

# Grey Cup Fever 1968



By **Lloyd Walton**

Port Carling  
Ontario

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**Sigmund FREUD's Birthday**  
in Chancery Art Gallery

At age three I called her Ibbitch Ann. Elizabeth Ann, the strawberry blonde down the street with summer golden skin and hazel eyes. We grew up together. Her father, a school principal had a great sense of humour. Her mother was a hypochondriac, but very sweet,

Often we would play Roy Rogers and Dale Evans down in her parent's basement. "It's time for me to wake up to saddle Trigger," I'd say. "No Roy, we can sleep in, it's Saturday" Then she would pull me back down on to the pretend cardboard bed on the hard floor. I just didn't get these girl games, but I liked her.

We were both nine years old when her father was transferred to southern Ontario. As their car was leaving the driveway for the last time I climbed the old apple tree across the street. Her dad pulled up below the tree and stopped. I wouldn't come down. I could see her silhouette in the back seat. In a foolish frenzy I blurted out a stupid catch phrase of the time, "Good riddance to bad rubbish." The car pulled away and turned the corner leaving Sault Ste Marie forever. I felt like an idiot. And I missed her.

As the years passed, Elizabeth and I exchanged a few letters. I grew up, found a new love and became a student at the Ontario College of Art in Toronto. The year was 1968. It was a great time to be alive. The Beatles were still in their prime. It was the dawning of the Age of Aquarius and peace and love could conquer all, and rule the world.



One dark autumn night while walking home from school through the falling leaves, I spotted the love of my life hand in hand with another guy. They both looked very happy. Stabbed



through the heart, I was rocked. Thirteen years ago in an old apple tree I had a similar helpless feeling. Helpless, helpless, helpless, helpless.

In a night of sleepless rage and remorse my thoughts drifted to Elizabeth. Maybe Elizabeth Ann, if I could find her, could help me regain my pride.

I knew that she still lived somewhere North of Toronto. A few phone calls back home got us connected. "Oh Lloydie, Lloydie, how lovely to hear your voice. Please come up for Sunday dinner with my family. I'd also like you to meet a good friend of mine. We will pick you up at the end of the subway line." Her sweet soft voice fired feelings I had long forgotten.

The subway jingled, jangled and rocked in rhythm and tune to my anticipation till the screeching last stop at the Northern end of the Young Street line. At the top of the subway stairs, there in a blonde halo, a shapely backlit figure glowed in the morning light.

As my eyes adjusted, the strangely familiar hazel eyes and smile came into focus. My Ibbich Ann! I raced towards her, arms outstretched, but she tensed and stepped back. She demurely held out her hand for me to shake. "Oh Lloyd, I would recognize you anywhere."

Then, a tall bloke with short greasy black hair sprang directly between us, offering a limp handshake. "Lloyd, I would like you to meet my fiancée, Frank."

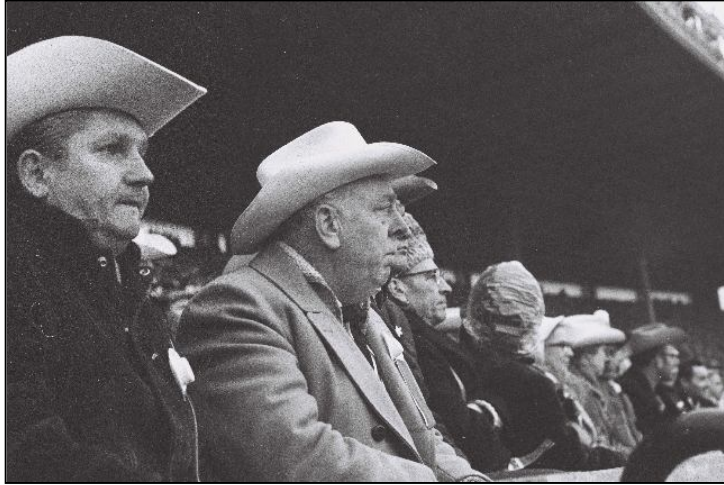
He wore a beige sport jacket with white shirt and matching tie. This guy was right out of the Eaton's catalogue. I was an adorned in black, bell bottomed, turtle necked, mop top, Beatle loving artist.

My instincts said, "Get back on the subway." But I couldn't just leave her without... "Without what?" I wondered.

Squeezing into the back seat of his red and white two-door Chevy Bel-Air, I felt like a kid being taken to the dentist by both mom and dad.

“Our plan for the afternoon,” he said. “Is to cruise Richmond Hill, looking for a house for Liz and I to raise a family.” And so for hours, listening to 1940’s big band music, we did.

With one hand on the wheel, and the other around our girl, Frank commandeered the conversation, boasting about big business deals and about how he would one day be taking over his father’s used car business, where he now worked. Art College to him was dismissed as a place that trained people to paint seasonal sale signs in Kresge’s, and Woolworth department stores.



