

June/July 2013

# VANISH

International Magic Magazine



**MARK  
WILSON**

**A LIFETIME  
IN MAGIC**

edition  
**08**

**Mark &  
Nani  
WILSON**

## this edition

**1 STOP THIEF!**  
JEFF MCBRIDE TALKS  
ABOUT STEALING OTHER  
MATERIAL

**2 MAGIC TRICKS**  
LEARN MAGIC - FROM MENTALISM TO  
CLOSE-UP TO STAND-UP ROUTINES

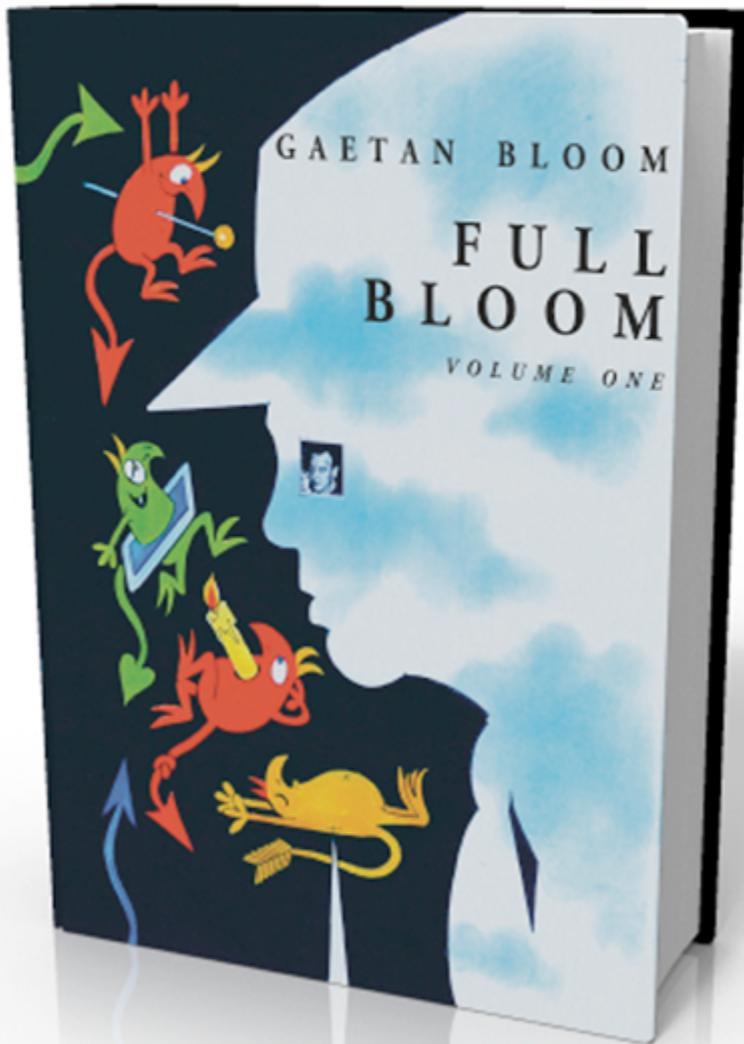
**3 HOW TO PUT TOGETHER  
A TOURING SHOW**  
LEIF DAVID INTERVIEWS  
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June/July 2013

# VANISH

International Magic Magazine

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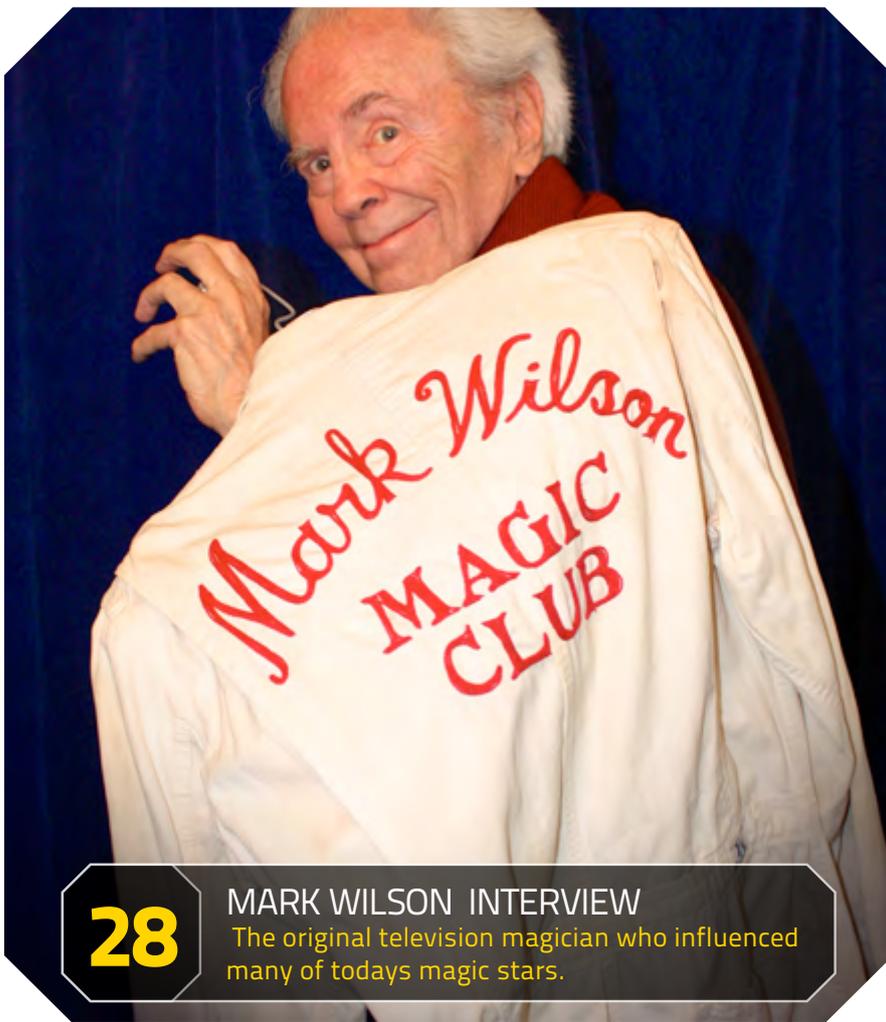
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# FROM THE EDITOR

## FRESH LOOK FOR VANISH WEBSITE INCREASES READERSHIP

It has been an incredibly busy month both personally and professionally. We left New Zealand at the end of April and have moved full time to Vancouver, Canada. As of June 1st we will be in our own place and ready to settle down. Having said that, on June 6th I fly back to New Zealand for a series of corporate engagements, so there won't be much 'settling in' during June.

It has been a very busy time for the magazine as Chipper and I finished up the new website. It took as long to design and put together as an issue of VANISH, but the end result has seen a huge increase in the number of subscribers. We plan to do more with the website over time including photographs from readers, competitions, and blogs.

The response from the last issue has been the best yet with emails and phone calls from people I haven't heard from in a very long time. The support of the

entire magic community towards VANISH has been amazing. I would like to also thank MURPHYS MAGIC SUPPLIES for their continued support and helping get VANISH out to magicians around the world.

This issue offers some hard hitting articles, in particular Angela Funovits article on Bullying in Magic. With the increase in online magic chat groups there does seem to be a trend towards the negative, and this is not a good thing for the future of magic. Angela tells it like it is, and we at VANISH aren't afraid to run with this type of story.

The other hot topic in magic right now involves some well known names who either have had their acts 'copied' or, as it appears, have taken a routine from another act without permission. Jeff McBride has put his heart and soul in to his article, and it is one that every single magician should read. If you belong to a magic club then please share this edition of VANISH because there is something in here for everybody.



**Paul Romhany**

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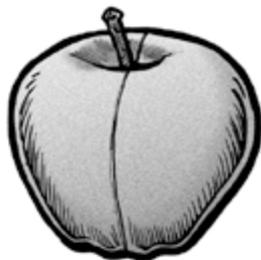
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Finally I would like to thank Nick Lewin for the wonderful two part article on Mark and Nani Wilson. Nick is one of the busiest performers out there today, and for him to take time out of his schedule to do this interview really means a lot to us all here at VANISH. Thank you to Chipper Lowell and Greg Wilson for the wonderful photographs for the feature story as well.

My favorite Mark Wilson story was about fifteen years ago when I visited TC and Lesley Tahoe's Magic Shop in Burbank California. Mark had spent the day there and I got to hang out with him. While we were there a mother and her young son, about nine years old, came in to the shop. The boy saw Mark's book "The Complete Course in Magic" and said, "I used to own that, but it got stolen." Without saying anything, Mark went out to his car and brought a signed copy back in the shop and handed it to the boy and said, "This is for you." It took a moment for the boy to register who was handing him the book, but when he did his mouth almost dropped to the floor. I've never seen a kid so happy. In that instant Mark Wilson became MY hero as well.

*Paul Romhany*





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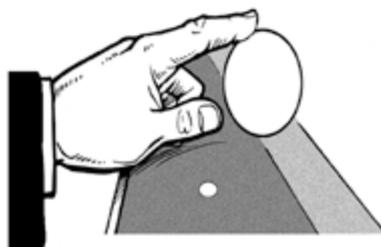
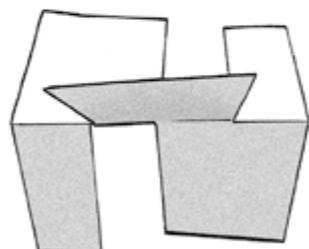
*"Bravo! I'd been waiting with bated breath."  
-Bond, James Bond*

*"Bamboozlers! Bamboozlers! Bamboozlers!"  
-Beetlejuice*

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# news

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## Cinema for sale

Le Grand David Cinema up for sale for \$1.35 million US

If you have a story or a news related item please e-mail the editor at [editor@vanishmagazine.com](mailto:editor@vanishmagazine.com)

We try to keep the news as current as possible and generally this is the last piece we work on prior to the magazine going live.

### **Cabot Street Cinema in Beverly for sale**

Magic show's former home on market for \$1.35 million.

BEVERLY — Cabot Street Cinema, the theatre that has provided an elegant home for vaudeville, movies and magic shows for nearly a century, is for sale.

The sale was announced yesterday by a Boston real estate company that has been hired to market the

building. The asking price is \$1.35 million.

The theatre is owned by White Horse Productions, a group of eight shareholders who were part of the Le Grand David and His Own Spectacular Magic Show that ran for 35 years at the theatre until the death of its founder last year.

David Bull, who played Le Grand David and is the president of White Horse Productions, said the

company could no longer continue to operate two downtown theatres once the magic show ended. The company also owns the Larcom Theatre, which it will retain and keep open.

[Click HERE for full story.](#)

**Magician, Ivan Amodei,** celebrates his 400th performance at the historic Beverly Wilshire Hotel, on the famed Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills, CA. Accompanied

by a cellist, Ivan has been presenting his solo show, "Intimate Illusions", for three years now. The evening includes a mix of close-up and parlour style magic, mentalism, live music, and audience interaction throughout the 90 minute performance.

**'Deceptive Practice': Poof - the life of master magician Ricky Jay appears**  
Molly Bernstein's *Deceptive Practice: The*

*Mysteries and Mentors of Ricky Jay* is a documentary film. A charmingly seductive portrait of one of the great illusionists and card magicians of our time (and perhaps of any time), the documentary spans Jay's remarkable career, from beaming boy - he was little Richard Jay Potash, of Brooklyn, entertaining friends and family with his magic act - to the contented gent he is today. In-between: a colorful parade of conjurers, teaching Jay (literally) the tricks of their trade.

Bernstein interviews Jay in the dressing rooms of theatres where he performs, in restaurants, and on the run. There is a wealth of vintage TV footage: Jay with Dick Cavett, with Dinah Shore, with Johnny Carson. Jay talks with wonder about the sleight-of-hand maestros Cardini, Slydini, Al Flosso, Francis Carlyle, and Roy Benson, and the two wizards who most shaped Jay's act and aesthetic: Dai Vernon and Charlie Miller, truly a couple of cards.

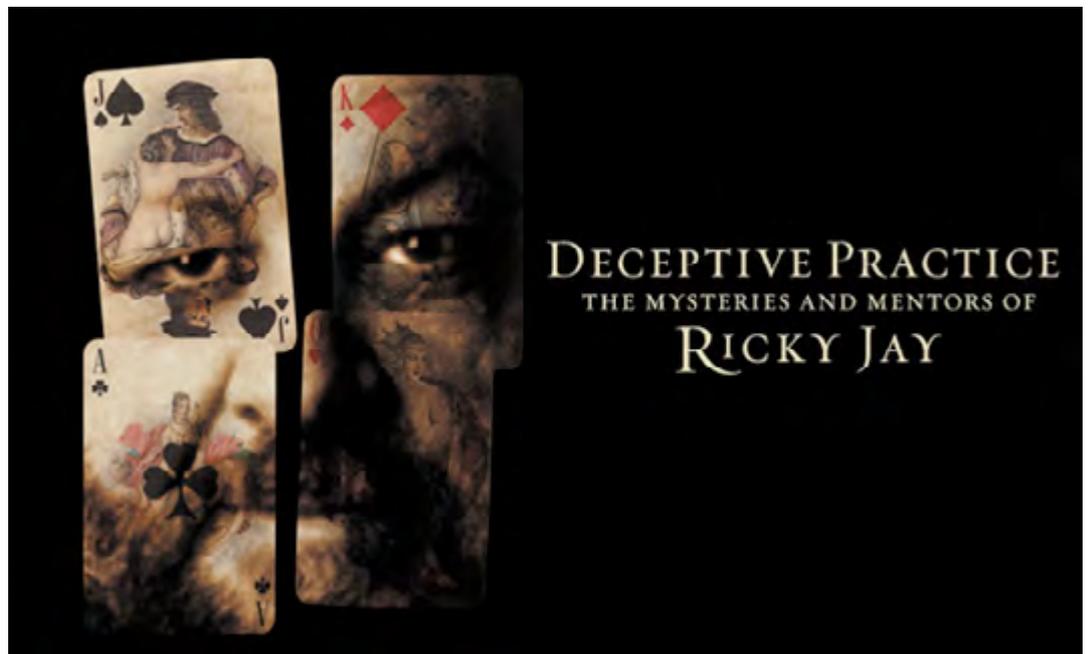
Running time: 1 hour, 52 mins.

Playing at: Ritz Bourse

### TIPS ON ENTERTAINING KIDS

(NAPSI)—When vacation time comes and kids have more free time, there could be good news for parents searching for interesting and unique activities.

Lance Burton, world-renowned magician and magic adviser on "Oz



the Great and Powerful," recommends practicing magic as a fun option for engaging kids at home. Magic has been enjoyed by many as a compelling hobby over the years—even by some celebrities including Neil Patrick Harris, Jason Alexander and Johnny Carson.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

### WORLD RECORD BROKEN

A Hungarian magician has performed street magic for 31 hours, breaking the Hungarian record, and most probably also the world record.

Lui the Magician (above) told MTI late on Sunday that he broke the previous world record by 15 minutes in the street magic category but in order to have this officially recognised, all official documents about the attempt, including video recordings and photographs, will be sent to the Guinness committee.

He performed his stunts, including mind-reading, table magic and even a water tank escape, in Siklos, southern Hungary.

Lui the Magician (35) has been active as a performer for 20 years. He said his record attempt including 102 stunts was a tribute to legendary Hungarian magician Rodolfo who was born 102 years ago.

### NEW CONVENTION IN THE UK

Martin Hunt announces a new Magic Convention in the UK called Magic-Unleashed. This one-day convention will be on the 9th June and be held in North Yorkshire. For more details visit: [www.magic-unleashed.co.uk](http://www.magic-unleashed.co.uk)

### UPDATED WEBSITE

Be sure to drop by the new website for VANISH MAGIC MAGAZINE - we will be adding more features to the site as time allows. From here you have access to back issues, joining the newsletter and other features.

[www.vanishmagazine.com](http://www.vanishmagazine.com)

### THE REVIEWS ARE IN FOR "NOW YOU SEE ME" MOVIE

The reviews are now coming in for this latest magic themed movie.

Here is part of a review from Seattle PI. ([click here to read entire review](#))

"Now You See Me's magic fails to impress (literally) with the film's use of CGI magic tricks. I don't want to see LeBron James go up and turn into a CGI player right before he dunks. The fact that you see him do it is part of the shock and awe you experience. Magic is the same way. David Copperfield escaping and not knowing how he did it is why people love magic. I get it. Now You See Me having competent actors who can pull off action, acting, and comedy is more important than having magicians that can do tricks. It's hard to CGI a good joke (no Jar Jar Binks).

As charming as the first two acts are, the third act drowns during the film's "pull a rabbit out of the hat" moment and never recovers. The film gets away from itself and tries to do a lot in very little time in an attempt to explain the big reveal. What should be a great "a-ha" moment in the film turns into an "oh-meh" moment.

Although the end is frustrating, the rest of the film is pretty good. Now You See Me is film that has no business being as funny or as entertaining as it is."

The VANCOUVER SUN opened up with the following for their review of the movie -

Movie review: Now You See Me — but you'll wish you hadn't  
Lacklustre script, pedestrian flaws, the magic is missing.

A reviewer at jam.canoe says: "Audiences should never go to movies about magicians and illusionists just to see the magic and illusions. In this era of digital special effects, when absolutely anything is possible, staged magic tricks lose their lustre. So we need a nifty plot and interesting characters to keep us engaged ... But the movie is still a fraud. It is missing real emotion, real thrills, real mystery. But, worst of all, it lacks magic."

### SAVING ELEPHANTS USING MAGIC

It doesn't take magic to stop elephants from going extinct, but Eric Bedard knows it can help out the cause. On June 12 at the White Eagle Hall, 90 Dock St., Bedard and 15 fellow magicians will be putting on an array of magic shows to raise money for Elephant Earth, a local charity that works at stopping illegal poaching in Africa.

Bedard plans to travel to Kenya this September and walk 100 kilometres with others to bring awareness to the crisis.

To learn more about Elephant Earth, visit [elephantearth.org](http://elephantearth.org).

