Lighter Side of Adaptive Optics

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Foreword

A few months ago I received an email from Tim Lamkins whose official title at the time was Content Acquisition and Development Specialist, Publications for SPIE. SPIE used to be called SPIE—The International Society for Optical Engineering, but now it is called SPIE.

Tim was inquiring whether I would like to write another book on adaptive optics. My immediate reply was “No!”

Tim was persistent, especially with the job title “Content Acquisition and Development Specialist.” I told him that there were plenty of good books on adaptive optics already, some of which I wrote myself, and some of which were written by others who copied all my best ideas, but wrote them under their own names. I told Tim that there wasn’t much need for another book yet. “Maybe in a few years,” I said.

Tim was not taking “No!” for an answer. He explained that the book was to be for a wider audience than the one-billionth of one percent of the population of the world who would normally buy a book on optics. His vision for this book was “for the masses.” No math was to be involved.

I was still reluctant. I know Tim was just getting ready to offer a large advance for the book, much like Stephen King would get, I presume, but he didn’t need to cut the check ... he told me that it could be “humorous.”

His argument was persuasive. I could write a funny book about adaptive optics! So, here it is. If you don’t find it greatly informative, technically perfect, and somewhat amusing, tell Tim.

Bob Tyson
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Charlotte, North Carolina, USA