

I loved Frank as a dear friend in his Oxford days. We lived together for a while, both with marriages that had ended, like Jack Lemmon and Walter Matthau in the movie 'The Odd Couple.' He was great company, so easy to get on with and we had terrific conversations which, whatever the subject-matter, were always laced with his sharp, sardonic sense of humour (evident throughout his writings and highly appreciated by my students in New York). I think it fitting to evoke this side of Frank for you today by telling the story of a brilliant practical joke he played on several of us.

We—several of Frank's friends, including my late wife Nina--were at the World Congress of the International Sociological Association in Toronto in 1974. The previous Congress had been in Bulgaria and so there were many Bulgarian apparatchiki—boring, conformist party-minded professors—hanging around. To save money I shared a room with Frank and Nina did the same with our friend Tamara. I was in charge of one of the research committees, whose sessions were to take place in the coming days. Frank was, I thought, in the shower and the phone rang. It was a Rumanian Professor Pominec (pronounced Pominetch) requesting, no demanding that I should include his paper in one of our sessions on 'the Industrial-Scientific Revolution' (the Communist jargon-laden topic of the moment) and suggesting that we meet in the lobby in half an hour. I went down but he didn't show up and I went back to the room and told Frank about it, to his considerable amusement. Professor Pominec never did show up in Toronto, though I received several handwritten message from him, excusing his absences in various ways, including 'disturbances within the stomach.'

Of course, we concluded that this was Frank's doing but he fiercely denied it, even claiming to have met the real Prof Pominec, whom he described as bearded and dressed in a black cloak and with a cane. So we decided to pay him back. Nina and I invited him to dinner in Oxford with some of the friends from the Toronto visit, and we recruited an Oxford friend (Rumanian, as it happens, by origin) to interrupt our dinner, suitably attired with cloak and cane and claiming to be the real Prof Pominec and accusing Frank of impersonating him. When he rapped on our front door, Frank exclaimed 'It must be the bailiffs!' He sat imperturbably at the table denying a torrent of accusations and for months afterwards denied ever having played his joke on us. (I believe he finally admitted it to Krishan, but never to me).

Frank was a wonderful, life-enhancing person.