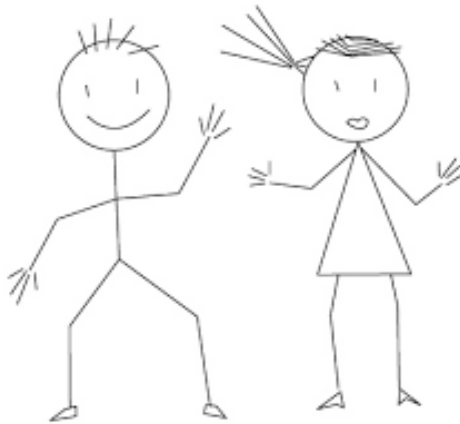


Figure 1 An early piece of artwork by Jack Handey, age 17

Jack's mother saw a glimmer of something in him, however, and sent him to live with monks on the remote island of Bouvet, approximately 1,000 miles from Antarctica. On this island covered almost entirely by a glacier, laden with sheer cliffs, Jack imbibed the wisdom of these monks and learned to become a font of wisdom himself.

1.2 Beyond Bouvet

After spending 10 years with the monks on Bouvet, they realized that he had learned all that he could from them. With tears in his eyes, Jack left them with one final piece of wisdom to ponder:

As you make your way through this hectic world of ours, set aside a few minutes each day. At the end of the year, you'll have a couple of days saved up.

With these words, Jack left the frigid wilds of Bouvet and prepared to rejoin the modern world. Although he would be a keen observer of the human condition, he would never fully become part of society, but rather remained on the fringes as he shared his insights.

CHAPTER 2

2.1 Journey to New York

Although he had not lived in civilization in ten years, Jack dove right in and moved to one of the biggest cities in the world, New York. In New York he honed his insights on the street, shouting to passers-by whenever a great thought came to him. Most people thought he was disturbed, but one man saw that more was there. That man's name was Lorne Michaels.

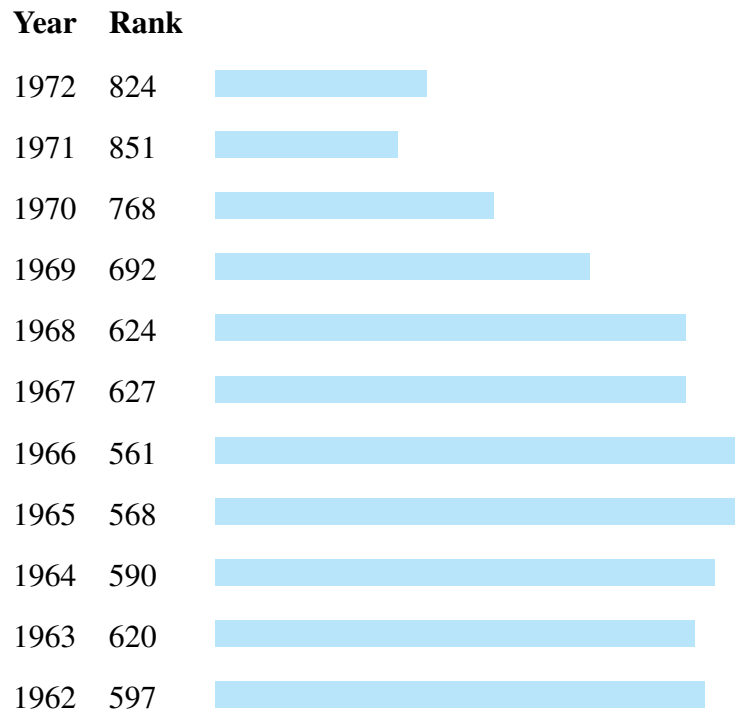


Table 1 Popularity of the name Lorne since 1900.

After meeting Lorne Michaels, Jack Handey's life was irrevocably changed. Finally a person recognized that his street corner rantings were not the words of a madman, but rather a genius with a keen insight into the human condition.

