The Origin of Dr. Uranus

Back in the days of the iPhone and iPad, after *The* *Lord of the Rings* movies were released and during the making of the new *Star Trek* movies, I saw Dr. Uranus—still my father—for the last time. This narrative fabric was still basically a thread of truth: the first three semi-biographical pieces still unwritten, the science fiction and fantasy tales still not fabricated, the WebStory as yet unwoven.

Dr. Uranus and my father were one and the same. My father had performed mentalism for my English classes when I was a teaching assistant in the 1980s, and we presented him as Dr. Uranus—to be ridiculous and to give a hint the show was a hoax. Later, not long after Dad died, I actually did design an effect based on the famous ESP symbols really used by Dr. Rhine at Duke University and featured in the first *Ghost Busters* movie. When I scrawled it on my trick lists to perform at Athens Technical College, I called it the “Uranus Prediction,” short-hand for “The Prediction of Dr. Uranus.” In this story, it is fictionalized as “The Last Trick of Dr. Uranus.” The plot and effect of that trick are essentially the same in the story as in real life. The narrative fabric is neither slack nor strained in this regard.

Anyway, Dr. Uranus originated as the persona used by Dad for performing mind reading stunts, was then passed along orally in the telling of those exploits, then typed up in text as fiction, and finally uploaded to the internet. Dr. Uranus thus emerged in both reality and fiction as well as in the realm of urban legend—the twilight haze of memory and myth.

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