Questions About Michael Jackson Surgery

My colleagues—we are plastic surgeons—and I were intrigued by the Belgian medical paper (“Mandibular angle augmentation with the use of distraction and homologous lyophilized cartilage in a case of morphing to Michael Jackson surgery”) about transforming the face of a young professional singer whose “quest was to obtain the facial features of Michael Jackson, his idol that he imitated professionally.” Thank you for reporting on it.

But we are asking ourselves whether the result was quite what those surgeons anticipated, and whether new questions arose to face (pardon the pun) them afterwards. Did they, as a result of the publicity (which apparently they sought) subsequently receive other patients who expressed similar needs? Which vintage of Michael Jackson (whose own face underwent numerous transformations) was determined to be optimal for the surgery, and was that decision made more by the patient or by the surgeons? Were there copyright issues with the face? Specifically, with the jaw lines? The copyright issues are the ones that most concern us, as we have one potential patient who is an admirer of Elvis Presley, and another who would like to more closely resemble the Belgian cartoon character Tintin, and three who want to become more similar to the Korean singer Psy, he of the mega-hit “Gangnam Style.”

Anjana Joshi, MD
Mumbai, India

Pardon His Punt

I again beg your pardon. The photograph I sent you shows what was called a “punt gun”. It was used for hunting ducks. My letter, which embarrasses me even to think about, presented my analysis of the mechanics of how it supposedly was used as a vital tool in a long series of “blue movies” produced in the early part of the twentieth century for the exclusive use of customs officials in North America and South America. I was wrong. It would take considerable amounts of time to explain to you why I had come to believe that, and come to believe that I had supporting evidence to that effect. But let’s simply say that I was wrong. Thank you for declining to publish that letter; it might have become the professional death of me. But it can be professionally stimulating, rather than suicidal, to admit one’s mistake without actually having had the mistake fully occur. And so I give you permission to print this letter, should you wish to, as an educational effort on my part. I am nearing retirement age anyway, so there is little damage that could occur to my career as a result.

Anton Callister
North Bay, Ontario, Canada
How Kik Looks at the Eyeball

I was dismayed by the claims expressed in the letters [AIR 21-3] about Dr. Pascoe Rentz’s photograph of the eyeball that he says a colleague abandoned in his (Rentz’s) lab. I was that colleague. I in no way abandoned that eyeball. It was taken from my bench, forcibly, while I was away, attending a conference on eyeball preservation in Costa Rica. I am engaged—as I have been for nearly ten years now—in legal proceedings to regain possession.

Preston Yik, Ph.D.
Osh, Kyrgyz Republic

Mel Amidst the Umbrellas, But To Left

In my recent letter I explained how, in reorganizing our archives, we came across this photo of Mel, the famous “little guy” who always appears in your letters column. In that letter, I said that Mel is the fifth man to the left of the third umbrella from the top, on the right side of the image. I was mistaken. He is the sixth man to the left of the third umbrella from the top, on the right side of the image. I apologize for the confusion I must have caused.

Yamna Ruiz García-Huidobro
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