

## SHAKEY'S "MUSTACHE GUY" BANJO STORY



**Figure 1**



**Figure 2**

### The Story:

In the late 1960's, I played seven nights a week at Shakey's Pizza in Knoxville, Tennessee. I was 23 years old, when I started, and sat on a stool on the stage facing the audience. The piano player (18 years old) had his back to the audience. The piano player would help me with chords and many songs. I new a few chords and a few songs on my own, but the piano player usually played lead. I played the 5-string and 4-string banjo every night. We played mostly the same songs every night. Sometimes, I wore a gold vest, black pants, black tie, black hat, and clip-on mustache (Figure 1). Other times, I would wear a red vest, black pants, black bow-tie, and no hat (Figure 2). One evening, a regular customer said she was glad to see me, rather than the other guy. She commented that I was a much better banjo player than the other guy with the mustache. I told her, thank you, and I was trying to help the "Mustache Guy" get better on the banjo.

### Questions?

Why did the customer not like the mustache guy's banjo playing?  
Why did she think the red vest player was better?  
Did she know the difference between good and bad banjo playing?  
Did she not like mustaches?  
Was the pizza and beer better than usual that night?  
Who knows?

### Present-Day

Many years later, I'm still trying to help the "Mustache Guy" play the banjo better. Jim Bottorff's Page website ([jbott.com](http://jbott.com)) was started to help the "Mustache Guy."

Happy Picking and Strumming,  
Jim Bottorff - 2023