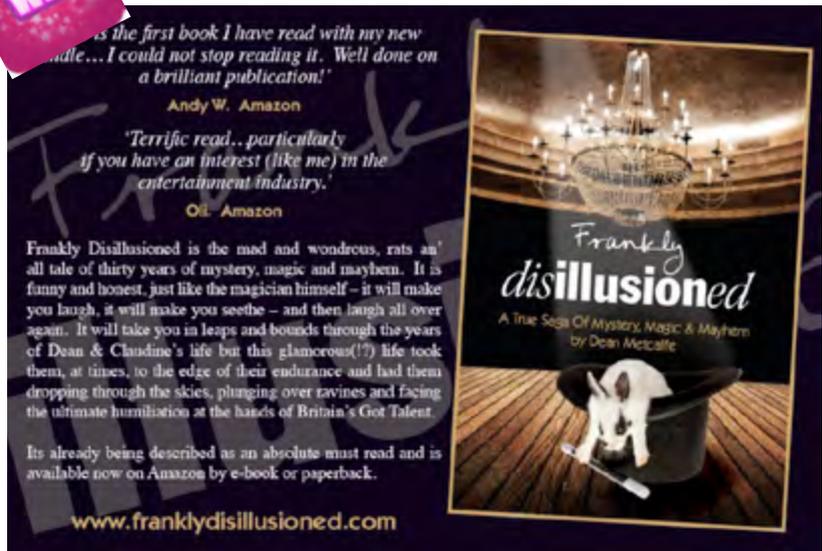
# COMPETITION

Each issue we will be offering a chance for readers to win prizes. Each correct answer we receive will be in the draw to win one of the prizes below. This competition will finish on June 30th 2013 and winners will be notified by e-mail and via our FACEBOOK page -[www.facebook.com/VanishMagazine](http://www.facebook.com/VanishMagazine)

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Frankly Disillusioned is the crazy, "rats an' all" tale of master magician, Dean



Metcalfe and his sometimes hilarious, often chaotic, globetrotting adventures with his glamorous assistant and wife, Claudine. This is YOUR chance to win a signed hard copy of this wonderful book.

ANSWER the FIVE QUESTIONS and email your answers to: [editor@vanishmagazine.com](mailto:editor@vanishmagazine.com)

1. Which famous Las Vegas Magician recently ended his contract after a 13 year period?
2. Which city is International Magic Shop based?
3. Holland has produced some brilliant magical talent and world champions like Richard Ross and Fred Kaps, which brilliant Dutch Illusionist performed in London 2012 at the Peacock Theatre?
4. Dean Metcalfe, the author of Frankly Disillusioned, has performed internationally for over 30 years, what year did he win 'The Young Magician of The Year' at the famous Magic Circle in London?
5. Name the editor of VANISH MAGIC MAGAZINE.

**EMAIL ANSWERS TO:** [editor@vanishmagazine.com](mailto:editor@vanishmagazine.com)

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# ON BULLYING AND MAGIC

Angela Funovits, M.D.



“When magicians act with such disrespect for one another, it is both a negative display of character and a shameful representation of our community”

**A**s I sat down to lunch with a medical colleague of mine several weeks ago, he curiously asked whether I thought magic was a dying art.

My belief is this: in order to be a prevailing art form, magic needs to adapt. In order to adapt efficiently enough to keep up with mainstream entertainment, magic needs an intact and supportive community that encourages creative synergy and advocates the success of its members.

Is this the type of environment that has been fostered by our present magic community? Both personal experiences and recent news reports would lead me to believe otherwise. Like many others, I was shocked and heartbroken to hear of the passing of Kevin Tejan, a talented young magician who committed suicide after being bullied by others in the magic community, most notably in online forums.

There are powerful lessons to be learned from Kevin that I deeply wish could have been ascertained in some other way. Kevin’s story is an extremely difficult yet vivid reminder that words matter. Degrading comments can have a profound impact upon the psyche of a victim whether stated in person or posted online.

While magic forums are intended as an avenue for shared thought and support among magicians, they are also notorious for harboring an absurd number of hurtful, unsophisticated interactions. Many professionals avoid them for this very reason. Unfortunately, countless magic clubs have also been described as following a similar trend.

When magicians act with such disrespect for one another, it is both a negative display of character and a shameful representation of our community. As a physician I feel obligated to emphasize that the psychological damage inflicted by such behavior is very real. Both bullies and victims of bullying are at increased risk for psychiatric disorders. For victims, these disorders run the spectrum of debilitating anxiety, depression, and suicidality. A recent study published in *JAMA Psychiatry* has revealed that these effects can be long-lasting, extending from one’s youth well into adulthood.

Each negative interaction played out in person or online perpetuates a vicious cycle in which magicians learn to habitually resent one another, all of which undermines our efforts to grow, innovate, and thrive as a community. Some might

view bullying as a natural component of the struggle entertainers face as they fight their way to the top. I emphatically propose a different viewpoint. There is nothing natural or necessary about harming others in the pursuit of your goals. Moreover, the real joy of being a magician is not found in the feeding of one's own self-importance. Rather, an extensive, deep, and lasting source of happiness can be found right within the relationships that you form and in the fundamental knowledge that you have contributed to something greater than yourself.

It is with sincere optimism that I envision a future for magic in which kindness is the norm, and all are welcome to enjoy, adapt, and share in the art without being impeded by the fear of harassment. We must take it upon ourselves to adopt a zero-tolerance mentality of bullying and other degrading behaviors in our community. I urge you to lead by example and to encourage those around you to do the same. Together we can be the driving force toward a more unified and supportive culture in which magicians are free to enjoy magic, and in which magic is free to thrive.

1. Copeland WE, Wolke D, Angold A, Costello E. Adult Psychiatric Outcomes of Bullying and Being Bullied by Peers in Childhood and Adolescence. *JAMA Psychiatry*. 2013;70(4):419-426. doi:10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2013.504.



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*Bamboozlers- The Book of Bankable Bar Betchas, Brain Bogglers, Belly Busters & Bewitchery: Volume Three by Diamond Jim Tyler is due out June of 2013.*

Expect the same classy style pocket-sized book. It contains 75 effects with over 100 illustrations and is bound in green faux leather, with silver gilt edges, silver foiled stamping and has a ribbon marker. The foreword of the book is by Mac King. The book will be sold exclusively at [www.diamond-jim.com/originals](http://www.diamond-jim.com/originals) for \$19.95.

**STUNT:** A small piece of paper is made to spin on your finger like an airplane propeller.

**SECRET:** Cut out a two- by three- inch piece of paper napkin. Most writing paper is too heavy for this stunt so you'll need to use a lightweight paper of which most cheap restaurant napkins are made. Fold the paper in half across its width and make a good crease in it. Then fold all of the edges up about a quarter of an inch away from the peak of the crease. Pinch each of those corners together away from the peak of

the crease. The paper should look like a little tray with a crease running down the middle of it (Fig. 1).

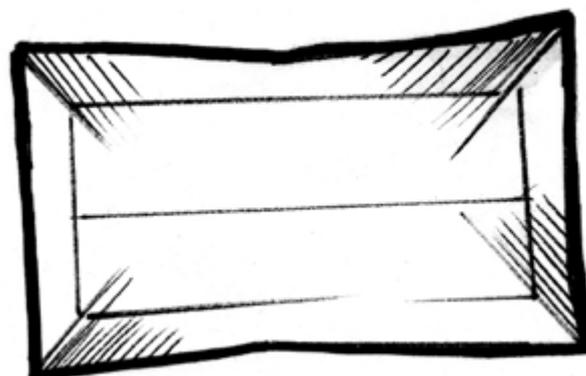


Figure 1

Place your middle or index finger in the center of the paper at the valley of the crease. Extend your hand and the paper away from your body while pinching the paper between your finger and thumb. As you begin to spin your body in a circle, release your thumb from the paper, and if you'll keep your middle finger in the center of the paper it will spin like an airplane propeller (Fig. 2).

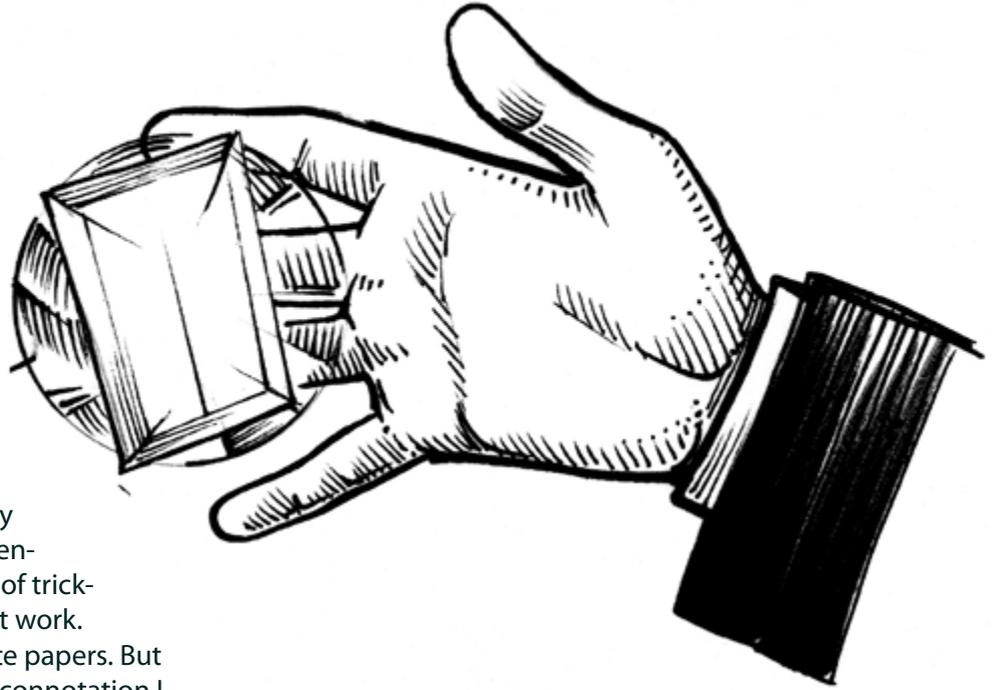
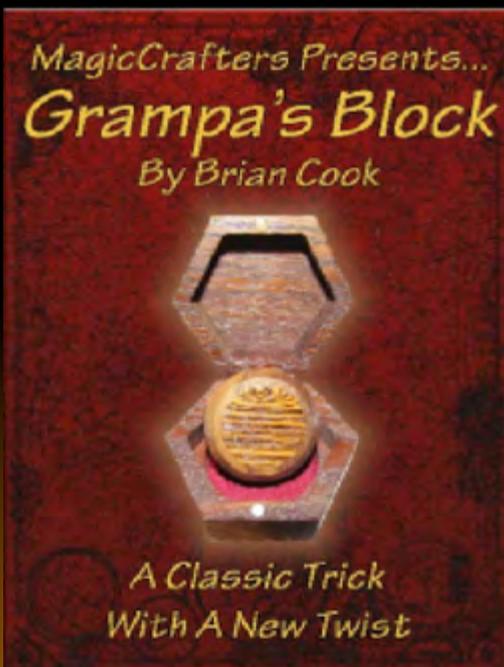


Figure 2

This is one of my favorite stunts to show someone. It was taught to me by the famous entertainer Avner the Eccentric. People will swear that some type of trickery is involved, but it is pure science at work. Avner taught this effect using cigarette papers. But since cigarettes have such a negative connotation I want to pass on some advice to all of my young readers:

"You shouldn't smoke... unless you want to look really cool!"

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# TEN LITTLE SECRETS

John Carney wrote “There’s not one great secret ... there’s a great many little ones” in his fabulous book Carneyopia, while talking about the many people who approached Dai Vernon hoping for the “One Great Secret” to help their magic. And it’s just as true in creating success in your magic career as it is in creating success in your magic performance. Here are ten little secrets...

## Part 1 - The Business of Magic

### # Stop “Being Busy”

We can all be busy doing stuff, filling up our days and feeling pleased with ourselves at the close of business, but are you actually working on the right things? Being busy is sometimes just a way to avoid doing the tasks that might really propel you and your business forwards.

**Action** – Be clear on what your goals actually are and the actionable steps that will progress you towards them.

### # Give Stuff Up 1

It’s just as important when setting your goals to decide on what you are not going to do as it is in deciding what you are going to do.

We often set goals like - exercise more, practice more, call more people, write more etc. But it is often easier and more effective to



TIMOTHY  
HYDE

- Stop “Being Busy”
- Give Stuff Up 1
- Learn to Outsource
- Do a SWOT on yourself
- Give Stuff Up 2
- Charge More
- Think Bigger
- Hang Out With Positive People
- Be Yourself

eliminate tasks, habits, people and practices, freeing up your time and energy.

And this also applies to clients and jobs. Michael Port in his brilliant work “Book Yourself Solid” talks about this as The Velvet Rope principle. Eliminate the bookings that don’t fill you with excitement!

### # Learn to Outsource

As much as you think you can, you can’t do everything. And even if you could, is it a good use of your time?

As independent entertainment professional we are used to wearing many hats. We write, design, direct, do the accounting, publicity, administration. And then of course perform. But this “we can do everything” attitude can be a trap.

The internet has made outsourcing easy.

Web sites like - Fiver.com, Guru.com & Elance.com provide a vast array of cheap priced talent for hire for Design work, Voice Overs, Banners, Business Cards & Virtual Assistants.

### # Do a SWOT on yourself

Most people do a SWOT on their business and it certainly is a very useful diagnostic and planning tool. If you don't know the technique a quick browse on the internet will show you how to do it. The tool is often used for strategic planning. SWOT = Strengths, Weakness, Opportunity, Threats.

I suggest you also run a SWOT on yourself. Really pinpoint what you are good at and what you are not. I was reminded of this recently in an article about the famous Australian chef Neil Perry. He was already a successful man, running a couple of top rated restaurants, but after running the SWOT on himself rather than his business, he saw by exploiting HIS strengths he could be doing so much more. He then rapidly expanded into many other different but related markets and niches.

### # Give Stuff Up 2

Don't be afraid to stop performing something even if it works really well. There's usually something better to discover that will help your act and career grow.

One of my favourite professional speakers is Joe Calloway. He famously challenged the entire National Speakers Association conference to give up their tried and true keynotes and even topics and to develop new ones. It caused quite a stir, but many took up the challenge.

For years I closed my stand-up show with some fire eating. Apart from the obvious health and safety issues it was very hard to give up, as it was such a strong closer, but I did and my act grew. A decade later when I was doing an illusion show, we would always close our shows with the same strong routine, but then found something better. I now close my shows with a poem ...

### # Charge More

Most magicians don't charge what they are worth or charge what they could. What excuse do you make? Is it a valid excuse? Could that be an assumption and could it be challenged?

### # Think Bigger

One of the best moves I made about 15 years ago was to stop thinking of myself as a Sydney Magician. As soon as I did, I started getting work all around the country. I still get more work in Queensland and Victoria than I do in my home state of New South Wales.

Eliminate the "they'll never pay for the travel or the accommodation costs" thinking! They will.

Alternatively, charge the same fee anywhere around the country. Many professional speakers do this. Charge a bit more for your show and pay your own costs when you travel, use frequent flyer points etc. It will work out better in the long run. You make more when you work near home and this will balance up the times when you travel, but you will also get exposed to new markets and contacts.

Five years ago I was on a cruise and having dinner with Graham

Burke, CEO of Village RoadShow, the executive producer of such movies as Happy Feet 1 & 2 and Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. His is a real rags to riches story and probably worthy of a movie itself. During dinner, another person, on finding out what I did, asked where I worked. I replied "at corporate events all around Australia" and felt rather pleased about "thinking big." Some time later, at an appropriate moment, Graham leant across and whispered "always tell them you work all over the world." I now do.

### # Hang out with Positive People

Don't spend time or energy on people who suck the life and energy out of you.

If your time on internet forums, at magic clubs or social activities is not filling you with excitement and energy why continue? Find people who inspire, invigorate and challenge you and spend time with them.

It was recently put to me like this. Find the cleverest person in the room and hang out with them. And if you ever find that you are the cleverest person in the room, change rooms.

### # Become interesting

People like to do business with interesting people. Become interesting! And I don't just mean the fact that you do some amazing magic. What else do you do?

### # Be yourself

"Be yourself, everyone else is taken" Oscar Wilde

### Who is Timothy Hyde?

*Timothy Hyde has been a full time performer since 1977 and is widely acknowledged as one of Australia's busiest and most successful magicians. A wide ranging career has taken him from street performance, comedy clubs, theme parks, trade shows, casino seasons and now works almost exclusively in the corporate sector with an occasional cruise assignment. His online MagicCoach project, running since 1999, including a free newsletter, manuscripts and unique products can be found here <http://www.MagicCoach.com>*





**STOP! THIEF!**

**By Jeff McBride**

*"An original artist is unable to copy. So he has only to copy in order to be original."* Jean Cocteau

This may be the BIGGEST story in the world of magic today! Everyone seems to be talking about it.

- Barkady rips of Teller's "Shadows",
- Criss Angel calls out Dynamo for copying.
- Jan Rouven's fans are outraged that Criss uses one of \*Jan's illusions for his TV show.
- Ayala calls Rouven a thief for performing his illusion "without rights"
- My entire show gets ripped of in Thailand.
- ...and the magic community is reeling from rip-off dealers and copyists.

### CAN ANYONE STOP THE MADNESS?

Not too long ago, I was dragged into a drama with a magician in Thailand. The BBC picked up on my situation with this most-recent "copy act" and mentioned how I handled it gracefully as a "magic

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The BBC picked up on my situation with this most-recent "copy act" and mentioned how I handled it gracefully as a "magic teacher."

teacher."

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-21861418>

You will want to get the full story. Thankfully, there's a 'webified' text of the radio story, but it's much better if you click the 'play' button and listen to the audio:

<http://www.theworld.org/2013/04/magician-jeff-mcbride/>

Look and listen to both of these stories! These are ground breaking stories on "magic theft" and intellectual property rights.

"In the old days, I heard stories about how professional magicians protected their material and handled theft situations. Many of the stories ended in dramatic confrontations in parking lots, with bloodied noses!"





He apologized to me, but the damage was done, and the youtube clip still remains for all to see - evidence of a pro knowingly ripping off another pro.

#### **PUNCH IN THE FACE?**

In the old days, I heard stories about how professional magicians protected their material and handled theft situations. Many of the stories ended in dramatic confrontations in parking lots, with bloodied noses... or with the offended magician storming the stage and kicking over the offending magician's table... like stuff right out of the movie *The Prestige*. I could imagine myself following this example, but would never act on it, in reality... I'm just not gangsta enough.

