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He commutes from paint to pen and back

This week's cover, as well as the illustration on page 67, is the work of Raanan Lurie, who has been our resident editorial-page cartoonist for the past two years. Such whimsical caricatures are only half of Lurie's art. He is also a serious painter, a well-known portrait artist whose subjects have included governors, senators, prime ministers and heads of state—often the same men he has needled in cartoons. "When Nelson Rockefeller sat for a portrait," says Lurie, "he told me he hoped I'd be kinder in oils."

Lurie is an Israeli who began his artist's career almost as soon as he could scratch a pad. When he was 16, he was publishing cartoons in the Israeli press—and taking part in combat missions in the '48 Arab-Israeli war. When the '67 war broke out, Lurie was in Montreal exhibiting his paintings at the exposition there. He flew home to Israel, fought the war as commander of a reserve infantry company and was back in Montreal in less than 21 days—before his excursion-fare ticket expired. Having, in a sense, commuted to war, Lurie tried for a while to commute to LIFE from Montreal-"in on Tuesday, out on Wednesday, the same hour, the same day, every week." Exhausted, he moved his family closer to New York, only to find that the 331/2-mile train trip from Stamford, Conn. to Manhattan often takes longer than the Montreal flight.

Lurie brings his sketch ideas to us once every week, but he tries to do his research and finish his drawing at home. To spot the quirks of his cartoon characters, he watches hours of television and reads more than 20 magazines and books each week. "I am a political analyst who happens to draw," he says. "And you cannot comment on something you know nothing about. It is not enough just to draw a well-known person with a long nose and call it a caricature. There is humor, of course, but that is the bait you use to catch the serious reader."

Lurie finds no conflict between his cartooning and painting. Each is a refined art form, he says, though vastly different. And for him, at least, they are complementary. "I have tried doing fine art exclusively," he says, "and I have tried cartooning exclusively. I found I got tired of doing just one or the other. I must do both. It is like my commuting. If I take the train to the city on one day, I must relax by taking the car the next."





RAANAN LURIE



THE BOMB RADICALS



LURIE