

WHAT ARE THE
CHANCES OF CHANCE?

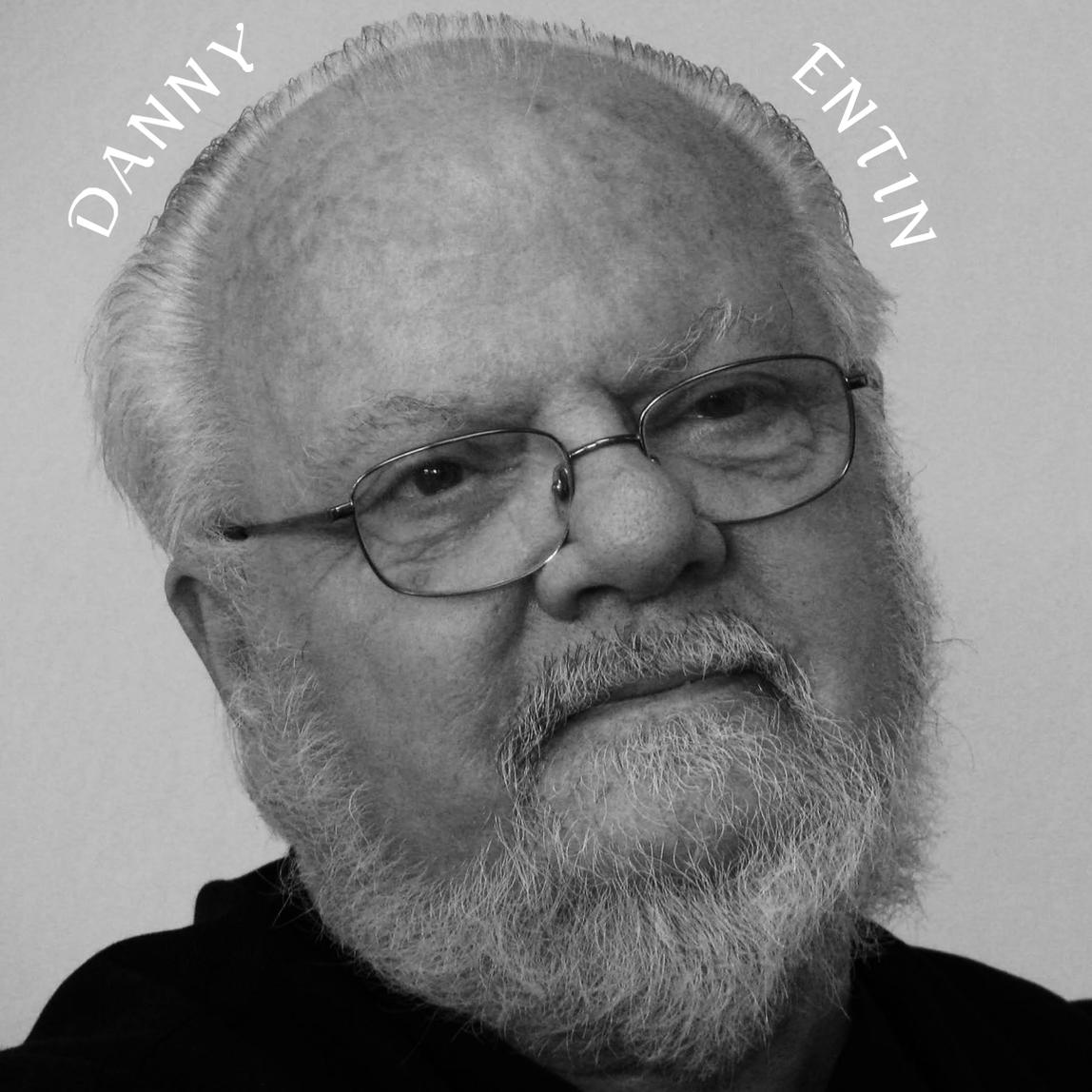
DANNY ENTTN



*or How I Became
a Photographer*

DANNY

ENTIN



In 1958, I went to Russia with a borrowed camera without a light meter. When I returned, I took my film to a little neighborhood photoshop on Bleeker Street. My guess-exposures were perfect. I had no ambitions or pretensions towards photography, although I was a fan and respected Avedon, Penn, and Frank.

I bought myself a \$15 enlarger and did awkward amateur homemade prints in my kitchen.

I lived in a one-room, a four-flight walk-up on Charles Street and made my living as a prole graphic designer for Time Inc.

One evening I decided to have a party.
Probably the only party I've ever had.
Someone asked if they could bring a friend.
Of course, I said. The friend seemed to be
bored and began to unroll my dead sea scroll
prints. His name was Danny Entin.

He said he was a photographer and liked
my photographs. Danny told me he had a
studio with a grand skylight that he never
used on Saturdays, and he would give me a key.
"I seen me chances and I took 'em!"

I used my usual homemade reliable formula for exposing film, but it was a disaster. The pictures were terminally underexposed. I was embarrassed; no, I was HUMILIATED. An exasperated Danny fumed “THAT’S IT!” If you’re going to be a photographer, you should know what you’re doing. Head bowed I followed him chastised into the darkroom, where he taught me how to print, expose film properly, and all the mechanics of photography.

I began to invite my friends on Saturday afternoons to take their portraits for fun.

Then one day, somebody said they had an actor friend who needed a headshot.

The actor was Robert Morse. Could I do it?

At that moment, he was a popular performer starring in Thornton Wilder's Match Maker on Broadway.

Mr. Morse arrived at 11 East 17th Street during a popup deluge worthy of Noah. The studio was darker than a midsummer's night dream.



Giac Bozzi

(unknown)

Tom Lacy

Duane Michals

Henry Zimmerman

Danny Entin

Bill Burdick

Danny became my mentor, and I his tormentor. Danny Entin went on to work in a catalog studio, where he made 8 x 10-inch pictures of shoes and blouses. Eventually, he became the director of the Roerich Museum on the Upper Westside. Roerich was a Russian painter well-received in Moscow but ignored in New York.

Dan worked and lived there for the rest of his life with his great friend Bill Burdick. We always kept in touch.

I saw Dan a week before he died.

The Roof of Eleven East Seventeenth Street



Fast forward sixty years, my friend Mike introduced me to his friend Jed, a young thirty-five-year-old full of energy and intelligence. Last week we had a gemütlich dinner, and when Jed retired to the Men's Room, I asked Mike what Jed's last name was. He replied, Jed Entin. How many Entins can there be, I wondered? It turns out my new friend Jed Entin's grandfather was Danny Entin's cousin. How wonderful, the full circle of time has brought another Entin into my life.

JED

ENTIN

Portrait of Jed Entin by Mike Koessel

IF I HAD NOT HAD A PARTY,
IF SOMEONE HAD NOT BROUGHT A FRIEND,
IF THE FRIEND HAD NOT BEEN A PHOTOGRAPHER,
IF THE PHOTOGRAPHER HAD NOT BEEN CURIOUS,
IF HE HAD DISLIKED MY PHOTOGRAPHS,
IF HE HAD NOT BEEN THE KINDEST OF MEN,
I WOULD NEVER HAVE BECOME A PHOTOGRAPHER.

How slight the serendipity of life.

Dear Danny, thank you.

I FLY, I FLY, GOODBYE!

Early photographs
shot in
Danny Entin's Studio