#### **COPYCAT? COPYRIGHT!**

Teller is one of my friends. He was recently in the news. A Dutch magician called Gerard Bakardy (whose real

name is Gerard Dogge) stole his "Shadows" routine. Teller got righteous and got good lawyers. Good work, Teller. For the full story: <http://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2012/04/silent-magician-teller-files-copyright-suit-over-stolen-shadow-trick/>

#### **OK, FINE THEN!**

I hate to see friends fight, but recently, Rafael from Belgium had to stand up to his long-time friend Hans Klok over the performing rights to a combination of effects that Rafael had fused together. This was big news, and set new precedents in the way magicians handle claims of originality and rip-offs. Here is the story: [https://www.boston.com/news/world/europe/articles/2011/11/09/abracadabra\\_dutch\\_court\\_fines\\_magician\\_over\\_act/](https://www.boston.com/news/world/europe/articles/2011/11/09/abracadabra_dutch_court_fines_magician_over_act/)

Hayashi is an amateur magician who performs on European television. He says he was under pressure from television networks to generate lots of new material. He knew he made a big mistake when he ripped off my "opening masks" number. I was really angry with him, but Hayashi was very persistent and even spoke with my manager, Tobias Beckwith, about how best to deal with the situation. He apologized to me, but the damage had been done, and the youtube clip still remains for all to see-- evidence of a pro knowingly ripping off another pro. I also learned a lesson from Hayashi about holding grudges, that if I'm carrying a resentment, it only hurts me.

#### **TURNING CONTROVERSY INTO CONVERSATION**

When I saw the rip-off act from Thailand, I knew he was so far away there was no punch in the face that could end it, so I couldn't go "old school" on him. I know that the internet is a powerful medium, and our magic community is very active in finger-pointing, name calling and cyber-bullying. It just makes me sick when I read nasty criticisms and mean comments about other performers on the internet. There has to be a better way to resolve disputes than by posting long angry ranting threads... which start to look like so many car accidents along the information highway.

I decided, with the help of my Mystery School advisors, to dialogue with the Thai magician. Through google translate, we started a conversation. We were able to reach some understanding and make some agreements, instead of getting caught up in condemnation, conflict and controversy. A few months later, I even had the opportunity to fly to Thailand to be part of a big magic festival. Many of the magicians mentioned how gracefully we worked this situation out, and thanked me for building bridges instead of punching faces.

"Jeff, he is NOT a rip-off act! It is apparent that this guy loves your magic act so much he wants to be you!"

My friend, writer Rick Lax, and I talked one day about the Thai copy act. He said, "Jeff, he is NOT a rip-off act! It is apparent that this guy loves your magic act so much he wants to be you!" That made sense to me. The Thai guy was not "evil," he really worked hard to get the act to be an exact copy... much like a Michael Jackson impersonator tries to copy every move. He was creating a McBride magic "tribute act!"

A few weeks later an email came in from a college student named Trevor.

He recounted a story that is printed in STARS OF MAGIC regarding Nate Leipzig.

*"Behind the surface gentlemanliness on which everyone who remembers Nate always comments, was the very real kindness that is such a basic component of true gentility. This is best exemplified by the time Dr. Daley sat next to Leipzig in a theatre and suffered through the performance of a magician who had stolen every trick from Leipzig. His act was a carbon copy of Nate's.*

*Daley said at the conclusion of the performance, "Nate, he's doing your act!"*

*"Yes," said Leipzig, and we think this sums up the man's character, "yes, but he's doing it so well."*

- Stars of Magic, 1961.

I am sure you are aware of the above, but I wanted to send it to you because your reaction to your act being done by another magician reminded me of Nate Leipzig.

I wonder if Nate Leipzig approached the magician backstage, or sometimes after the show, and created a dialogue with him similar to what you did with the magician who did your act. I think you both did the right thing."

Thank you for sharing your valuable experience Trevor!

I am no expert, but I am learning more from friends and colleagues every day.

Here is an interesting paper by Jacob Loshin I found on the internet

<http://faculty.winthrop.edu/kosterj/WRIT510/readings/intellectualproperty%26magic.pdf>

There is so much to learn about the intricacies of legal matters. Recently, I've been emailing with my friends Sara and Deb McCallister.

Sara Crasson is a lawyer who is writing excellent articles on intellectual property rights (IP), for Genii magazine (see June 2013).

Ms. McCallister is very well read in the areas of magic IP, and sends me interesting find, the amount of information is often overwhelming! Emails bring new info

almost every day! (I've included links in this article so you can see just a small part of what is out on the internet!)

A curious article on IP was written recently by Hellen Lindvall for Digital Music news. Ms Lindvall said, "Mannerisms, distinctive characteristics, gestures – even the silhouette – are just some parts of a personality that can be covered by this new intellectual property right." The full article can be read here. <http://www.digitalmusicnews.com/permalink/2013/20130515image>

### WHAT'S YOURS? WHAT IS NOT?

Recently on the Ethics episode of Mystery School Monday, our friend, Brad Henderson, boiled all of this down to two simple points. He said: "There is what's ethical, and then there is what's legal." Although something may be within the letter of the law, it's still may not be ethically "right." Many magic dealers have marketed other people's ideas, including mine, because of slippery copyright and patent laws, but ethically, they are dead wrong. They have taken another artist's work and ripped it off.

I listen to the counsel of my wise elders. Eugene Burger, Dean of the Magic & Mystery School, says:

1. If you purchased a magic effect from the creator, it is yours to perform, though not to expose or teach.
  2. If you've purchased a book or DVD with a routine in it, you are entitled to perform that routine exactly as the performer does, unless specifically stated otherwise.
  3. If you have any question about the performing rights of a magic effect, or if you feel that you have created something new and original, it is advisable to reach out to magic experts in the community, ask for expert, informed advice, or contact the artist!. You would be amazed how many would give permission or work a deal with you.
  4. If you see an artist perform an original piece of magic on television or youtube, it is NOT yours to perform, even if you can figure out the method. As Jamy Ian Swiss says, "My act is not a smorgasbord for you to pick and choose from."
  5. Study creativity. You can find many workshops, books and learning materials on creativity. One of my favorite books is Creativity Is Forever, by Gary A. Davis. It teaches how you can generate your own original magic ideas.
- There seems to be a mad rush today, driven by the internet, for accelerated fame and fortune. All of a sud-

den, everybody is exposing magic on youtube clips to get hits for their site, or, as soon as they come up with a half baked ideas (which may or may not be original), they are selling it on the internet, trying to make a fast buck and get their name around.

This behavior is hardly a path for the true artist. If a performer focuses on money and fame, they will never develop a solid artistic core. I feel it is much more important for an aspiring magician to work on their craft, to practice their art, to hone their skills and to learn their history. If there are any questions concerning creative rights to a magic effect, be very cautious. The social media is very unforgiving, and one mistake can blemish a magician's entire career. I strongly advise everyone to be very aware of the dangers of taking advantage of legal or ethical shortcuts to success. In the long run, they don't pay off.

***"Originality is the best form of rebellion."***

-- Mike Sasso

#### **More interesting links**

Law and Magic: A Collection of Essays [Paperback]

Christine A. Corcos

<http://www.amazon.com/Law-Magic-Collection-Christine-Corcos/dp/1594603553>

[http://faculty.law.lsu.edu/ccorcos/lawhum/lawandmagicpage.htm#DEFINITIONS\\_OF\\_MAGIC\\_](http://faculty.law.lsu.edu/ccorcos/lawhum/lawandmagicpage.htm#DEFINITIONS_OF_MAGIC_)

Jeff McBride is the creator of McBride's Magic and Mystery School and helps magician all over the world with their careers. [WWW.mcbridemagic.tv](http://WWW.mcbridemagic.tv)

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**W**hen Dean Metcalfe decided to put pen to paper to tell the story of his life as a magician and worldwide entertainer, it was in the wake of years spent courting extremes; the frozen, barren landscape of The Falkland Islands and the draining humidity of Hong Kong; the white, fluffy towels and champagne on high-class cruise ships and bug infested apartments in Belgium. Each and every one of the bizarre tales in this book is true – Dean can vouch for that – he was there! People often told him that he should write a book about their travels as professional entertainers – so here it is, aptly titled – ‘Frankly Disillusioned’!

**Genii Magazine (USA):**

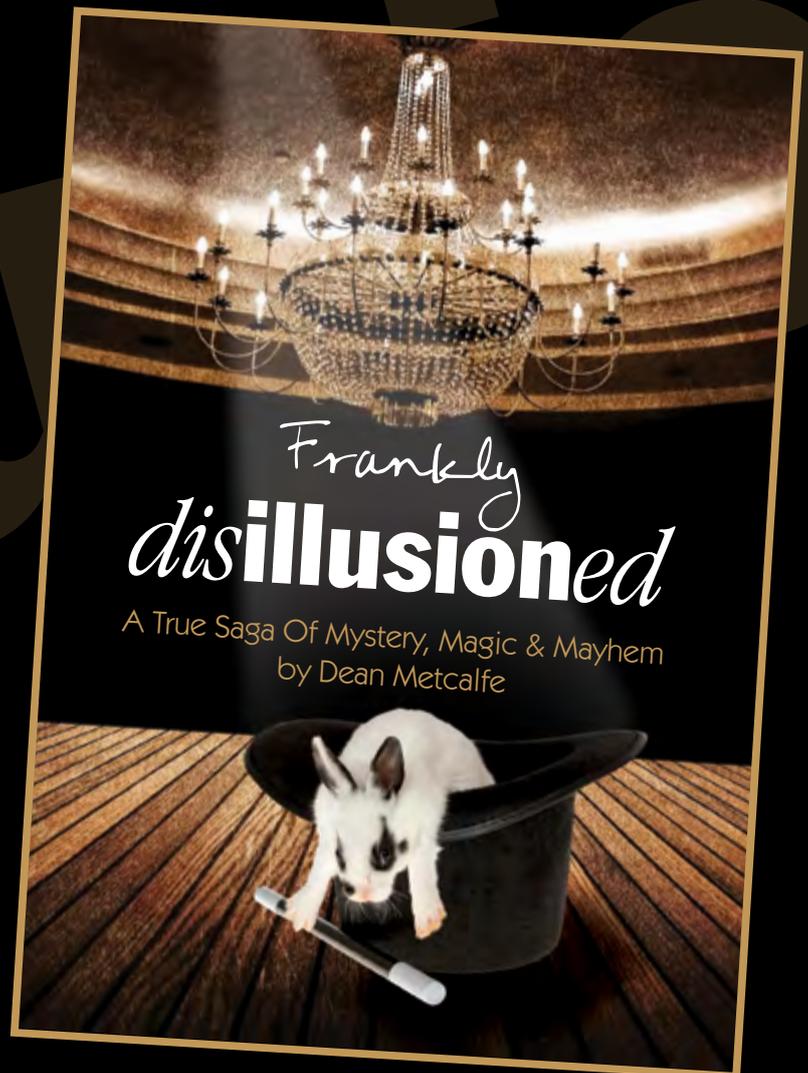
*There are accidents, blood, explosions, brothels, chickenpox, assaults, and even a hotel fire. The book's strength lies in being very engaging, funny and honest. Read it before you give up your day job!*

**Vanish Magazine Review:**

*“This would definitely have to be one of the best books about somebody's career in magic I have read in a very long time. This is a true account of the good, bad and ugly of show business from a husband and wife who have entertained around the world. There are stories in here that really made my hair stand on end and I wondered how I would react if I were in their position”* **EXTREMELY HIGHLY RECOMMENDED**

**Magic Seen Review  
(Mark Leveridge)**

*“It's actually quite hard to put it down, because at the turn of every page, there's another jaw dropping revelation. The book is a wonderful roller coaster ride, sometimes funny, often amazing and regularly surprising. Its a real eye opener and I thought it was a brilliant read”*



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**MARK  
WILSON**  
A LIFETIME OF MAGIC





# MARK WILSON INTERVIEW

REPORTER: NICK LEWIN    PHOTOS: CHIPPER LOWELL & GREG WILSON    LAYOUT: PAUL ROMHANY

## MARK AND NANI WILSON: FROM TEXAS TO ALAKAZAM

It was a true delight recording the interview with Mark and Nani Wilson that formed the basis of this story. The interview took place in their warehouse/office/workshop in beautiful Valencia, California and it was exciting just to see the history and memorabilia that are packed into every inch of the 4000 square foot facility. I really don't think Mark or Nani have discarded an item since their early days as a young couple in Texas.

## BY NICK LEWIN

There is an awesome living magic museum going on around you when you visit the Wilson Warehouse facility. It is filled with the creative clutter of a lifetime in magic. Any true-blooded magician could have spent a full day just exploring the space and looking at the myriad of fascinating items. I enjoyed their gracious tour immensely and could have spent hours more exploring.

By the time I got over the physical environment, the next thing that really caught my attention was exactly what a wonderful team the Wilson's make. They

can start and finish each others sentences and are so perfectly attuned to each other that it seems a little bit like a mind reading act. Mark would start to tell a story and Nani would quietly disappear only to return with an object or piece of publicity that Mark would be describing a few minutes later.

It was an object lesson in teamwork and you realize that in the 61 years they have known each other and worked together Mark and Nani have achieved the kind of synergy that is seldom seen. I really didn't have to do too much 'interviewing', I just turned on my tape recorder and enjoyed the ride. I did ask the questions I wanted to, however for most of the three hours I just tried to keep out the way. Sometimes I would interrupt Mark's flow with a pertinent inquiry, but I tried not to.

I am sure it comes as no surprise to anyone to hear that Mark is a very determined and self directed human being. As his story unfolded to me, I realized that this had always been the case and Mark's focus coupled with his incredible teamwork with Nani is a truly magical and successful love story. Since the publication of his iconic 'Course in Magic' Mark has expanded the teaching aspect of his magic and I was amazed at how much I learned during my visit about the art and business of magic.

Starting at the very beginning, Mark Wilson was

MARK  
WILSON

Holding original footage reel  
of The Magic Circus Show.

“MARK IS  
A VERY  
DETERMINED  
AND SELF  
DIRECTED  
HUMAN  
BEING.”

PHOTOS BY CHIPPER LOWELL



born into a family that was a perfect place to begin his hone his skills as a pioneering magician. Mark was born in Dallas, Texas into a family that consisted of a long line of entrepreneurs. His father was a very successful salesman and it is apparent to anyone with any insight into his career, that Mark embodied these traits and skills into his arsenal as a businessman and showman.

At the age of nine, Wilson saw a performance by magician Tommy Martin and his future path became very clear—he was going to become a magician. He bought a copy of Thurston's '50 New Card Tricks,' and began practicing split fans and back palms with a deck of Playtime playing cards that fitted his youthful hands. His love of magic was born and quite obviously the flame burns just as brightly to this very day.

By the age of twelve Mark was demonstrating magic at the 'Douglas MagicLand' magic shop. He relished this achievement for the opportunity it gave him to gain access to the more sophisticated props and tricks that resided in the back of the store. By the time he was fourteen Mark was ready for his first professional performance. He performed at a local Rotary club for the princely salary of five dollars plus bus fare. His career had begun.

While his family were no doubt waiting for the 'magic bug' to work its way through Mark's system, his path was heading in a very different direction. Wilson went on to attend Southern Methodist University in Dallas, where he studied advertising and marketing. He became the head cheerleader for the football team, in order to position himself to win a school election; obviously those lessons in advertising and

marketing were taking root. It is no stretch to say that magic plus marketing have been the hallmark to Mark's continued success throughout his entire career.

On New Years Eve in 1953 the single most important event occurred in Mark's life. At a fraternity party he met a beautiful young blonde lady holding a tray of champagne glasses. He took a glass of champagne and requested a kiss to usher in the New Year. The young lady was Nani Darnell and seven months, on August 29th, they married and became husband and wife. In doing so they also formed one of the most successful partnerships in the history of magic.

Nani had been dancing since she was three years old and a professional since her eleventh year, her ideas of a future were classical ballet and the possibility of becoming a 'Box Jumper' were as far from her mind as could possibly be imagined. This wasn't the future that her mother had planned for the talented Ms. Darnell either! In order to win moms approval, Mark briefly shelved (or appeared to shelve!) his goal of being a magician and quit magic (or appeared to quit magic!) to work for his uncle in the decal business.

However, magic was never far from Mark's mind and before the wedding confetti was out of his hair, he was hard at work on reclaiming his stake in the magic world. He wasn't just performing shows at his local Rotary club though; he was selling his first television show based around magic. Within seven months he had sold his first television show.

One of the fascinating things about the Mark Wilson story is that he was always a television magician, almost from the very start of his career. With television and magic, Mark had found the perfect combination of the medium, the message and how to become the messenger.





In a move that became symptomatic of his entire career, Mark cut out the middleman and found a sponsor for his proposed show and delivered a 'done deal' package to his local television station. When you deliver the sponsor and the programming to a television executive, it is the TV equivalent of making that 'offer that you can't refuse.'

The client was the local Dr. Pepper bottling company and the product was 'Time For Magic,' which initially aired locally in the Dallas market. The TV station was initially convinced that magic was not going to work over the air--a statement that Wilson was to hear repeatedly over the next decade. He always proved this attitude to be incorrect and succeeded with his singular approach to magic. It is really no stretch of the facts to say that Mark Wilson was the first TV magician--he practically invented the medium.

Mark had a very simple technique, to sell his corporate sponsors on his proposed shows. He went to them and painted a picture of how their product would benefit from the show he was creating. He found ways to place their product in a starring role in the show that was to be presented. He didn't need to sell the client on Mark Wilson, as

much as sell them on what Mark Wilson would be doing with their product. He would go directly to the president of a company and say, "You have a delightful product. Here is how we can use it." This proved a simple and devastatingly effective means to an end.

Mark's prototype show 'Time for Magic' began its first 26-week run on WFAA in Dallas in February 1954. Wilson incorporated personal appearances for Dr. Pepper in the local supermarkets and a host of other tie-ins to maximize his television contract. He also created a special magical premium. When Mark used this term to me in our conversation, I didn't really know what it meant. When he explained it to me, I realized that I had been a prime fan of 'premiums' as a child growing up in England. Let me explain exactly what they are....

