

## Pigeon Photography...The Good the Bad and the Ugly! By Frank McLaughlin

After being in the sport for 40 years I have watched the evolution of pigeon photography. Back in the early days of pigeon photography the photo was just that, a photo. On a rare occasion the photo was turned into an oil painting but this was reserved for the champion pigeons.

In the last ten years we have seen a major change with computer technology and the program Photo-Shop. Pigeon photography has become more of an artist rendering of the pigeon more so than the pigeon itself. I have heard so many express disappointment when the pigeon arrives and looks nothing like the picture on the internet.

To the untrained eye these Photo-Shopped pigeons can look beautiful. The colors are brilliant and the shape and stance is outstanding. To the trained eye one can see the pigeon has been totally changed. We see added color, the wings and tails trimmed excessively short and in many cases the same tail is just copied and pasted on every pigeon photographed by the photographer. The worst is when eyes have been enhanced with added color.

I am all for trimming a stray feather but not for totally changing the entire shape and appearance of the pigeon. Over the last several years we see more and more of what is called "Cloning". The photographer seems to place a cookie cutter over each pigeon and every pigeon has identical shaped bodies, heads, tails, wings etc. This cloning is the very worst possible example of pigeon photography for me.

When I witness fanciers using cloning for their pigeon pictures on their websites or in their advertising, I think one of two things. Either the fancier does not know one pigeon from the other or they are actually trying to fool the untrained eye.

Recently I looked at a group of 'cloned' pigeon photo's at auction. An hour later a fancier called me and said he was planning to bid on a few of these pigeons because they were all similar type. He expressed how he likes when a fancier keeps similar typed pigeons in the loft. I just listened because to say these pigeons were similar type was the farthest from the truth. The only thing similar about this group of pigeons at auction were the photographs.

Down deep I do not feel fanciers are trying to deceive with the 'cloned' pictures but are just not experienced enough to realize not every pigeon looks the same. There are fanciers and some quite successful that will still go to the breeding book in the stock loft to lookup what pigeon is what. Many fanciers probably look at the clone and the actual pigeon and see the same pigeon. An owner of an auction site once said to me..." A blue bar is a blue bar, I just use a picture of a blue bar".

I have been lucky over the years to have Henk Kuijlaars photograph my pigeons. The photograph is the pigeon. Henk has been asked by some to alter the photo's but he will not. It is sad that the actual talented pigeon photographers like Henk, have to compete with the talented computer guys. If you take a picture of your grandmother and photo-shop her into a supermodel, is this photo still your grandmother? If I take a picture of Granny, I want a picture of Granny.

I will provide an example of my own pigeons that arrived from Europe with a cloned photograph and the actual photograph of the pigeon. You will see what I mean when I say cloning. These three are not as drastic as some of the clones. I would never use the cloned photo on my website.

Sorry if I ruffled a few feathers. No pun intended.

**The first picture below is my pigeon as is. The second photo is the clone.**



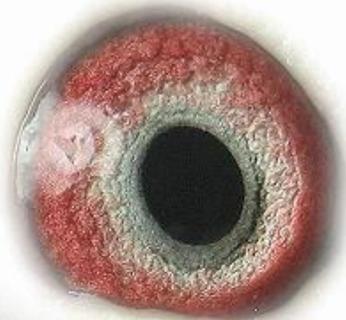
Notice how beautiful Belg 10 1506089 really is and compare her to the clone below.



Clone of Belg 10 1506089. Notice the big difference between the actual untouched photo and this photograph.

*10 BELG 1506079*

**"Red Fool"**



**Germain Imbrecht**

B10-1506079

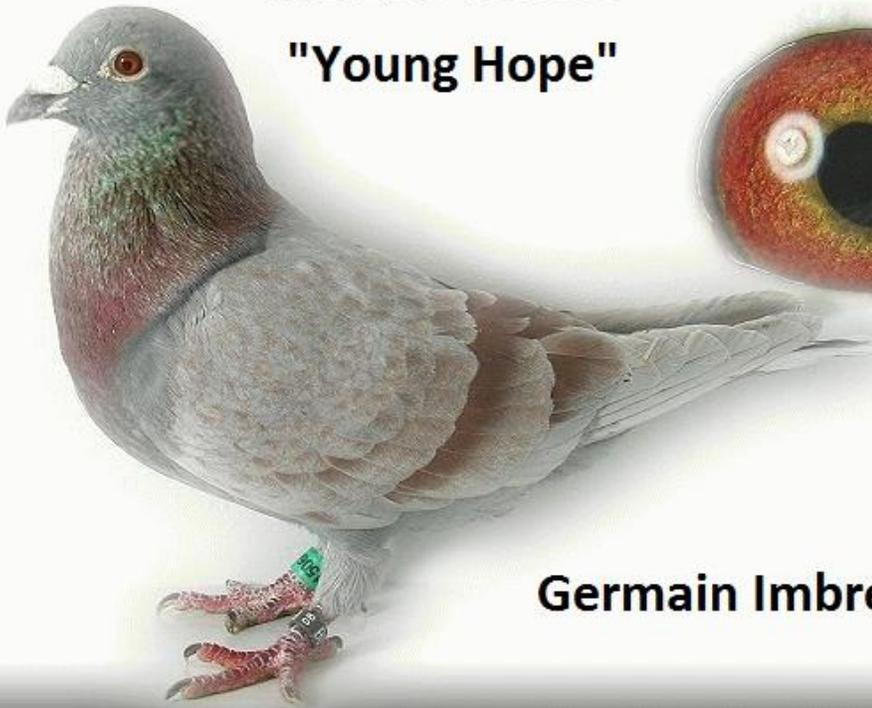


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ES A

*10 BELG 1506086*

**"Young Hope"**



**Germain Imbrecht**

B10-1506086

