

# Alec Soth's Archived Blog

September 10, 2006

## A series of coincidences

Filed under: [minnesota, photographs \(mine\)](#) — alecsothblog @ 10:27 pm

Around 1996 I was taking pictures along the Mississippi River in Saint Paul. While walking around [Island Station](#), I saw a young man making a painting on an easel. He told me that he lived on a houseboat on the river. He said it was a cheap way for an artist to live. It seemed so romantic. I was terribly jealous. I told my girlfriend I wanted to live on a houseboat. She said no.

That brief visit always stayed with me. Years later when I started *Sleeping by the Mississippi*, I thought a lot about that artist living on the river. I think it inspired me to make [this picture](#).

I later found out that the artist doing the easel painting was [Rob Fischer](#). But I don't think I met Rob again until we both showed in the same room at the 2004 [Whitney Biennial](#). Last weekend Rob and I were both invited to a [softball party](#) in Franconia, MN. The host of the party owns this picture by me:



And this sculpture by Rob:



Rob is holding his baby girl. She was born on August 9th. Her name is August.

My baby boy was born on August 4th. His name is also August.

What are the odds that they'll end up married?

## 9 Comments

1. That is truly a great story!!!

*Comment by [Timothy Briner](#) — September 11, 2006 @ [2:02 am](#)*

2. A nice, funny and strange story. Btw a good sign your boy is five days older ... woman often prefer older man for a marriage.

*Comment by [creezy](#) — September 11, 2006 @ [8:33 am](#)*

3. Truth is stranger than fiction they say.

*Comment by [Billie](#) — September 11, 2006 @ [8:51 am](#)*

4. Amazing!!! I love synchronicities, and that's one of the best I've heard!

*Comment by [Mark S](#) — September 11, 2006 @ [12:00 pm](#)*

5. great story, I had an encounter like that on the coast of Washington a long time ago, but none of the people turned out to be able to show at the Whitney, or even locally here in Seattle, but very similar. Oh, and no babies yet, not till I get the ball rolling and bring my batting average up.

*Comment by [Harold Hollingsworth](#) — September 11, 2006 @ [1:25 pm](#)*

6. What a handsome family! And the fact that I'm THAT August's grandmother has no bearing whatsoever.

*Comment by [Penny Woster](#) — September 11, 2006 @ [3:49 pm](#)*

7. [...] But that's not the coincidence part: when the pair bumped into each other at a party recently, both men had the identical happy announcement, which he represents with a photo: [...]

*Pingback by [Off Center » August stories...](#) — September 12, 2006 @ [1:54 pm](#)*

8. [...] In 2004 when I was living in Brooklyn my cousin came into town for a visit and one of the things she wanted to do was check out the Whitney Biennial, something I'd wanted to see but wasn't going to because I was broke. She has a rich boyfriend and paid for the both of us so I got to see Alec Soth's work there. It was displayed in a room that also contained some photographs by Katy Grannan, whose rep at the time also represented a photographer I was assisting (actually that photographer was who first recommended I see *Sleeping by the Mississippi*). Also there was a sculpture by an artist whom as it turns out Alec Soth once happened upon on the banks of the Mississippi River while taking pictures and there was a series of photographs of surfers. Curiously that room and a wall with a bunch of lightbulbs on it are pretty much the only things I remember from that visit. [...]

*Pingback by [Salish Park » Blog Archive » Mamiya 6](#) — September 14, 2006 @ [4:03 pm](#)*

9. Congratulation. I have three. Three is a tribe.

*Comment by [MB](#) — September 25, 2006 @ [10:40 am](#)*