A premium was a special item that could be obtained by collecting proof of purchase from the company that offered them. Mark would demonstrate a trick on his TV show and then inform his audience that the method was explained in a special booklet. If you mailed twelve Dr. Pepper bottle tops to the bottling company you would receive this special booklet, featuring thirteen tricks that you could perform. His



"It is no stretch to say that Mark Wilson was the first TV magician - he practically invented the medium."

first premium was featured on 'Time for Magic' for twenty-six weeks and resulted in over 300,000 bottle tops being received in the mail. That is a lot of soda being sold!

Mark's show aired at 5:45pm just before the evening news and began to achieve enormously successful ratings. At one point it was the highest rated early evening show in Dallas and was beating the ratings of such established favorites as 'The Perry Como Show.' With success like this the show moved into other television markets in Texas, such as Houston, San Antonio Waco and Tyler.

One tiny hiccup on the road to success occurred when Mark when a local television station told Mark that his show had been cancelled. When he visited the local bottler to enquire what the problem was, he was told that there was so much response to his magic premium that the manager's secretary was spending almost her entire working week counting bottle tops! The decision was quickly reversed and the show continued to go from strength to strength.

Between 1954-1959, an additional four sponsors were added to the show and Mark and Nani began an exciting but grueling schedule travelling across Texas performing the live appearances that were broadcast as 'Time for Magic' and later 'Mark Wilson's Magic Club.' This was the days before videotape and there were endless hours of driving, setting up props and changing costumes in the car and filming in steaming hot aluminum studios. It was hard work for the young couple and the training ground for their future successes.

Mark and Nani must have been making big bucks with their network of television shows, right? No, in fact money was tight and most of their budget went right back into the show. In fact, they ended up moving back into Mark's parents home and living in the garage, while their new baby boy was housed in the maid's room. This was actually a very comfortable and practical arrangement but it signaled to Mark that it was time to move from a regional market to a national one, since no national market for a TV magic show existed, it also meant that Mark had to create one. He began in Los Angeles.

After surveying potential markets Wilson flew to Los Angeles, armed with a kinescope



of their early shows. From his base at the Beverly Hilton hotel, Mark tried to set up meetings with all seven local stations and succeeded only in obtaining a meeting at Channel 13. At the meeting the station manager sounded the old familiar note, "Magic won't work on television." Returning from the meeting to his hotel Mark glanced enviously at the famous CBS Television City center located at Beverly and Fairfax. Maybe it was more like a premonition than an envious glance, but that is a little further ahead in our story.

There was now a two-year period where Wilson focused his time and energy on finding a national sponsor for his new series. Mark started a non-stop series of phone calls and presentations to potential corporate sponsors. He created an edited kinescope to show at these meetings. In this era of film editing there were often some loud 'clicks' when the edited film was projected and Mark learned to cough at just the right time to cover the sound 'hiccups!' Attention to detail was always a Wilson trait.

Part of his success has always been the very careful and business like presentations that Mark uses to illustrate his future plans. Exploring his warehouse facility years later I was intrigued by the elaborate visual presentations that he has employed since his earliest successes. They are part art, part science and always accompanied by exciting video demonstrations of past projects.

His philosophy always seems to have been--- 'why tell the client what you will do, when you can show them.'

The sponsor that jumped at the opportunity was 3M. They liked the idea of magic and wanted to tie it in with their new magnetic recording tape, in fact they wanted to use the show to demonstrate the viability of syndicating a television show. In 1958, 3M commissioned a thirteen-week run of 'The Magic Circus' to air in, six markets and it became a historic first in the television industry. The show was filmed live in Dallas and then 2-inch tapes of the show were shipped to, Baltimore, Boston, Denver, Houston and Philadelphia for broadcasting. These tapes were driven to the airport for shipping each week, with their four-year old son Mike riding shotgun in the car. This was still a very hands on and family business.

The 'Magic Circus' series marked the start of Mark and Nani's association with Bev Bergeron, who created his famous role of Rebo the Clown for the show. Rebo would of course later reappear when 'The Magic Land of Allakazam' found it's way onto the airwaves. The creative team and style for 'Allakazam' was really formed and forged during this period of time. It was a really strong show that delivered great ratings.



**LEVITATION**  
Nani being levitated  
on television.

3M were delighted with the reaction to their show and told Mark that they wanted to re-launch it as a Network show, "How does Sunday afternoon on NBC sound?" Well it sounded pretty darn good to Mark! The show was submitted to NBC for a 5:00pm time slot, but sadly NBC nixed the project and decided to go with a golfing show. Once again those same words were heard—"the network doesn't think magic will work on TV." It was a crushing blow to all concerned.

It is worth exploring here exactly why these words were so often heard as one of Wilson's projects were discussed, and how Mark always proved them wrong. The reason that the TV industry felt, not unnaturally that TV audiences, who were accustomed to shows like 'Rocket Man,' would just assume that the magic was achieved by trick photography. This is the reason that Mark came up with his three golden rules for making magic on TV relevant and believable.

The three rules Mark devised have now become standards for almost everyone performing magic on television, they are...

**1** Never to cut away in the middle of a trick, but to create a continuity of vision. If you cut away from the



On 'The Magic World of Alakazam' Mark also made a point of walking into the audience to perform magic during the taping of his show.



magic to an audience reaction shot, then the integrity of your relationship with the audience is lost.

**2** Always have a live studio audience present to act as something of a committee for those viewers who are viewing at home.

**3** Always make an announcement for the viewers stating clearly and sincerely that no camera magic is used to create or enhance the magic that they are viewing.

On 'Magic Land of Allakazam' Mark also made a point of walking into the studio audience to perform magic during the taping of his shows. This reinforced the genuineness of the magic. It also made filming the shows quite a bit more complex as ever illusion needed to be staged/lighted for both the live audience and also the TV cameras. It was a simple and masterful stroke of thinking.

After the disappointment of the 3M show to go national, it was back to basics for Mark and lining up sponsors and products and forming them into a saleable product. Mark made many visits to the Kellogg Company, armed with suitcases of prototypes of tricks constructed from cereal boxes and ideas for commercials using magic. After two years, it paid off and in Dallas Nani got a call from their advertising agency saying that Kellogg's wanted to put them on the air. Mark flew from Los Angeles to Chicago to sign the deal memo that would seal the deal!

The biggest break in their career had arrived, when on the October 1, 1960 the first episode of their new



show aired. 'The Magic Land of Allakazam' was now a national show that was being filmed at CBS Television center each week. When Mark and Nani walked down the hallway of that historic building they had the thrill of seeing their portrait on the wall right next to Lucille Ball. They had really arrived. 'Allakazam' was to run for two years on CBS and then without missing a beat moved over to ABC. As always seems to be the case in television while there was no hurry to green light a project; getting the show up, running and on the air needed to be done at lightning speed. There was ten weeks to prepare the show---not much time, but with the backlog of experience and material that their previous shows afforded them, it was achieved in style.

Planning and preparing the show and getting it on the air for that first show was a huge achievement and took a great deal of effort---but now the hard work

really began! They had to repeat the experience 25 more times in as many weeks. Each show involved between 7-9 tricks and several illusions and that took a great deal of creative planning and organizing. There was a weekly budget of \$5000, which had to cover a myriad of costs including props, costumes, production assistants, and all the network studio rental fees and union crew expenses; so the emphasis was squarely on being creative.

When the show first aired each episode contained two short cartoons especially created by the famed team of Hanna-Barbera.

Mark was determined to lose the cartoons and have a show that was solely filled with magic. In thirteen weeks the first cartoon was gone and by the second year the second cartoon was also eliminated and his show consisted of all live magic. Unfortunately the extra budget allotted to the show from the two missing cartoons was only \$500 a week, and it left another seven minutes of airtime to fill.

Fortunately, 'Allakazam' had a brilliant creative team working on the material that was featured each week. Bob Fenton, Bob Towner and Leo Benkhe worked closely with famed illusion builders Carl Owen, and John Daniel, from "Owen Magic Supreme to produce props and magic that would dazzle on a weekly basis. In 1961 a youthful Johnny Gaughan flew in from Dallas to act as 'runner' for the show, by the end of the series he was well on his way to becoming the world famous magic craftsman who is now so revered in the magic fraternity. Johnny had worked with the Wilson's back in Dallas as a young lad but he now had a driving license, this made him even more useful to the team.

Mark and Nani met with the rest of the team every Monday to pre-plan the next week's show. There was no official writer for

the show, however a great deal of interaction resulted in a show that got stronger and stronger each week. After purchasing a 'Shop-smith' multipurpose tool the team started to build their own illusions which helped stretch their limited budget. In talking with Mark and Nani it became obvious to me that their philosophy had always been to take whatever their budget was and make sure that the audience saw every penny of it.

The show was filmed with the CBS method of recording a live show, which ended up with a 35 millimeter black and white master with a separate sound track to make the show. Mark was the responsible for sending out the 16 millimeter copies that spread the show across the country. Those copies inspired magicians across the country and probably created more magicians than any previous event. Years later Mark was to hear from magicians as diverse as Lance Burton and Johnny Ace Palmer what an inspiration they had been.

So successful was the show that the original 26 episodes were extended to a 39-week season, and in 1961 another 38 shows were produced. The show was a bona-fida hit and got a significant following across the country. When Kellogg's dropped out as a sponsor in 1962, the show moved over to ABC with new sponsors, and continued airing until December of 1964. A popular new character arrived in the form of Mr. Periwinkle, played by one of the

Ringling Bros. master clown's, Chuck Burnes. Their first son, young Mike Wilson also graced the show and truly added to the family spirit of the production.

By December 12th in 1964, when the final episode aired on ABC, it was clearly evident that Mark's vision and dream of making magic a successful element of television programming had been achieved. No one would ever again say, 'Magic won't work on television,' Mark and Nani Wilson had proved that it not only could work but DID work. One piece of really great news is that ten DVDs have been released of these pioneering shows, with each DVD containing four full shows. They are a classic resource and joy for everyone who loves magic and are available via Mark's website [www.markwilson.com](http://www.markwilson.com)

I have described the first half of the Mark Wilson and Nani Darnell story in this article, and for most performers it would be a gigantic legacy. This story continues next edition.





I AM A FIRM BELIEVER IN THE SAYING THAT "SUCCESS LEAVES CLUES." AND WHOSE SUCCESS IS BETTER TO STUDY IN THE WORLD OF MAGIC THAN MARK WILSON.



# LESSONS I HAVE LEARNED FROM MARK WILSON

**By Michael King**

I remember that day so clear; as if it was yesterday. It was a very sunny August afternoon in 1971. On a dusty Little League baseball field in Portland, Indiana, a young boy at bat swung hard at the baseball lobed his way in earnest by a pitcher clad in a, dirty, ill-fitting wool uniform. The bat made contact with the grass-stained rawhide ball and it screamed skyward, headed for center field and a young boy who was kicking at the grass with the toe of his rubber-cleated shoe, daydreaming, unaware that the baseball was completing its arc and headed back to Earth as the hitter, turned runner, neared second base.

The ball landed hard on my head with a thud and instantly brought me back to reality. Stunned and stumbling about, I searched the sea of green grass, badly in need of a trim, that surrounded me. Finally after several tense seconds I spied the ball and grasping it firmly, spun on my heels and flung the ball towards home plate as the runner turned the corner at third base and pounded hard towards the catcher and the home plate he guarded with his entire body. The ball landed between third base and home, just right of the pitcher's mound and took a bounce towards the waiting catcher. A very good throw, I thought to myself as the occupants of the bleachers rose to their feet to see what was to be the last play of the game. The

crowd of on-lookers inhaled in unison as the runner slid face first in an attempt to sneak under the catcher, who's eyes were spilt between the bouncing baseball and the advancing runner determined to make it home first. The entire baseball season was being determined by this one play. If the runner were successful at arriving safely home, his team, The Cardinals, would be league champions. However, if the catcher tagged the runner out, The Phillies, my team, would leave the field victorious and for certain end up at The Pizza Place on Elm Street munching down on victory pizza and guzzling all the cola we could drink.

The ball landed softly in the faded brown leather catcher's mitt. Bruce, the catcher, spun his rather large body on his left heel and thrust himself and the mitt towards the sliding runner. A billowing cloud of dust rose and immediately impeded the view for the players on the field, the coach, the players in the dugout, the mothers and fathers, grandparents and the local bookie, who would

## ABOUT MICHAEL KING

Michael King is a film and television writer, producer and director based in Los Angeles. King is also a professional magician who has performed magic for corporate clients and in nightclubs and theatres in North and South America, the UK and Europe. As well he is a much sought after technical adviser when producers are producing film and TV projects that involve magic.



take a bet on anything in town, including this championship Little League game. I stood center field, waiting with all the others for the outcome of the play, the game, and the season; certain that I would soon have a bellyache from eating too much pepperoni pizza and drinking way too much soda.

I will never forget the next three things I heard coming from the direction of home plate as that cloud of dust cleared. First, the one word cried out by the barrel-chested, tobacco-chewing umpire, Mr. Young, who sold used cars on Meridian Street when he wasn't officiating at local sporting events. "Safe!" he screamed at the top of his lungs. Mr. Young's decision was followed closely by the sound of cheers and audible disappointment that arose from the bleachers and the opposing teams. The third thing I heard that fateful afternoon in 1971 came from the general direction of my team's dugout. I'll never forget it. "King, you suck."

Yes, it was obvious that more than a few of my fellow teammates held me responsible for the loss of that game and the season's championship. A fact I was often reminded of for years to come. But that day, I was indifferent by what had happened. I ran from the field, grabbed my red Stingray bike leaning against the dugout, and gave a wave to my mother who was walking from my game to another set of bleachers where the A league teams played and my older brother, a star player and a local hero was making diving catches and pounding homeruns over the center field fence. "Go straight home." instructed my mother as I rolled out of the parking lot and began the ten block bicycle ride to my house. A ride that was occasionally interrupted by a passing car and a teammate hanging out the backseat window, reminding me what a terrible baseball player I was. But really, I didn't care, I felt great! In a very short time I had reached the block on which I lived and rounding the corner, rolled my bicycle across the lawn, leaped from it, and headed

for the front door.

I entered the house, a spring in my step, as I dropped my glove and bat on a waiting chair, quickly moved to the Zenith Channel Master and flicked the large oak cabinet television on with a twist of the wrist. I dove for the couch and landed with a bounce. Spinning around I grinned to myself as I heard the TV announcer proclaim it was time for Mark Wilson's "Magic Circus" starring the amazing magician Mark Wilson and co-starring the loveliest, most charming and beautiful woman I had ever seen, Nani Darnell.

Yes, Mark Wilson was my idol and he was what I wanted to grow up and be, a real, world famous magician; one like him. One who could show one of those colorful boxes empty and then produce my very own Nani Darnell.

My mother, understanding my passion for magic, took me to Muncie, Indiana to see "HOUDINI" starring Tony Curtis and Janet Leigh, she gave me a book on Houdini and I was relentless in mastering the tricks in the back of the book. I watched every magic performance and read every book on magic I could find, but it was seeing Mark Wilson and Nani Darnell on "Magic Circus" that made me want to be a magician. My dream was to become a magician, visit the Magic Castle, and meet Mark Wilson.

And so my journey began. I, like all young people starting out in magic, looked for every chance I could find to learn and perform magic. I ordered magic books and tricks from places like Abbott's Magic Manufacturing Company in Colon, Michigan and Tannen's Magic Shop in New York City. I worked hard to master the magic effects and soon found myself performing magic at every school talent show, birthday celebration, church social, civic club event, and party I could find. I wasn't world famous like Mark Wilson, but I had become a working magician so I thought that was pretty good.

The second part of my dream came

true one day in the early 90s, at Hollywood Magic, when a magician who worked there turned to me and asked, "Wanna go with me to The Magic Castle tonight?" "Of course!" I exclaimed, and with that soon found myself saying "Open Sesame" to a little golden owl that sat on a bookshelf in the lobby of the "Mecca of Magic" the world famous Magic Castle. It did not escape my attention, as I strolled up the drive to the Magic Castle, that my favorite photograph of any magician ever, that of Mark Wilson levitating Nani Darnell, was photographed in front of the Magic Castle.

Now to a guy who grew up reading Genii magazine, I knew that The Magic Castle was the place for magic and it did not disappoint. Watching magic at The Castle that night kept me amazed, mystified and thoroughly entertained. But that wasn't all to the night, I also was treated to an impressive and rather lengthy array of what I have come to call magic star sightings. There was Ron Wilson, Martin Nash, Tom Ogden, Bruce Cervon, Jack Goldfinger, both of the Larsen brothers, Milt and Bill, the lovely Irene Larsen, Max Maven, Michael Ammar, John Carney, Mike Caveney, Tina Lenert, Rocco Silano, Jamy Ian Swiss, Haruo Shimada and even Dai Vernon, to name just a few. What I witnessed that night at The Magic Castle, may have been one of, if not the most impressive collection of magic stars I have ever seen. But what happened next would be a life-changing moment.

I was seated at a small table near the bar across from the Palace of Mystery, watching Milt Larsen chat with Esther Williams, the movie star. I happened to turn my head to the right and there caught sight of Mark Wilson as he began to descend the stairs. I had to blink my eyes as I thought to myself, could that really be Mark Wilson? I soon had my confirmation as he strolled confidently past my table and moved up to Milt Larsen and Esther Williams, who leaned over, kissed him on the cheek and with a broad smile exclaimed "How lovely

to see you, Mark. How's Nani?" I am not certain of his response as my head was swimming and my heart was racing. I couldn't believe my luck; I was sitting just a few short feet away from my childhood idol, Mark Wilson.

Now to put things in perspective, I work in the film industry and have been around movie stars, lots of them. And to be perfectly honest, celebrity does not impress me, but that night I was excited beyond belief to be in the presence of the man I felt was the greatest magician I had ever seen. And like all of us bitten by that magic bug, it is a strong emotional attachment I feel to magic and Mark Wilson represented the best of that world to me.

So I mustered up all my nerve and approached Mark as he finished talking with Milt Larsen and Esther Williams and headed towards The Parlor of Prestidigitation. I called out. "Mr. Wilson?" Mark spun on his heels and greeted me with a smile. "Yes young man, how can I help you?" His charm and warm smile immediately let me know that Mark Wilson was genuine, affable and approachable.