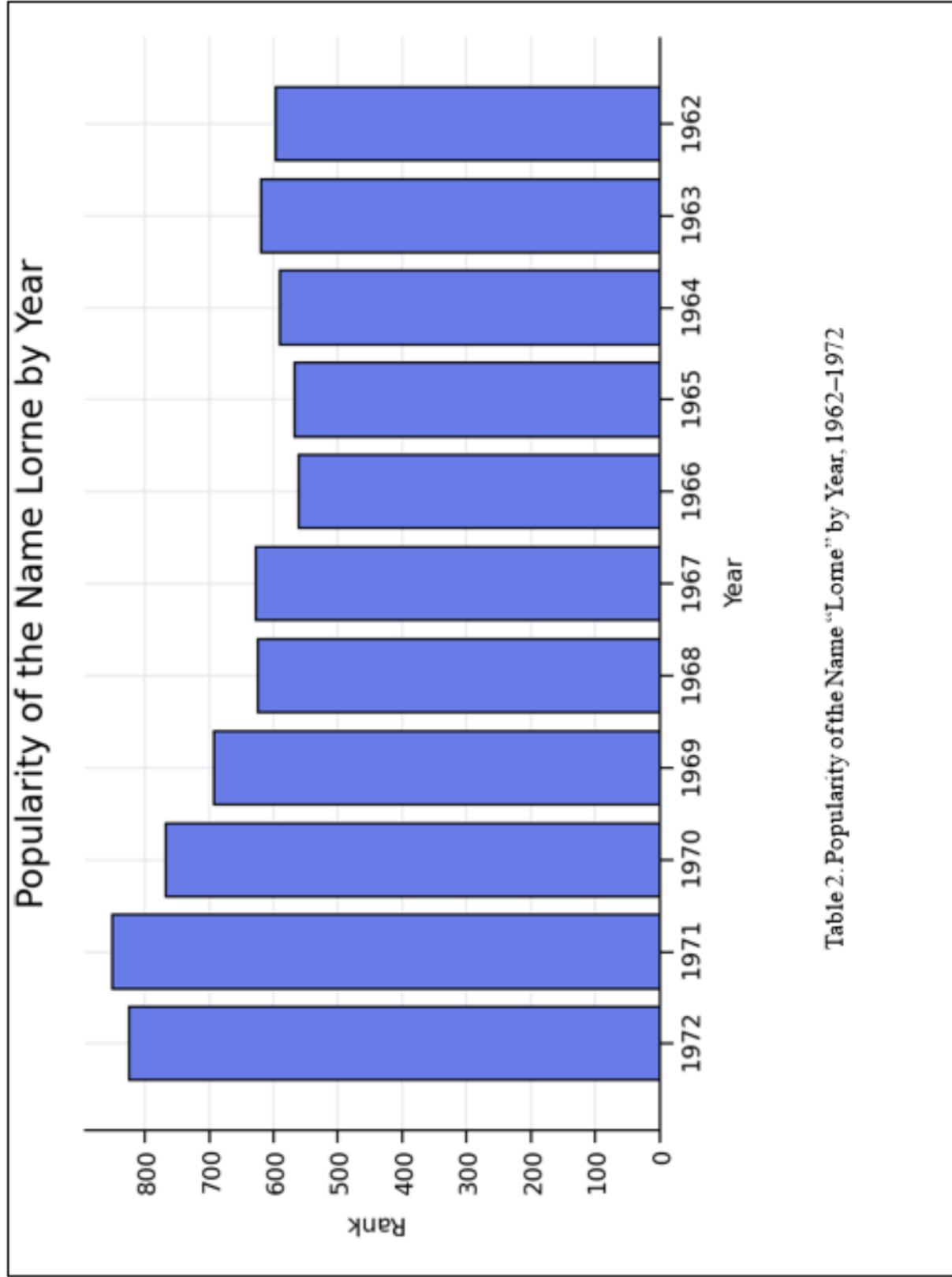


Table 2. Popularity of the Name "Lorne" by Year, 1962–1972

APPENDIX

Works by Jack Handey

Deep Thoughts (1992)

Deeper Thoughts (1993)

Deepest Thoughts (1994)

Fuzzy Memories (1996)

What I'd Say to the Martians (2008)

The Stench of Honolulu: A Tropical Adventure (2013)

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