

DEEP THOUGHTS THROUGH THE AGES:  
THE WORDS AND WISDOM  
OF JACK HANDEY

Approved by:

---

Dr. Steven Rogers  
Professor of Greatness

---

Dr. Margaret Carter  
Professor of Greatness

---

Dr. Maria Hill  
Associate Professor of Greatness

---

Dr. Matthew Murdock  
Assistant Professor of Greatness

DEEP THOUGHTS THROUGH THE AGES:  
THE WORDS AND WISDOM  
OF JACK HANDEY

A Dissertation Presented to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Dedman College  
Southern Methodist University  
in  
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
with a  
Major in Greatness  
by  
Buffy Summers

B.A., Liberal Studies, University of California, Sunnydale  
Master of Greatness, Southern Methodist University

May 14, 2016

Copyright (2016)

Buffy Summers

All Rights Reserved

## 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.

Summers, Buffy

B.A., Liberal Studies, University of California, Sunnydale  
Master of Greatness, Southern Methodist University

Deep Thoughts Through The Ages:  
The Words and Wisdom  
Of Jack Handey

Advisor: Dr. Steven Rogers

Doctor of Philosophy degree conferred May 14, 2016

Dissertation completed April 17, 2016

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. INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1. Jack Handey’s Early Years .....	1
1.2. Beyond Bouvet .....	2
2. NEW YORK STATE OF MIND .....	3
2.1. Journey to New York .....	3
APPENDIX	
A. Works by Jack Handey .....	5
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	6

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1.1 An early piece of artwork by Jack Handey, age 17 . . . . .	<a href="#">1</a>

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
2.1 Popularity of the name Lorne and Jack since 1980 .....	<a href="#">4</a>



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

## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

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.

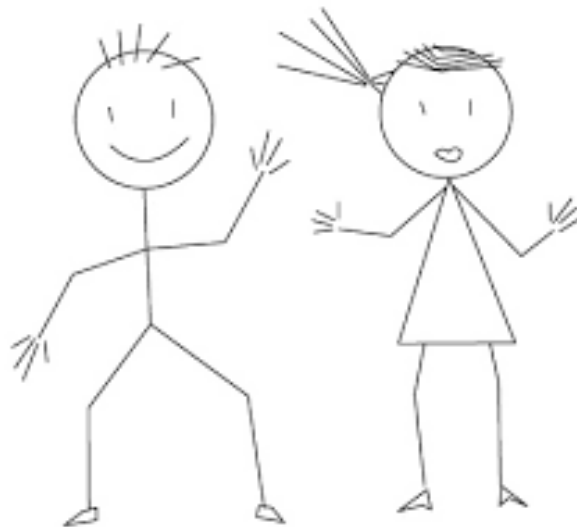


Figure 1.1. An early piece of artwork by Jack Handey, age 17

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 [1].*

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

### NEW YORK STATE OF MIND

#### **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.

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.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Lorne Rank</b>	<b>Jack Rank <a href="#">[2]</a></b>
1998	974	61
1997	849	76
1996	890	89
1995	796	110
1994	701	127
1993	692	143
1992	645	155
1991	600	166
1990	630	166
1989	572	179
1988	527	171
1987	484	165
1986	457	175
1985	440	175
1984	418	173
1983	396	172
1982	426	166
1981	429	166
1980	415	159

Table 2.1. Popularity of the name Lorne and Jack since 1980

## Appendix A

### 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)

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- [1] HANDEY, J. *Lost In Deep Thought*. Berkley, 1994.
- [2] SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION. Popularity of a Name.  
<https://www.ssa.gov/OACT/babynames/index.html#&ht=2>, 2016. Note: This is an electronic document. Date of publication: [Date unavailable]; Date retrieved: February 7, 2016;. Date last modified: [Date unavailable].