I told Mark that I wanted to let him know how much his magic had inspired me and excited me over the years. He thanked me and then asked about my career and smiled broadly when he learned that my current partner was James Aubrey, the former president of both MGM Pictures and CBS Television. "You work with Aubrey, huh?" he questioned. "He was the head of the network when we did "Allakazam" there." Mark checked the face of his watch and politely excused himself by letting me know that he was meeting someone and needed to leave. He asked for my business card and promised he would call me the next day and then disappeared into the crowd. I stood there silent for several moments, taking in the fact that I had accomplished my dream. Not knowing at that moment that the dream was just beginning.

The next day, my phone rang in my

office, I answered it and heard Mark's voice on the other end. He asked me if I'd like to talk to him about working on a TV project. "Of course." I told him. "Great, can you drop by our house?" He said as he gave me directions.

I pulled up in front of Mark's lovely home in Encino, jumped out of my car and marched a quick step to the front door. I pressed hard on the doorbell and soon heard the sound of heels clicking on the floor inside. The door swung open and there stood Nani Darnell, who was even lovelier than she had been on television. "You must be Michael." She said with that 10,000-watt smile of hers. She stepped aside and motioned me in. Mark was on the phone and nodded to me as Nani escorted me to a seat in the living room. I have to confess, as I sat there looking over at Mark and Nani, I thought to myself, "Kid you have made it." And I had. I had begun a business and personal relationship with two of the kindest and most talented people I have ever had the pleasure and honor to work with.

Now I am certain by now many of you are thinking; this is all well and good for you, but what does this have to do with Mark Wilson and magic? Okay, fair enough. Keep reading, because Mark Wilson has a lot to teach you.

When I was asked by Mr. Romhany to write an article about Mark Wilson and Nani Darnell I thought to myself, what kind of article should I write? I have lots of funny and exciting stories about Mark and Nani and their lives in show business. I thought to myself, readers would love that. Then I asked myself,

what would Mark do? As I was thinking about this I glanced over at a bookshelf in my office and noticed the title of a very popular book amongst successful people entitled The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People by Steven R. Covey. It hit me that's what Mark would do, he would use this article to teach. Mark would do what he has done for me, and for so many others in the world of magic. He has always given, of himself, his time, his talents and his knowledge. And as author of the most published book in magic history, Mark has spent decades teaching magic and it's performance. So, I thought I would share with you the "seven lessons" in magic I have learned from Mark Wilson. Lessons I have turned into habits I use as I approach my magic and the rest of my entertainment career.

I am a firm believer in the saying that "success leaves clues". And whose success is better to study in the world of magic than Mark Wilson's. So after much thought I have come up with seven lessons in magic I have learned from Mark Wilson; and I would like to share them with you.

The first lesson I learned from Mark Wilson was to never try and live out my dream, that of wanting to be Mark Wilson. I needed to face the fact

that there is only one  
Mark Wilson  
and he  
is like  
no



other magician who came before him. Mark has told me several times as I have continued to try and have a semi-professional magic career during my years in TV and film, "Michael be yourself. Once you become a personality that is unique, you have something to sell that no one else has. Remember, no one will pay to see magic, but they will pay to see you, if you have a personality they want to see on stage or on the screen." This advice is echoed in every facet of show business I have worked in. It is uniqueness that sells and singles out a celebrity from the pack. There is only one Bob Hope, one Lucille Ball, Only one Ellen DeGeneres, one David Letterman, one Jim Carrey, one...you get the point. And there is only one Mark Wilson. So lesson one, be unique, be yourself and develop magic and an act or show that reflects that.

The next lesson I learned was while preparing for a show at The Alex Theatre in Glendale, California. Randy Carter, a friend and crewmember I knew from "Seinfeld" was putting on a Vaudeville night at the theatre and asked me if I'd like to headline the show. I was thrilled and accepted the offer and then thought to myself; I am playing a huge theatre and know my 12-minute cabaret act, the one I was performing in comedy and nightclubs at the time would not be big enough. So, I called Mark, who said, "Come on out to the warehouse and get whatever you need." The next day I was standing next to Mark in his massive warehouse filled with the best illusions and magic props money can buy. Now I had toured an illusion show in the seventies and eighties, but I had not done a twenty-minute spot in a review show and was uncertain what to do.

Lesson two came in the form of a question from Mark. "Who's your audience? He asked. "If you find out who your audience is and give them what they want, you will be success-

ful." I listened carefully as Mark continued. "Lots of magicians build a magic show that they like and then go and try to make an audience or booker like it. Don't make that mistake." I thought to myself, this happens in the movie business as well. Many times filmmakers make movies they want to make and can't understand why distributors and audiences do not like the film. The opposite is true as well. Give the audience what they want and the ticket sales will go through

immediately recognized Mark. He brought his wife over to us explaining to her that Mark was one the world's greatest magician. Mark thanked the man and smiled. The wife spoke up. "You're a magician? Then do something magical." Without hesitation, Mark pulled a pocketknife from his trouser's pocket and blew everyone away with his version of "The Color Changing Knife". The man and woman and the rest of the small crowd that had surrounded Mark applauded



the roof. Don't believe me, just look at what movies sell. They all fall into certain genres that have proven track records. Mark's lesson number two was simple but important. Give the people what they want, if you wish to be successful.

Lesson three came one afternoon when Mark and I were leaving a restaurant near Warner Brothers Studios in Burbank. While we waited for the valet to bring the car around, a man got out of his car with his wife and

as he finished, bid them a good day and got into his car. As we began to buckle our seatbelts, I turned to Mark and said "Wasn't it lucky that you had that trick with you." Mark smiled. "No luck to it. I have carried that effect in my pocket my entire career. If you're a magician you need to always be ready to perform. You never know whom you are meeting and how meeting them will impact your career. Always have great magic with you at all times." You can imagine how well

Mark performs the "Color Changing Knife" having done it for over fifty years. In his hands it is pure magic. And I can guarantee you he has it in his pocket today.

Lesson four came in a conversation I had with Mark as he exited the stage of a large theatre, having performed his now classic "Silk To Egg" for a very appreciative audience. I asked him, "Mark, you have to have done that trick thousands of times. How do you always make it look like it is the first time you have ever done it?" The question was easy to answer for Mark. "You owe that to the audience." He told me. "You may have done the same effect a hundred or even a thousand or more times, but it is the first time most of them have seen it. You need to have the excitement and energy level that you are performing real magic, just for them. That will always pay big rewards." So lesson four is to always perform your magic like you are creating it for the first time. Like it is real magic. Give the audience their money's worth. Give them your best.

Lesson five started as a bit of an embarrassing time for me. Mark and I were in his car and he was telling me a new idea he was developing. Now if you know me, I can be very excitable and that day I was. I began to throw out ideas of how to do what Mark wished to accomplish. Frustrated by my interruption, Mark calmly said, "Michael, please just listen." I did as instructed and did not utter another word the rest of the drive back to his office.

When we arrived back at the production offices, Mark went into his private office and I went upstairs to a video editing bay and returned to editing one of Mark's instructional videos. Thirty minutes had past when my phone rang; it was Mark who asked me to come to his office. Once there I apologized for my interruption in the car. Mark said he was sorry for telling me to be quiet, but he wanted to get out his ideas while they were fresh on his mind. Mark then walked over to

his desk and picked up a framed photo that showed him, Alan Wakeling, John Gaughn and a few other men in a television studio. "Michael, I did not become successful in magic without the help and advice of a great many people. I have always respected and revered these men and women and their contributions to my career. And I will tell you I learned the most from these very talented people when I was still and listened to what they had to say. Knowing they have lives and career experiences I never have had and there was much to be learned by listening." Lesson five came hard to me and only after I had embarrassed myself in front of my hero. But it is a lesson I have used every day since I learned it. Talk less and listen more. Especially to men and women who are trying to help you. For me, this lesson has paid very big rewards.

Lesson six was presented to me while Mark and I were in the editing bay looking at hours and hours of footage from shows he had produced and starred in over the years. Indeed an impressive body of work. That particular day, Mark and I were looking at "Allakazam" footage. On the screen one of Mark's male assistants was rolling an illusion onto the stage that was in the shape of

a ship. Mark chuckled to himself. "You know...the paint on that illusion was still wet." He told me. "Really?" I questioned. "Yes sir." He said with another smile. "We had to create 99 shows, one each week with 30 minutes of original magic each week, with a different theme each week." I did the math quickly in my head. That was 2,970 minutes of magic! I was stunned. "How did you do that?" I asked. Mark was quick to answer. "We knew our magic, between myself and the others on the show, we knew what effects were out there and we knew how to fit each one to the theme. Of course we repeated effects by redressing them, but each week the show was different. And each week it was a rush to get it ready and on the air." I later learned that Mark Wilson had then and still has one the biggest collection of magic books in the world. A collection so big he does not have the space to display all of the tomes. Lesson six; know your craft. Study it daily. Want to know something about Mark few know? At 84 years of age, Mark Wilson still studies magic...every day. In fact Mark works every day of the week.

Mark Wilson knows his craft, like no one else I have ever met.



Lesson Seven came to me a few years back when I found myself having difficulty raising money for a movie project I had attached Oscar winner Ernest Borgnine to. The phone rang one day and it was Mark and Nani calling just to check on me. Nani talked for a few moments and then got off the phone. Mark asked about what was going on and I told him I was having a tough time getting the money together to make the movie. Mark told me to hang in there and to not stop pushing forward on the project. I sighed heavily, which he heard. "Michael, did I ever tell you about getting Allakazam on the air?" Asked Mark. "No" I responded. He continued. "I had had success in Dallas on local television and knew in my heart that I could get my magic show on one of the three networks if I tried hard enough. So I packed up my bags and came to Los Angeles, getting a room at a hotel looking out at The Hollywood sign. Day after day I would get rejection from networks, producers, ad agencies, agents, managers, everyone. I would come back to that room every night, open the curtains and eat my dinner looking out at the Hollywood sign. And that continued day after day until my time was almost up. I returned to my hotel room late on that last afternoon, totally defeated, knowing I was going to have to return to Dallas with my tail between my legs. Suddenly the phone rang; it was Nani. I hated to tell her that I had failed, but I knew I owed her the truth. After I told her the bad news, Nani didn't miss a beat before telling me that you're never out until you quit and then advised me to get up the next morning and try and arrange one last meeting before my flight home. I thanked her for loving me and supporting me and hung up. I got to my feet and walked over to that big window and looked out at the Hollywood sign and said "You're not gonna beat me. And you know what Michael? I made the deal the very next day. Never forget, the true key to success is tenacity. Never quit and one day you will make it." And that became lesson seven. Never quit working at what you want and desire. Follow your dreams and never quit and you will make it.

There are so many more lessons I have learned from Mark and Nani that I could share with you. As well as countless humorous and exciting stories of them and their career, like the time Mark almost drowned on stage at the Las Vegas Hilton, only to have his life saved by Nani. Or the time Al Flosso sold Mark's Super-X Suspension that Mark had been storing in Al's shop while Mark was out of town. Then there's the story of when Mark and Nani caught up with a stunned Richiardi Jr. on stage in Paris during one of his performances. Or my favorite, the story of how a handsome young magician met a beautiful young stewardess on New Year's Eve, took her in his arms, kissed her passionately and together

they built a life that is worthy of a great romantic novel or a Hollywood movie.

As I look back on the more than two decades I have known Mark Wilson and Nani Darnell, I realize all of the lessons in magic and in life I have learned from them. Many, like the ones I have shared here, were taught to me as lessons in life offered by caring parents. And then some of these lessons I have learned simply by spending hundreds of hours with two lovely people who also happened to be two of the most talented entertainers I have ever met and I have met quite a few. Yes, I count myself blessed to have had the wonderful opportunity to be around Mark and Nani and to see how to live a life filled with happiness, excitement, fulfillment, magic and not the least of which...love.

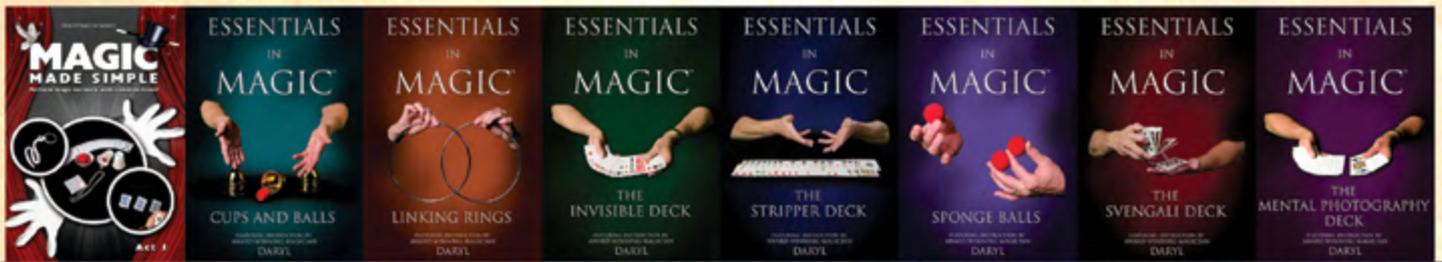
Wanna know a secret? I still want to grow up and be Mark Wilson. But we all know the truth, there is only one Mark Wilson; my hero, my idol, my mentor, and my dearest friend. Of course all of that goes for Nani Darnell too. Yes, I am living proof dreams do come true. Thank you Mark and Nani.

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ESSENTIALS IN MAGIC'S

# MASTER CLASS



# MENTALISM:

## AN ADVENTURE IN MYSTICISM

Part One of a Series by P. Craig Browning

About a year ago I was talking with my old buddy Rick Maue about the strange work we do and he pointed out something many of us forget, "not that long ago most all of magic was viewed as a form of Mentalism".

Think about it for a minute; how so much of magic well into the mid-20th century, relied on the idea of things surreal, demonic and esoteric when it came to presentation, even when presented by some of the more pragmatic folk of the day. Why would they do this? Why was the woman apparently hypnotized before the levitation, for an example?

ANSWER: Belief!

It's very difficult for most of us born into a post-World War II culture to understand how religious views and superstitions were so prevalent and controlling in times past; even greater than what we Baby Boomer

types can recall through the 50's and 60's. Then again, this is one reason why a performer could do a card trick and pass it off as being something paranormal. It's why someone like Blackstone, Sr. could present the Dancing Hank as a kind of fun Poltergeist and the audience honestly bought into the idea.

But we need to go further back in time if we are to understand the power behind both, Belief and what we now refer to as Mentalism . . . not so much the Shamanic era of time but certainly the early 19th century and times prior to that when humankind was more connected with nature and the lore surrounding it – the "sciences" if you would, about how our ancestors could read the signs in nature for telling the weather and how to use nature itself to insure healthy yield of crops. It was a simpler time when religious belief was near requisite to most, education

was horridly basic with very few exceptions, and human beings as a whole had yet to become jaded when it came to taking another at their word. Most importantly though, technology wasn't there to distract or steal from them this simple way of seeing the world, having hope – faith in even the simplest of things.

We need to understand this era somewhat well, just to understand why people would travel tens of miles and spend entire afternoons patiently observing a Séance in which the knocks & thumps or tapping and ringing would be counted and tied to the alphabet, slowly revealing a message letter by letter... try that on a 21st century audience and see how far it gets you.

Something else our ancestors had that is nearly non-existent in today's culture – patience. Understanding this legacy from which Mentalism evolved is how one begins to understand the differences between what used to work a few generations back (1940s & 50s) and why such

things are now seen as “Mental Magic” or “impractical” when it comes to true Mentalism for today. In short, the lack of distraction and the level of belief in the spiritual & paranormal, allowed the audiences of that era to forgive a lot of things psychologically that our modern audience simply won't forgive. In short, if something looks like a duck, waddles like a duck, quacks like a duck then it is most likely a duck; or as the case were, a magic trick... and yes, that includes a boat load of things that old Joe Dunninger and Burling Hull got away with. Then again, escape from the Dunninger Mold is one of the biggest challenges a present day Mentalist has... that is, if he/she wants to come across as a genuine mystic.

I understand that in today's world such an image is not exactly on the top of everyone's list; cynicism and leaning on the auspices of science, pseudo-science and rationalism are at an all-time high and rightfully so – it's commercially

appealing and has been for decades, just ask Kreskin. The catch is, the claim of being an expert in NLP, FACS or any number of other valid or questionable sciences is just as big a lie as claiming to be Psychic; a clairvoyant, or telepathist, etc. So please stop deluding yourself about taking a “higher ground” when skirting around such things, you’re still a liar and you are still deceiving the public and depending on your own morality, you might even be preying on the public even though you are implementing this more fraternity endorsed way of working. Fortunately I’ve not the larceny in my bones to take that “higher ground” position and so I work from the Older School of tradition when it comes to Mentalism and the idea of serving as a modern-day mystic.

We old timers (some of whom are young, chronologically speaking) see our work as Mentalists as being more of an act in humanitarianism than a mode of theatrical performance. While we most certainly do shows of all kinds, we understand what I call the “Robert Nelson School of Logic” – the fact that we use one skill set so as to benefit our other skill sets or services; I do Readings by day so as to create a patron base that will benefit shows, workshops and book sales. Each of those secondary things brings benefit to all the other things and as a whole help sustain the only illusion I actually have to focus on – the one of living up to my claim as a Psychic Entertainer. Those of you familiar with my writing already know that I step outside the lines of convention, challenging peo-

ple to think a bit more about what they are doing and why. I’m simply not satisfied with the idea of doing things for the sake of doing things and while I do believe in having fun doing what it is we do, I believe a certain level of discipline needs to be in play if we are to succeed by way of consistency... by delivering time and time again, performances that support our claim of ability.

This series will take a look at Mentalism of the Old School format as well as the newer modes of thought that are floating about. My primary focus however, will center on the idea of the 21st century mystic.

#### Why?

Because there is a slow undercurrent afoot; young performers (25-35 years of age for the most part) that want more, they are wanting to re-create the image and action of the yesteryear shaman as a present-day enchanter; someone that can mesmerize an audience by the telling of a tall tale that may even include some form of simple (obvious) trickery while likewise being able to discern the thoughts and needs of others; one that is a Reader of the Soul as well as being a Reader of the Mind, the Environment and more!

Needless to say, this will be a somewhat surreal journey but I hope you’ll consider taking it with me so that we might learn about these wonderful things, together.

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# IMAGINARY CIRCUMSTANCES

## JOEY PIPIA

My experience in theater has taught me valuable lessons about what is missing from many magic shows.