Whenever I would bring up old reminiscences, as I tried to do all afternoon, Frank would change the subject to next weekend’s Grey Cup game. He was obsessed with planning an elaborate outdoor party to celebrate the football final. He would rent a bleacher and large screen TV to set up in his back yard. The food would be catered.

Liz said, “You should come.”  
“Fat effen chance, “I thought.”

We stopped to get ice cream. It was too difficult for me to get out of the back seat so Elizabeth said that she would stay and keep me company. Roy and Dale were alone at last. She turned slowly and looked deep into my eyes. I leaned forward. After a nervous silence, a burst of longing and forgotten feelings filled the Bel Air.

Frank was back in a flash. “Here, grab this. It’s melting,” he barked, shoving an ice cream cone up to my face.

Over a classic roast beef dinner, Elizabeth’s father was his same old jolly joking self. He ended the grace with, “Bless this food to our use and to us thy service. Amen. Then this kid in the tree says, “Good riddance to bad rubbish.” A big laugh. I could have crawled under the table.

Her mother went on and on about her different doctors for her many maladies. Frank kept suggesting new names for the guest list for next week’s Grey Cup party. It was to be made up of his friends and their girlfriends, and my old girlfriend Elizabeth, who was very quiet over dinner.

My god it was a tense drive back down to the top of the subway line! Liz said that she had a headache and felt like she was coming down with something. “Hmm “I thought. “Could she be turning into her mother?”

I tripped getting out of the car and hit my face on a no parking sign. My nose hurt and my eyes were watering. I kissed her hand and said, “Nice to see you again, Liz. Enjoy the big game, Frank. “ He gave me a look that said, “Now get lost, buddy!”

I blearily slinked down the subway stairs and disappeared into the night.

All of the next week at school my head swirled, thinking of that magic moment in the car when we were alone together. I had the fever. I couldn’t just walk away. I had to find a way to show her what she was losing. A future great Canadian artist! And that freaken Frank. .... I just had to show him. But how ?

In my long career in the creative industry, I have found that my best ideas have come to me while in the shower. Soothing water to me has a way of nurturing ideas. My secret place for serious thoughts. The boarding house where I was staying as a student didn’t have a shower. It had a bathtub. That’s where I did my thinking back then. But it was no ordinary bathtub. That’s where the boarders had to wash their dishes because the tiny kitchen had no sink.





In the dim bathroom light I prepared a deep hot nurturing soak and stepped in. Peas and carrots popped up and swirled on the soapy, soupy surface like flotsam. Reluctant to drain it and start over I lay back and pressed on with my thinking and dreaming.

What a creep, that Frank. Get lost, buddy.... indeed.

I drifted off listening to John Lennon's just released meandering, fragmented, Revolution Number 9. Number nine, number nine, number nine.  
Hold that line.  
Hold that line.



Pow.... it came to me. That's it! I would appear at tomorrow's Grey Cup centre field kick off ceremony! All I needed to pull it off was talent and nerve.

Dried off and back at my desk, I made up a press pass by gluing a 50-cent photo mat self-portrait onto a logo of the Television station where I had worked back home, as a summer job. On the way to the big game, I had it laminated in a coin machine in the basement of Union station.

Approaching the CNE stadium, I slung my camera over my chest and added every filter I could to make the lens look bigger and more professional. Flashing my press pass to a surprised and confused ticket taker, she waved me through. At field level a Toronto Police constable, after seeing my concocted credentials and camera, pointed to where I was meant to be. "That's the way to centre field. You better hurry. He said."

Walking between the lined up kick-off teams of the Calgary Stampeders and Ottawa Roughriders was like walking through a canyon. The players, in pre game jitters looked as nervous as I felt. To keep up my ruse, I began snapping pictures.

Suddenly, surrounding me there was a flurry of activity. I found myself strolling alongside Prime Minister, Pierre Trudeau, Miss Grey Cup, the Premier of Ontario, John Robarts, Olympic Champion skier, Nancy Green and Jake Goudar, the Commissioner of the CFL.

It was a miracle. To top it off, the six of us lined up shoulder to shoulder to sing O CAN---A---DA. Looking directly into the cameras broadcasting coast to coast I sang the anthem directly to a bleacherd backyard audience in Richmond Hill, pointing my finger for emphasis at the end of each line.

"WITH A GLOWING HEART I SEE THEE RISE,"

Then, back to work, I joined the real press photographers to shoot the Prime Minister performing the ceremonial kickoff. Pierre had obviously been practicing. He even wore football cleats.

With the opening ceremony now over, and feeling the jealous eyes of Frank and perhaps longing gaze of Elizabeth, I sauntered off the field like Roy Rogers riding off into the sunset.

For the rest of the afternoon I drifted up and down the sidelines, torn between watching the game and flirting with the stetsoned Calgary cheerleaders.

At games end celebrations I found myself rubbing shoulders with winning Ottawa Rough Rider quarterback, Russ Jackson as he held the coveted Grey Cup. I leaned over and gave it a big kiss.

Frank won Elizabeth I suppose. I never did call her back.

I got over it. I won the Grey Cup ■