### **The Write Stuff**

Eugene Burger, and many other magicians, has long lauded the benefits of good scripting in magic. In this article, I offer new examples of why scripting is valuable to creating a winning magic performance. And I believe you have the ability to make it happen.

### **You Can Do It!**

Performing magic without a script ensures your performance will be hit or miss. Alternatively, writing a script gives you the very best shot at making your performance great, full of the kind of nuance that can only come from you.

Some say they can't, or are not able, to write. Others say writing a script will make their magic stale and lifeless. Treat yourself with the respect you deserve. Believe that you will do great things, and you will. Writing a script is a wonderful way to start.

This begins with what you are going to say. (This is just as true with a silent performance, but that is a different kind of script, which will not be the subject of this article.)

### **Leave Wing(ing) It For The Birds And The Pros**

There is a belief among many magicians that they can just make something up when they get out

there, or they'll just riff off the audience. Effective magic requires more thought than that.

Improvised performance (think, *Who's Line Is It Anyway?*) is governed by rules. These rules make improvising – if not easy – possible, for many. In other words, you don't need to be funny to create a funny scene. You don't need to be a brilliant actor to be part of a brilliant scene.

What you need to do, however, is to follow the rules – and the rules dictate how to say what it is that you say. Go outside those rules, and you create a scene that can be so bad it's painful for the audience to watch: people trying to be funny, or people trying to be interesting.

This is true for magic, too. When you create a well-crafted script, including thoughtful motivation for all your magical needs, the audience is rapt by wonder, instead of watching a person trying to be amazing.

In addition to performing as a professional magician, I teach acting, improvised acting (different from regular acting), and direct plays. Some of the plays I've directed were completely improvised. The actors had not one word of printed dialog. But, they had rules that they rehearsed for many hours. I speak from many years, and thousands of students and performances.

### **Jazzing With Marc Oberon**

"What about Jazzing?" you say. What about all that magic that is supposed to happen off the cuff? The Berglas Effect is supposed to come from the well of improvised moments, culminating in a routine that wasn't even there a moment before. Is that really true? I don't think so.

Marc Oberon has won several magic prizes. Marc's magic is held by many as tour de force of what can be done in a kind of jazzing way. Let's look a little closer at this particular part of his repertoire.

Youtube gives us the chance to see two of Marc's performances literally side by side. First, have a look at Marc at the Magic Castle: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x7UZpGNKug4> and then watch Marc on Penn & Teller's Fool Us: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DDVTK-1TfdQ>

Take a moment to have a look at these two clips. The cards selected by the two separate audience members are different, but what Marc says is identical in both shows.

This is an example of Jazzing (Open Index work, at least) in magic, yet demonstrating the successful use of scripting, memorizing, and performance.

### **What About Being In The Moment?**

Having a tight script, which is memorized, lets you leave the words and be in the moment. The script lets you play with the audience. Some of my best lines came from improvised moments in my routine. Many pros build their show this way. But the routine was there first. Having that routine is what allows you to get outside yourself.

I wish I'd been told this earlier in my career. In fact, I'm sure I was told this, but ignored the advice anyway. I didn't have a negative attitude, or anything like that, I just didn't know.

A few words about memorization: Memorizing a script means that you can recite it verbatim, at breakneck speed while having a conversation with someone else. In other words, the script is so much a part of you, that you can employ your brain with another activity.

In fact, that is what a memorized script should be. So committed to memory that you can have a conversation with the audience. Which, in a way, is what you are doing when you perform.

*"Imaginary Circumstances," is a VANISH feature dedicated to your success as a wonder worker. The focus of each column is a different aspect of theater, drama, acting, and how to incorporate it into your magic performance. "Imaginary Circumstances," comes from Joey Pipia's new definition: "A magician is a person who lives truthfully under imaginary circumstances."*

*Joey Pipia is a professional magician. He lives in Port Townsend, WA, USA*



**Having that routine is what allows you to get outside yourself.**





# 5 - 5 POKER DEAL

This is inspired by Richard Vollmer's "242 Deal," which you can find in magic magazines. This trick uses the same principle as the Richard Vollmer version, but I changed the method to get the result I wanted. This gambling routine does not require the entire deck to perform. Compared to the original method, you need some memory work. I will also provide three different versions of the presentation.

## EFFECT:

You remove 10 cards from the deck and play a poker game with your spectator, shuffle the pack and deal out two cards, let them select which card is their hand, and repeat the action to select the cards for you. After both hands have five cards, you will always get a Royal Flush.

## SETUP:

You will be surprised the setup is very easy. Put the royal flush on the top; for the remaining 5 cards, use any cards (like sevens or kings). (fig. 1)

## METHOD:

**SEQUENCE TO SET UP THE CARDS**  
The method is quite similar to the original method, but you need some to memory work.

First, hold the pack in the grip of overhand shuffles. Remember the sequence 2,4,2,4 to shuffle the cards. Now, slide off the top two cards and place the cards on the bottom of the pack; remember to slide off the top cards one by one. Then you slide off the top four cards and place them on the bottom. Then, repeat the action again; you need to do this sequence twice. Here, you need to count the cards to reverse the order of the pack. You can count down the cards and show that you have only 10 cards.

JASON LEONG

WATCH PERFORMANCE

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=loX8V\\_J5Ktw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=loX8V_J5Ktw)



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

**PRINCIPLE:**

The principle is the same as Richard Vollmer. When you deal out the cards on the table, both of the cards on the table is the same. No matter which card the spectator selects, you will force the cards correctly each time.

**FIRST PART**

First, you deal out two cards on the table and let the spectator select the card between the two cards on the table. You do not need to worry, because no matter what card they select, the ending result of both players' hand is the same. After they select the card, you place the "left" card on the bottom of the pack. Next, you need to deal the other two cards on the table. Let the spectator select one card on the table and push the card toward. Place the left card on the bottom of the pack. Now you need to repeat this action one more time until both have 2 cards in hands.

**SECOND PART**

Now, you may run into problems if the cards in the pack are not in an order that allows you to force the cards. Therefore, you have to do the overhand shuffle to get into this sequence. You slide off the top and bottom cards at once. Then, slide the top card off the top until you have only two cards in your hands. You place the last 2 cards on the top of the pack and slide the top card to the bottom of the pack. Now, deal out three cards on the table, let the spectator select two cards between the 3, and place the last card on the bottom of the pack. Repeat this process again and select two cards for your hand.

**LAST PART**

Here's the tricky part; you need to do a psychological force to force the last two cards in the correct hands. You deal the last 2 cards on the table and remember to which hands they belong. You tell the spectator "touch any card between the two cards." If



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

they touch the correct one, you are safe. If they touch your card, you can say "OK, we will do something's special this time, by switching the cards we touch for this time." Here, you try to force the cards to the correct position.

After both hands have five cards, let the spectator show his hand, and show your hand with a Royal flush.

**ALTERNATING PRESENTATION 1: RED OR BLACK**

In normal conditions, the audience does not know how to play poker. Therefore, you can still perform this trick and use this presentation. You replace the 10 cards into the five red cards and five black cards. You still use the same method to accomplish this trick, but you use a different presentation. This effect looks like a mini version of "out of this world."





# Jeff McBride's Magic & Mystery School

## Consume... and Forget

Larry Hass

*This is the third essay in a series by the faculty of Jeff McBride's Magic & Mystery School in Las Vegas. Last issue, George Parker discussed how to take familiar material and make it something special "in your hands." Here, I would like to suggest a healthy approach for finding material in the first place.*

What did you have for lunch yesterday or dinner last night?

If you found yourself drawing a blank, don't feel bad. Most people, after most meals, find it difficult to remember.

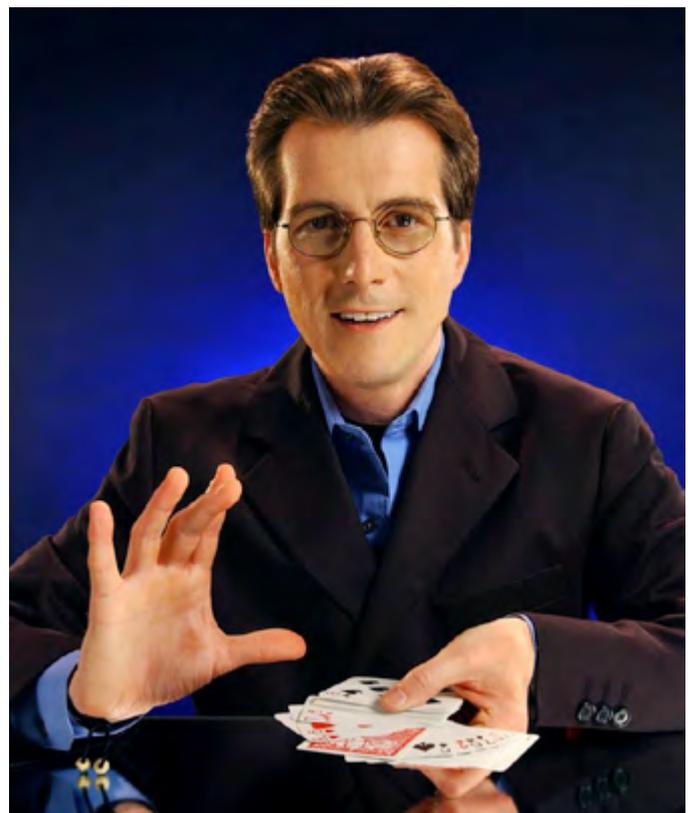
This interesting fact about eating points to something that is exceptionally important for magicians today. It points to a new, more fulfilling way of interacting with the vast ocean and endless flow of magic products, magazines, books, and online content. And it is a way that will save you lots of money. Those are obviously good things, yes? More fulfillment in magic for less money? Stick with me while I develop it. . . .

Consider: when we are hungry for something the thought of it looms large. We can't stop thinking about that chocolate cake or the last, cheesy slice of pizza. The idea gnaws at us, like an itch to be scratched. . . "must have it". . . and then we just give in. Ahhh!

The key thing is to notice what happens next. Soon the hunger begins again for something else, a bag of chips or a soda; we forget all about that pizza we "had to have" and

did have. In short, we consume and forget. Then we crave and consume something else. . . and forget again. And so on and on, in an ongoing cycle of feeling possessed and then empty.

If you are like me, you will see that this hunger cycle applies itself not just to food, but to objects, products, and even experiences: 1. "Must have it—can't live without it," 2. Buy it (ahhh!), then 3) On to the next one. And so we are called consumers, and our magic drawers, shelves, and hard drives get fuller and fatter.



How many times at magic conventions have you gotten “hooked” on something at dealer table after table so by the time you get home you don’t even know what you bought? How many times have you clicked “buy now” for a trick you know can’t be as good as it looked in that heavily-edited clip? How many times have you watched a magic DVD or read tricks in a book as though you were eating a bag of chips: one secret after another after another?

These things happen all the time, and to magicians everywhere. A big part of it is that, just as with food producers and sellers, there are many magic manufacturers and dealers who are delighted to transform your natural hunger into their profit.

So what can we do about it? About being turned into a perpetual “consumer”?

The first step is simply to become aware of what is going on, and to call it what it is: the hunger cycle. When you name it as you feel it, you are automatically reminding yourself that what’s happening is an illusion of fulfillment that usually leaves you and your wallet empty. This little “check” on your hunger is an important way to make better decisions.

The second step is to realize that you don’t have to be a “consumer” of anything, and not even food. Instead of that endless cycle, you can learn to practice an alternate approach I call savoring.

Thoughtful, healthy people don’t gulp their food or swill their wine. They linger with it. They think about the specific flavors they are tasting. They talk about it with like-minded friends. They might plan a whole night around preparing delicious food together and discussing the meal as it unfolds. It is not about “getting more” or “making time,” it is about making good. Indeed, while we are tempted and manipulated to “consume and forget,” this approach is about savoring to remember.

Next time you feel totally hooked by an ad for a product, I invite you to set yourself free by putting down the magazine (or getting up from the computer) and spending some quality time with a book, trick, or DVD you already own. If you are like me, you already have outstanding books and DVDs alongside the deck—books and DVDs you haven’t gotten to yet or didn’t savor when you were gulping them the first time.

In case you need a little help, here are a few items you probably own that I have found to be well-worth savoring: The Dai Vernon Book of Magic, The Jinx, Juan Tamariz’s The Five Points in Magic, Bob Neale’s Magic Matters, Tommy Wonder’s The Books of Wonder, The Stars of Magic, Eugene Burger’s The Experience of Magic, and just about any volume of Tarbell. But don’t limit yourself to these. Once you open your heart to what you already have (rather than hungering for what you don’t), I am confident you will discover that you already have a full plate!

So remember: say “no” to late-night, weak moment cravings. Spend your

magic time with excellent materials, not fast-food junk. Learn to identify yourself as a free person who savors, rather than someone who gets herded by hunger. Being free and powerful in relation to illusion—this is the way of the magician.

*Lawrence Hass, Ph.D., is the Associate Dean of Jeff McBride’s Magic & Mystery School. For full details about the School’s live learning and online classes please go to:*

*<http://www.magicalwisdom.com>*





## PRESERVING THE PAST, IN THE PRESENT; CREATING THE FUTURE.

BY BEN ROBINSON

*“Having spent my career attempting to produce a theatrical entertainment, a show, rather than a simple act, I have previously been seen as an anomaly in the entertainment world.”*

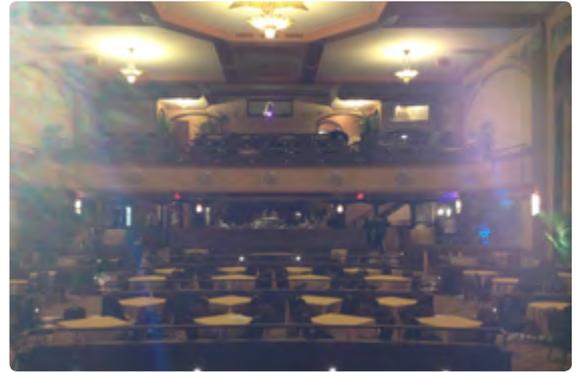
**O**n April 6th, Houdini’s (adopted) birthday, the Suffolk Theater in Riverhead, New York presented my new one-man show, Mysterium.

We presented two performances, 2pm and 8pm. This show is the culmination of the previous five one-man shows I have done since I was first presented by Lyn Austin’s Music-Theater Group in 1988. It was Ms. Austin who coined the term “music-theatre” in roughly, 1969.

Having studied magic since 1968, after first seeing Fred Kaps, I have always sought to include music in my performances. Consequently, for over 25-years my ambition has been a roller coaster of success, and, failure. One extremely serious factor I have always paid attention to: music is credited, licensed and in most cases, paid for. I have too much respect for musicians to simply “take” what I like, thinking my use is minimal and unimportant to the artist. In fact, having toured colleges, theatres, casinos, and the occasional talk show, I know that when I use music in a venue, sometimes, the license to play music in the venue is put at risk by others not being on top of copyright.

It’s worth considering if you want to avoid professional embarrassment or possibly having your reputation affected for your entire career. The problem with performers who use music without permission is that they get away with it, think it is easy and make a practice of this. Once caught by the copyright holder, the stench of your illegal behavior will follow you into professional corridors you cannot imagine; branding you as an out-and-out thief. I address this facet of professional work in depth because I am disturbed by those that don’t even make the slightest effort to legally use music — and it is so easy to do!

Having spent my career attempting to produce a theatrical



entertainment, a show, rather than a simple act, I have previously been seen as an anomaly in the entertainment world.

With the exception of two primary producing organizations (people who have invested real money in developing my show), I've spent the bulk of this part of my career self-producing. (In strict show business slang this is known as "four-walling.") There is nothing "wrong with" four-walling. The Maskelyne family four-walled for over 60 years —The Egyptian Hall of London!

While I am sure most magicians would be interested in what illusions I perform, obviously that is only my business. Any professional magician will tell you; successful performance doesn't result from certain specific

illusions, necessarily. The art of magic, as performed by a full-time professional, concerns: how the magic is staged; what presentation is given to a prop that doesn't look like anything found in the "normal world," such as a Die Box.

(For the record, something that only looks like it was made to produce an illusion, can also be very successfully performed entertainingly, an illustration being Max Howard's performance as Professor Gus Rich in the Wonder Spheres illusion.)

The important thing about my engagement at the newly renovated Suffolk Theater is: why I was booked, and what I delivered.

Given that the Suffolk has an 80-year story of birth, death and resurrection,

in March of 2013, (where I performed along-side Tony LoBianco playing New York City Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia), my show fit right in. This is because I've often felt like I should have been born in 1890 so I could have been 30 in 1920. That's really true.

While spending months preparing the show, I came to a singular realization that somewhat shocked me. Some of the magic in my current production has been in my repertoire for over 25 years. I have done these effects literally thousands of times for millions of people, all over the world. (I think I have entertained approximately 3 million people live in my life. One Summer I worked at Kennywood Amusement Park — they had 2.5 million visitors, and the show I was part of was the

center of the place, so I am sure, being on stage for 8-hours a day, doing 15-shows a day, each and every one saw me if they passed through. And that was just five months of my life. I've been standing on stages since 1974.)

Sequences created first in my brain in the Alps in Zermatt, Switzerland (atop the Klein Matterhorn, where I wrote my original production in 1987) were later developed in residency in the Rockies of Utah, the Berkshires of Massachusetts and later at the Base camp of Mount Everest at nearly 18,000 feet above sea level, higher than any point on North America. Mountains + magic = me.

During my 2am engagements at The Milky Way disco/"niteklub" in Amsterdam I developed routines I also performed



Diane Tucci Photography & Design | [www.dianetucci.com](http://www.dianetucci.com)

at The Roxy in Zurich, where, I was given one of the very exclusive shirts employees receive only after working there a year. I received my shirt from the owner after my 3-night stay in 1986. In "Café Americaine" on Rue Quixcompais in Paris I also did an act that patrons made me repeat over-and-over as they were hyped up on cocaine. I walked out of there at 6am feeling dizzy. Amsterdam, Berlin, Zurich, Paris, London, Bangkok, Kathmandu, New York, Seattle, San Francisco, and Los Angeles are just a few of the places I've made rainbows appear. Doing magic without the native language sharpens my performance.

As I wrote and legally trademarked the title of this current show, I thought how all the "greats" had their pet effects: Thurston performed his Rising Cards throughout his career, Blackstone had his dancing handkerchief, and Milbourne Christopher, his rope routine. Currently Harry Anderson never appears without his trademark Borsalino cocked rakishly

on his head, Mac King works in his plaid suit and Jay Marshall was literally inseparable from his ventriloquist gloved puppet Lefty.

So it is with me. I am very jealous of my effects, particularly the ones I create, such as what I might do with ink that behaves as a snake or my version of the Indian Rope miracle.

Magic is not about tricks. Magic is not about fooling people. Magic is not about being smarter than your audience. If you think any of these things, you are the only one calling yourself a "magician."

A magician is someone who performs magic. Period.

Audiences, who pay good, hard-earned money, want entertainment in the form of escapism wrapped in informal contemporary reference. Of course it is debatable what different audiences want—I am being particular to live audiences essentially in the United States.

No sane performer would attempt a 90-minute performance, and no audience would tolerate such, if there were not a boatload of experience supporting the endeavor. In my case, I listen to my audiences at every show, and my critics. Especially, if they are educated and have been in the business of critiquing stage performances for many years. Those who have seen many things on the stage can tell those who wish to stand on stages a great deal about the task at hand.

With this current show I was sure that a message had to be in place; and I needed consultants and those who offered direction to make it stick. (There was no formal person credited with being the Director of this show.) The work I put in over four months to prepare this production, paid off.

About 33% of the show was new material to me. One stage illusion took three years to refurbish, and about \$3,000 cash to finance the reconstruction and initial purchase.



*Packing in the show and dressing room*



I was delighted to find in Kenneth Silverman's book Houdini!!! that the great escapist spent the exact same amount of money on the exact same illusion. Though, HH spent that cash in 1925 in his last show (in today's dollars, John Booth would remind us, is about 5-times as much, or the equivalent of \$15,000).

I don't really esteem people who discuss how much money they have, or what they own—that's crass materialism. Some call it showmanship to promote whom you sleep with and what you own. To me, that is unnecessary and often a low-class substitute for actually having something to say as an artist. Of course 99.9% of people who perform magic on stage are not artists. I've often conferred with one of the greatest magic historians extant. He agrees with me that magic largely suffers from being thought of as a "hobby" and not an art because so few practice it with the tenets of other arts. The New York State Council on the Arts, I am sad to report, does NOT consider Magic, an art.

Of course the notion of "what is art?" is entirely subjective. But, in my work, I try to say something true about myself, and what I feel. I just illustrate those notions with rare illusions, which either I have created, or are little-seen.

Marvyn Roy reminds us that his success as Mr. Electric was largely due to the fact that he had no competition — no other magician would copy him as they did Cardini, because no one would take the trouble to work out solutions to all of the magic he presented. Indeed, as his publicity stated, "In all the world, there is only one." I seek to create something that is also as singular...unlike Mr. Roy; I'm doing a much longer show. My definition of an "illusion" might differ from yours...mine sometimes take seconds—do yours only involve big boxes?



The day of the Suffolk Theater shows my day began at 6:45am. The 31 show and prop cases had been packed the night before. Our Road Manager and 15-person passenger van arrived at 8am, and our lead assistant arrived 15-minutes later. Breakfast on the go was purchased, and two hours later, we arrived at the historic, landmarked, Suffolk Theater.

We parked in an unfinished construction site behind the theater—the load-in began (an hour early, much to our favor). By 11am all of our stage properties were inside and our dressing room was set. The new amenities were wonderful; the dressing room included two bathrooms, a working shower and a full kitchen with a large refrigerator. Having enough space to prepare is everything. As we were told the dimensions of Stage Left, and thought it large enough to handle what entrances and exits we needed. Unfortunately, we were not told that there would be a baby grand piano parked in Stage Left, blocking our usage.

When you run a big stage show, you need all the space you can get. Such prevented us from storing one large illusion that normally would have been set up backstage and then rolled on. Instead, we had it on stage from the top of the show, and, alas, we lost our surprise. No matter. Being a pro means you roll with whatever comes your way.

When you — pack a large 31-case show, travel a show, load in, tech and set up a 90-minute show all in one morning, and then continue on to do two 90-minute shows, for several hundred people at each performance, and then meet the audience afterwards to have pictures taken and sign programs, and then load out...that is a l-o-n-g day. So it was with me, and my small troupe. I walked into the mighty Suffolk Theater at 10am. I walked out at 11pm. (we still had an hour drive after to our lodging and then a afternoon show the next

day where we repeated it all over again for the highly esteemed Montauk Actors Group run by Lee Strasberg's former "right hand" Gary Swanson. It was my third appearance before this group.

The modern performer has to listen to the media, audiences, and sometimes, other performers. The reason should be obvious. The modern performer must know what has come before, and what will secure a booking, especially if novelty is sought. I remember Milbourne Christopher telling me, while watching

a young Jeff McBride work at Hunter College at an S.A.M. show. McBride's use of masks, Christopher noted, was novel. Then, Christopher mentioned that performing the linking rings was not enough of a novelty to justify a booking for a magician—this was in 1983.

Hence, if a booker/producer/impresario or agent asks me what material I do, the last thing I would ever mention is a "magic classic." I'm not damning that material; I'm saying dated over-exposed material is not going to float a





commercial boat. Not by a long shot. I can confirm that having original material exclusive to me is important to me for more reasons than I am naturally creative.

The Suffolk Theater Executive Director, Bob Spiotto, and I worked together over the four-month period, until the date of my show. A lot has to happen. Publicity has to be coordinated, pictures for social media and TV ads have to get to the right people and most importantly, a solid contract has to be created, followed, and paid for. That sounds a lot easier than it is.

I could have given 10% (or more) to the Agency that represents me, or I could negotiate the deal myself and keep that cut. It may surprise some readers

to learn that when you do a “big show for big money” you don’t get to keep all that money! I pay my troupe well because I want them to enjoy the work. The most important things to me are that: A) the audience is delighted, and B) my team delivers as fully as possible and enjoys the gig. I’m old fashioned. I believe treating people well fosters loyalty. Sometimes how you dress when you arrive at the theater will be as important for business reasons as what you wear on stage. If you meet the Chairman of the Board to the Theater while you are wearing ripped jeans, the Chairman may not stay to see the evening show feeling the performer was not respectful. It’s happened to me, and will never happen again. I have a “road uniform” as I do a

stage costume.

I’m always impressed when people have stayed with one another for years. In my case, I’ve had the same phone number for 20 years, and the same legit agent for over 30. These things mean something in business. My core team has also been with me for almost 20 years. Our youngest member has been working with us for 7 years. That is important to me because “breaking in” a new assistant or Stage Manager is often tough. There is a certain “rhythm” to any troupe; a language of a short script that you only learn after much experience. I want the people on stage with me to dig what’s happening; you can’t fake it; the audience will pick that up right away.

Our show has over a half-hour of specially-composed music. I spend a lot of time eating with friends of mine who are musicians. We get a lot done in recording sessions that can be very expensive at even an hourly rate. So, beware to be prepared before you ever enter into this type of work. Mistakes cost dollars, and, frustration. You don’t want to display that frustration to an audience in even a subconscious way when you hear or perform to the music. This is not folly. Every time I hear the wood blocks chime in one piece of music I remember I had my composer Marina Belica (from the hit band October Project) increase the volume so I could know I had 30-seconds left to do what I needed before the end of the routine.

Sometimes I talk during a soundtrack, other times, I perform as if dancing to the music; dancing, that is, with my fingers...there is always a "picture" to present where something amazing is happening, such as in the beginning of my show where we do an original version of the fabled Indian Rope feat.

Sound. Pictures. A point of view. Style. These are all things the great texts of magic discuss. But, how many magicians take the time to consider whether their collar is starched, pointed, Edwardian or without a collar? And why do you consider such?

Once, in London, I did dramatic material such as push a long sharp, skewer through my tongue without drawing blood (well before the tongue stud craze) and also did my version of the cigarette paper tear. While I thought there would be more critical ink spilled (in The International Herald Tribune, my old friend, the late Punch Sulzberger's paper) on my broader illusions, over six inches of column space went to my miniature illusion with a piece of paper, and the story given during it. Sometimes simplicity sells.

The paradox of my theatrical experience is that the simplicity I represent is actually quite complex to execute. There are over 1000 moving parts to my current show. (This show was announced formally in December of 2011 and was composed over

14-months of dedicated work by at least a dozen people.) I have spent nearly 40-years studying magic, doing magic shows, and writing about magic today and in the past. Recently, I gave an interview to a Charleston, South Carolina newspaper about my work, my writing and my opinion of an upcoming performance.

I am now who I always wanted to be. This is largely due to a huge revelation, on my part: it

takes 20 years to become a magician. I am sure of this. That is an old axiom expressed by Okito and his son Fu Manchu. I speak, of course, of the Bamberg family of Holland.

What I never quite realized (until it happened to me) is: the career of a magician begins after those 20-years have expired. In other words, once you have 20-solid years as a full-time magician only then does the career really ignite. I don't mean to



*Setting up the show*



say that you cannot really enjoy being a magician, doing magic, or hanging out with magicians. But, the few of us who have over 35-years in the game of being magicians, know something those of you without 35-years understanding, do not have.

Welcome to my beginning: I am an agent, producer, star, writer, inventor, negotiator, union member, attaché, confidant, student, tactician, logician, philosopher, mechanic, politician, and art-warrior. Sometimes I have to fight bad guys; usually I win.

Most of all, husband. I married my magic. It is I. I

am it. Maja is a formidable Goddess to marry. You become HER master by becoming HER slave.

When I was 21, a reporter from The New London Day newspaper of New London, Connecticut wrote "An observer can discern almost immediately that Ben has already attained what he defines as the final blossom of the art of magic — when the magician and his magic become indistinguishable."

So, once you have 20-years as a craftsman, then you can begin your next 20 years as a showman.

Craftsman...20-years... check.

Showman? Illusiongenius.com. Check.

The Suffolk Theater shows were the beginning of something wonderful for me. As a boy, I dreamed of touring theaters doing a magic show of my own invention. Today I live that fleeting, surreal dream.



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**The Magician's Choice!**

# Lions & Kiwanis & Rotary ... OH MY!

## Should I Perform for a Civic Club?

... Short Answer = YES!

DEAN HANKEY  
& ERRIN HOGAN



Feeling like you're lost in a land as other worldly as OZ at times can take a LOT out of a performer. Many times performers get requests to perform gigs that are outside of their target considerations ... geographically, audience wise, and most often PAYMENT WISE ... meaning requests for (nearly) free gigs!

We get questions like this via our [www.facebook.com/BIZofSHOW](http://www.facebook.com/BIZofSHOW) page (click the MESSAGE button to make it a personalized question if you'd like to):

*I'm trying to put together a mentalism show, and I heard someone talk about contacting service clubs (Lions, Elks, etc.) to do entertainment for their members.*

*What do you think about this?*

*Do you know if they have like an entertainment coordinator-type person? What are your thoughts?*

*Lost in Clubland,*

*Magic Joe*

Here is a sample of the types of answers that 'The DEAN of Success' offers to people at our events, in our INSIDERS Facebook Group (free to access by the way) and more:

*Dear Magic Joe,*

*I think it's a fine idea! They are GREAT places to gain loads of "experience"! ...but "you knew" I was gonna' say that anyway, being a "mentalist" and all! (HeHeHe)*

*Truthfully, in my experience, the service-club market is "light" at best. I don't know anyone who has made a killing in this market UNLESS they are "sponsoring" a fund raising performance or something of that type.*

*Typically, these service clubs give-away all their time, MONEY and talent to organizations the need their support. THAT'S why they are called "service clubs." That is a good thing for the communities in which they serve, but not so incredibly good for us as "professional performers" who derive our living from PAID engagements,*

*right?*

*You could always do "low-pay" or "no-pay" shows for the growth experience (and support the clubs that do good work in our communities) or you could create more of a synergistic alliance with them and help them do what it is that they do ... you could help them raise some money so that they could be even more effective in the community!*

*Now THAT is a way to both make a lot of money all the while helping your community groups as well! See how WIN, WIN, WIN marketing can be fruitful for EVERYONE?*

Bottom line ... especially in times like we find ourselves in today ... its always worth looking beyond an immediate "no thank you" to see if the WIN / WIN / WIN is truly an option ... and more often than you might have first thought, you'll discover a WIN in places you never thought to look before. There truly is "no place like home" when it comes to finding ways to help those around you.

NOTE: thank you to all of you who offered your own insights to our last BIZofSHOW insights ... and this is your invite to chime in again at: [www.facebook.com/BIZofSHOW](http://www.facebook.com/BIZofSHOW) and click on the MESSAGES button! See you next month with more insights into using Show Business to Grow (Your) Business.



# YOUNG MAGICIANS Chase Hasty

# CORNER

## PRACTICE

Think about what that word means. What does it mean to you? Practice is one of the only things that keep you from your dreams and goals. The people, who didn't succeed, didn't practice. Let me rephrase that. The people who didn't practice perfect didn't succeed. I have briefly touched the subject of practice in my last articles but today I am going to take this topic further. I hope you enjoy it as much as I do.

What is the difference between practice and perfect practice? Well, the answer is simple. Are you practicing for repetition or perfection? But, now you are asking, how do I tell? Here is a way, sit down and practice the French drop. How long does it take you? Did you do it in front of the mirror? Did you film it with a video camera? These are all very valid things to look at and to ask yourself.

When practicing, you need a routine to flow through and you need to be able to go back and review how you did later in time. In order to do this, you will need to determine a practice technique. Below I will list a couple. You might find one you like or you might not like any but, I am positive you will find a couple of ideas you liked.

**Technique One-** Practice with a three way mirror in front of you, this way you can see the front, left, and right angles to see if you are "peeking" anywhere.

**Technique Two-** Practice with a video camera filming you. Film multiple times from multiple angles. The advantage of practicing with a camera instead of a mirror is that you are seeing things like a spectator does instead of seeing it backwards. Once you have filmed your practice, review it and save it so you can go back and fix things if you have problems in the future.

**Technique Three-** Practice your magic with stage



lights on you. If you ever do a large show, you will find that when the lights are on you, you can see NOTHING! If you do not own stage lights, practice your magic with the lights off. This may sound silly but, I have heard of very many people doing this. It is the same exact thing as having stage lights on you because you can see nothing!

**Technique Four-** If you have patter (a story) that goes along with your magic. Go through your magic trick and record your voice and what you say. Then listen. Listen to the rate at which you speak. You can never go too slow. Change the pitch of your voice at more dramatic points of the trick. If you do a show, record the entire audio of the show. This is something Stephen Bargatze taught me. Then, you can hear what parts of your show the audience reacts to the most and adjust things from there. You won't believe how much you can learn from just listening to things.

**Technique Five-** This last technique pertains more to people who perform magic shows. There are actually two points in this last one. The first is to not perform for family or friends. Most people say, practice for your mom, brother, or best friend but, this, in my experience, is a terrible thing to do. Why? Because, they will tell you what you would like to hear. They want to be nice and

tell you that you did a good job when 95% of the time, they are lying. The second point is, don't practice in your own backyard. This is something my mentor, Luis Villamonte has told me and I am guilty of this one the most. It means don't do shows or tricks for people in your own community when you are first starting out or practicing something. If you are bad, they remember and information spreads like wild fire in small communities.

We have just gone over the definition of perfect practice and some techniques to ensure you are practicing perfect. Remember, when practicing, SLOW DOWN and practice perfect. If you get frustrated with what you are practicing, set it down and go do something else. You won't learn anything from practicing frustrated or mad. If you have any questions at all, feel free to send me and email at [chasty@magicmafia.com](mailto:chasty@magicmafia.com).



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# NICK LEWIN PRESENTS ...

## IT'S NOT THE DESTINATION

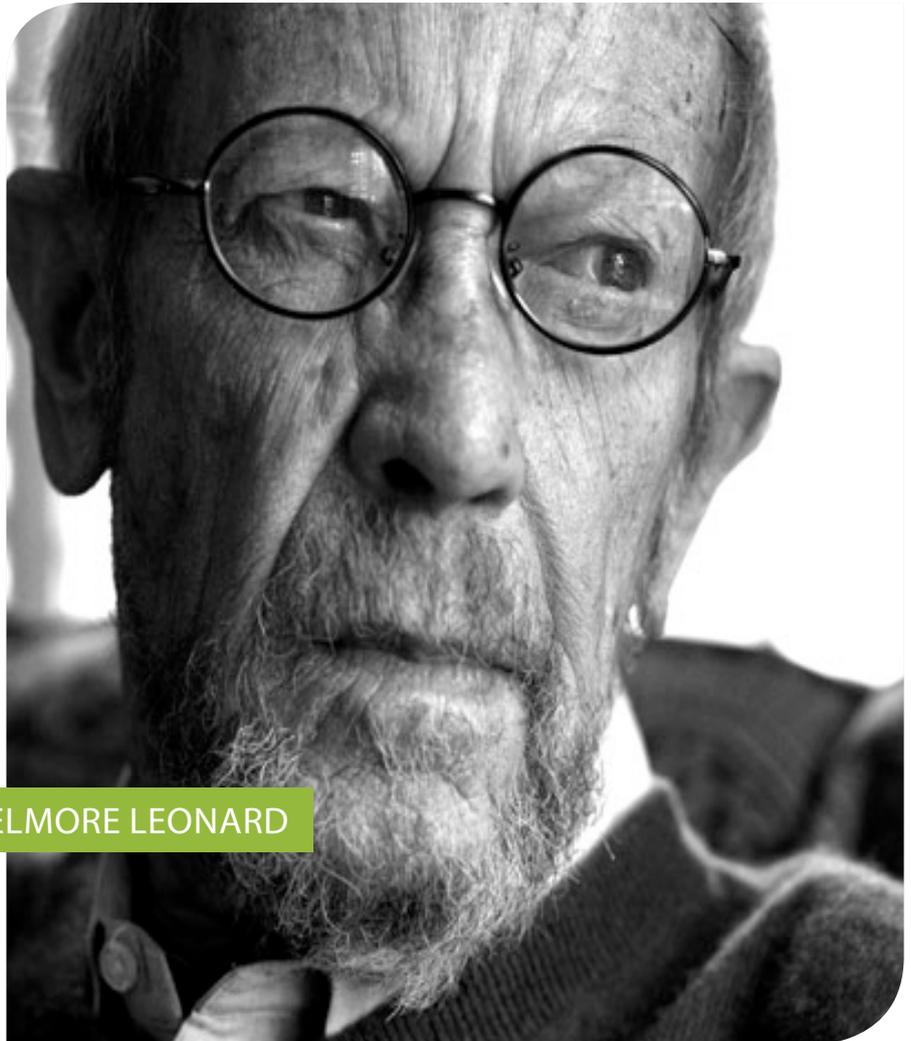
*One of the things that my first magical mentor, Ken Brooke, used to repeat to me on a regular basis was, "It isn't the journey it's the destination." I'm not sure he ever used those words but they certainly express the sentiment.*

Roy Johnson certainly did use the words in one of his early books, and in more philosophical ways it has been featured in many great metaphysical texts.

There is a very real problem with the performance of magic if you don't heed these words and accept them as a warning. The nature of most tricks is to have a set-up and then action that leads to a finale. I actually prefer to use the term reveal rather than finale. Usually that reveal is very fast and functions as an applause cue.

There is often a tendency for an effect that has a five-minute build up to result in a five-second reveal. If this is the case then you really need to pace those first five minutes and make sure they contain enough entertainment 'meat' that your audience don't lose too much critical interest in what is happening prior to your reveal. Turning a reveal into a double punch finale is another useful way to add impact to any show.

Much of magic is proudly based in the past, and very little new stuff is really going on. Think about how many magic props look like they are sloppy reproductions of Victorian



ELMORE LEONARD

props. The more expensive props often look like good reproductions of Victoriana. A great deal of nostalgia is involved in a love of magic. For a lay audience nostalgia about magic usually doesn't stretch any further than memories of what they saw as kids.

One of the things to be greatly affected since TV became the standard entertainment medium is pacing. You have to keep things moving at a fairish pace for a contemporary audience. You don't have to rush things,

but you need to add interest points throughout your routine.

One thing you can do is to ruthlessly strip away unnecessary wasted space or as it is known in radio 'dead air'. One of the writing rules of the great Elmore Leonard is, "I try and cut out all the writing that people will tend to skip when they read the book." Ah, words of sublime simplicity and wisdom from a master.

As a spoken/visual art form the audience are held hostage to your

acing and can't skip the bits they find dull. What they can do is lose interest/attention in what you are doing, and that is bad, very bad. Sometimes as performers we are very attached to things that we do/say that really don't move the action forward or contribute to the audience's enjoyment.

Sadly we magicians are seldom able to enjoy the benefits of a good and impartial outside director. We are primarily self-directed and that leads to us failing to be edited by an outsider with theatrical knowledge and a fresh pair of eyes. It is a problem to step out of ourselves and prune the rosebush to improve the blooms.

Illusionists have a separate problem because they often miss the critical aspect of a director is replaced by someone adding choreography and lighting. Both of these elements certainly have a real role in improving a performance but not if they clutter the action and slow down the action. Performers who speak are probably using too many words to say what they mean, and are therefore confusing/delaying the action.

With the instant access to movies and television afforded to the general public they have become, sometimes unknowingly, used to a directors touch in shaping a performance. We need to self-direct and make our work as commercial and accessible as possible.

Ken Brooke was a great believer in interjecting visual stunts and 'linkage' into his show in order to help maintain a steady pace; his style was not particularly driven by spoken jokes. Billy McComb of course used his verbal wit as a highly effective way to streamline the proceedings. I learned a lot from both of these two mentors and have combined their respective styles as much as possible, while adding much of my own.

USING A

DIRECTOR WILL

BENEFIT YOUR SHOW

One thing that both these performers, and most other top professionals, share is a show that doesn't seem to have any awkward transitions where the audience notices when the performer finishes one trick and begins another. A seamless show is a strong one when it comes to retaining an audience's attention.

I understand the notion of the 'storytelling' approach to magic, but it can seem extremely dated to a contemporary audience unless it is very expertly handled. I see a lot of performers treat each item as a separate gem and spending a great deal of time 'setting things up' instead of moving ahead in a speedier manner. You really can add too many details and too much color. The yarn you spin may actually be of much less interest to the audience than you think.

Nick  
Working  
The Room





**BILLY MCCOMB**

One of the most quoted phrases in magic is Robert Houdin's statement that, 'A magician is an actor playing the part of a magician.' Definitely true, but no longer a radical thought and maybe it is time to just accept it and take a deeper look. What this concept does not do, is give a magician a reason to pontificate, be precious or worse still become self-important.

It bears reflection that an actor enters the arena with a good script, a director and usually an additional cast in order to help create the play. As William Shakespeare stated, "The play is the thing," and not the player. With a magic show it is the act that is the thing and not just the

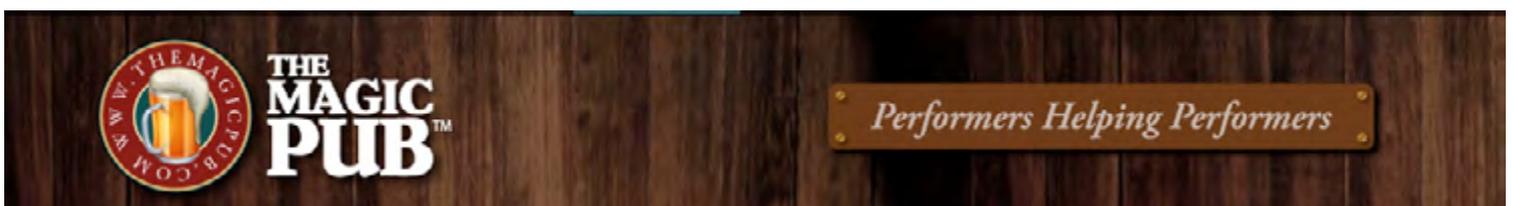
performer. Sure the personality of the performer is a key ingredient in making the show enjoyable but it is not the only element.

A good show is like a good play and the construction of both has a huge amount to do with finishing a successful journey and arriving at a mutually enjoyable destination. Enjoy every sight and sound that you can include on your travel, share them with your audience and make sure they enhance the experience as you do so. Then you are traveling on a first class ticket!

Advice that I never tire of sharing with fellow magicians is to write down your show and study the way it looks on paper. It is much easier to judge what your product is and then to improve it, if you write it down. You really can't successfully edit something until you solidify it, you may be dealing with what you think is going on/being said onstage rather than what is actually happening.

In your show you must know where you are going and how you are going to get there. When you have a clear picture of these two vital details then you can get to work on ways to make it as enjoyable as possible for your audience to take the journey with you. To paraphrase Elmore Leonard's 'Writing Rule' that I quoted and it probably wouldn't do any harm to analyze the bits in your show that the audience find least interesting---and then skip them. A poor performer works for himself and a good performer works for his audience.

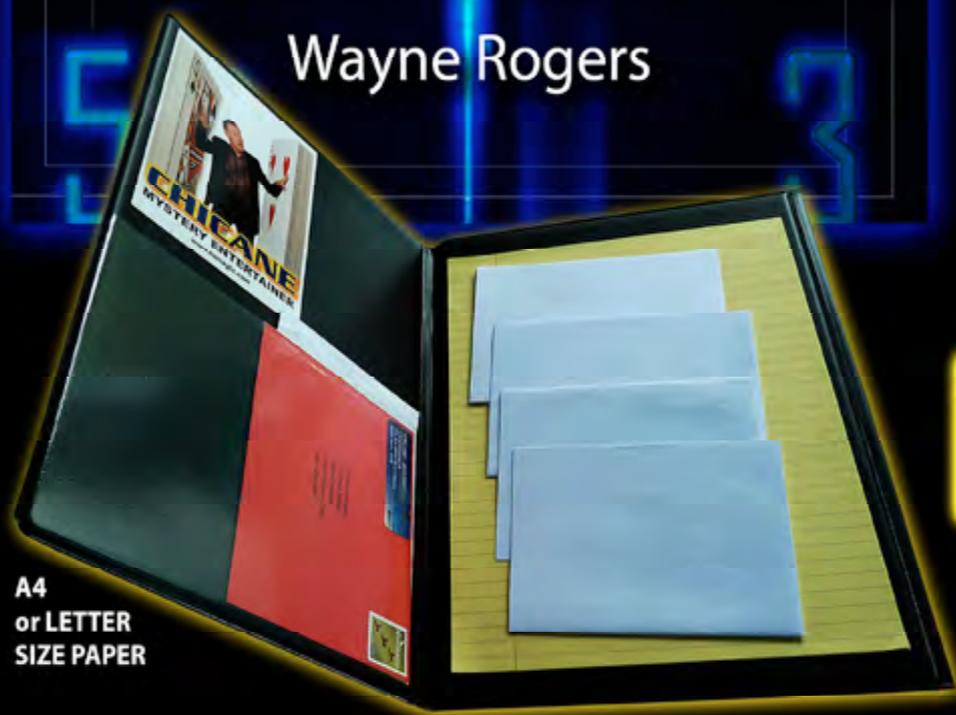
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# FORCE 4

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Wayne Rogers



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# DOWN UNDER

**DANNY ARCHER**

I love magic lectures. I love presenting them and I love watching them. I have hundreds of sets of lecture notes that I have accumulated throughout the years. For a long time, I was the top lecture booker in North America arranging lecture tours for many of the top magicians.

I have attended many magic and mentalism conventions and I would hazard a guess that I have seen over a thousand lectures. To me, the chance to watch the industry's top acts perform, teach and philosophize about the art of magic is hard to beat. As to the practicality of what you learn, that is open for debate. My thoughts about lectures were inspired by a lecture I watched online recently (another new wrinkle and one that I embrace, as I will be making my online lecture debut for Penguin on 9/22/13).

The lecturer proclaimed that all the tricks he would present were tricks he did for real people and not created just for the lecture. We have all heard these words many times before, and occasionally they are true. That made me think of one of my favorite stories that touches on the topic of whether lecture material is

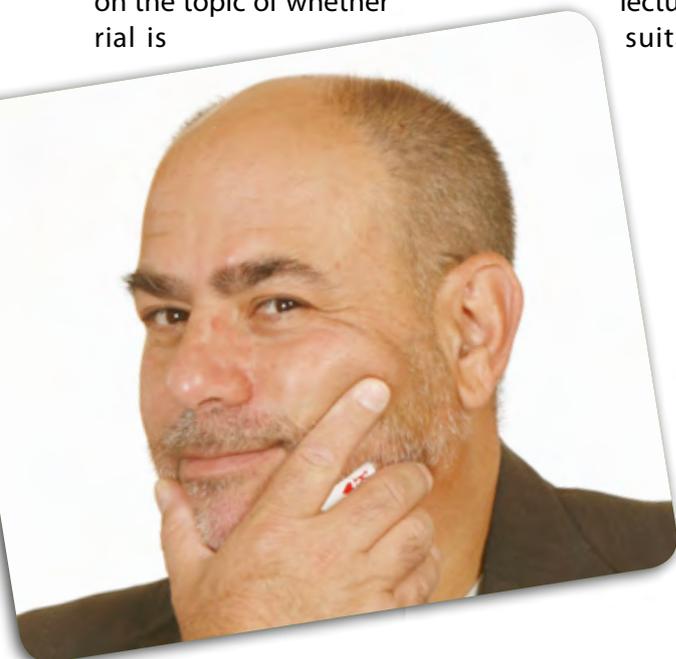
lecture material is suitable for

real world performances.

Let's use the Wayback Machine (people under 50 can Google it); to go back to the year 2000, a few weeks after the Sydney Olympics had ended. I had just finished lecturing in New Zealand (gorgeous country and awesome people) and flew into Sydney. The owner of the country's biggest magic shop, Sean Taylor, had booked me and Daryl as the out of country performers for two conventions he was presenting. The first one was on a Sunday in Melbourne and then a week later we would do it again in Sydney. Then I would travel around doing a few more lectures in Australia. The Australian people (and magicians) are fun-loving, happy people and love good magic.

The first convention went great and I was hanging out with Daryl and some of the local magi as we waited for the second convention. On Wednesday, I am at the magic shop with Sean when the phone rings. It is someone looking to book a magician for a corporate after dinner show for Saturday night. I listen as I hear Sean explain that there is a convention happening on Sunday and that one of the magic stars (Daryl) is doing a workshop on Saturday night and that everyone is going and it will be hard to find a magician on such short notice.

I catch Sean's eye and motion for him to put the call on hold. I tell him, I'm a magician... I'm not going to the workshop and that I will do the gig. The only caveat is that the client will need to provide transportation to and from the event. Sean gets back on the phone and tells them that one of the stars of the convention from America is in the shop and he can do the event. I speak with the client and find out they want me to be introduced as



an industry expert (waste management) and start a speech and then segue into the entertainment. No worries, I tell them as I have worked this kind of event many times before.

A taxi will pick me up and I will arrive after dinner and start my presentation as they are eating dessert. The audience size will be twenty to twenty-five people. I thank him and hang up. Sean asks me what I will perform as I don't have my regular act with me. I tell him that my plan is to do my lecture, but not the explanations. Since I am in a magic shop, I look over Sean's stock and borrow one prop, but basically I will create a show from the effects that I will lecture on the next day.

At the appointed time, a taxi picked me up and we rode about 20 minutes to the venue, a banquet room at a golf course. As you may have guessed or experienced for yourself, they were not eating dessert as I had expected but just sitting down to dinner. I was introduced to the host and invited to join the group. I sat down and met the people seated near me. They started asking me questions about waste management in America and I explained that I wanted to save it for my after dinner talk.

Dinner finally finished and I got up and got my show ready (I used my carry-on bag to transport and organize my props). The head of the organization got up gave me a nice intro and as Jackie Gleason used to say, "And away we go!" I started out talking about their business and segue into my first effect. The audience was thrilled that I wasn't going to be a boring speaker and they were laughing and clapping and quickly got into the spirit of things. Luckily my lecture was not all close-up magic. In addition to the card and coin effects, I also was able to present some parlor magic and mentalism as well.

Par for the Course (an add-a-number routine using a golf scorecard) and Triple Threat (a no force version of Mental Epic) were particularly well received as I recall. The show was supposed to be for 30-35 minutes or so and when I finished they demanded an encore. Luckily I had brought some of the items that I sell at my dealer's booth and was able to comply.

A second encore was called for and I did my Three Ball Routine and finally they were satisfied and let me call a cab and return. Sean was waiting up for me and wanted to hear how things went. I relayed the story to him and he said I should tell it tomorrow at the lecture. The next day was bright and sunny as we drove to the convention site. Over one hundred magician's attended and finally it



was my turn to lecture. As is my regular style, instead of doing a trick followed by an explanation, I did a show to open my lecture.

Then, I addressed the crowd and I told them the effects they just watched were not designed as fluff or filler but were real world effects meant to be performed for laymen. And then I related the story I just told you and it received a very good reaction.

Is there a moral to this story? I don't think so. It does make the point that I can back up my claim of my lecture material being suitable for laymen. It is also a reminder to be prepared for any situation. Each and every profession has their own websites, conventions and gatherings but I doubt if the insurance or plumbing conventions can match our industry in the story department. Be well my friends and I'll see you in the next issue of Vanish.



# THE SUCCESS SERIES ... CRIS JOHNSON



I'm sure others will disagree with me, but for me, performing for repeat clients can be tricky. On one hand, the client knows you and likes you, so you've got a lot of positive energy feeding your show and experience.

**O**n the other hand, there is pressure to do just as good of a job as you did last time...and for the repeat show, there's no surprise – people understand you and your character. Unless you're adept at creating a brand-new character, people 'know' you.

This can come with a headache, as the good memories of your previous show can swell in the minds of your clients, making a follow-up tougher. Add in the fact that for most professionals, it can take years to fine-tune an entire act. (For the

basis of this article, I'm assuming an "act" is at least 30 minutes, usually tops out at 60 minutes, with an average of 45 minutes.)

In particular, the toughest act I had to develop and fine-tune was my main motivational high school assembly. Teens can be an extremely demanding audience and I was constantly refining the show until I felt comfortable with it. (True pros know a show is never completely finished, but the major switching out of effects is done and now the script tweaks will continue over the course of the next 150-200 performances.)

Add in the fact that I was doing more and more repeat shows for elementary schools and I knew that to survive, I had to make creating second, third and fourth shows easier, putting it all into a “system” that made creating sequel shows easier.

I then began thinking of movie sequels, in particular the dreadful “Transformers 2: Rise of the Fallen.” The first movie was a lot of fun – a popcorn movie that held no higher ambitions. The sequel came along and it was a bloated mess – more explosions, more effects and a longer running time.

I shouldn’t have been surprised. Hollywood has figured out the sequel formula for popcorn pictures: Make it bigger, louder, but similar to the previous movie in spirit.

With all of that in mind for my high school assembly, I decided to use it as a blueprint for creating my second high school assembly. The educational topic was completely different, but the effects bear a striking resemblance to each other between the two shows.

For instance, in my first high school show, I use Smash & Stab. In the second I use Confessions of a Needle Swallower. It’s two ‘danger’ type effects. In the first show, I use Richard Osterlind’s wonderful Watch Routine. In the second I use another time effect that I came up with using the Stealth Assassin Wallet.

Here’s another example:

My elementary shows always start out with a 60 to 90 second production sequence set to music. For the last year, I’ve used a Parasol Act I put together. For the second visit to the school, I use a silk & vanishing candle routine. Both routines have a TON of magic packed into the 60 seconds. Both are big, colorful affairs.

In the middle of the show, I currently use the Pro Viper III. For the second

visit to the same school, I use Grem-lins in a Box. Both routines involve a ‘critter’ finding a selected card.

To end the show, I use Losander’s Floating Table. When I come back the second time, I know I have to ‘ramp up’ the wow factor, so I float myself a la Magellan Levitation.

To be clear, I don’t HAVE to make the second shows so similar (but bigger) but I choose to do so because after painstakingly fine-tuning a show, I know the effects that get the right response.

My thought process is this: “Okay, the kids loved the floating table. The second time they see me, they are going to expect more. I will therefore float something bigger...me.”

If I visit the school a third time, I haul out the REALLY big guns – I float a student in the air!

Now, I will say this: I know people who, in this example, have several theme shows and each show is ENTIRELY different from each other. That, of course, is much better, but for me it is a lot harder. It’s something I strive for, but on the way, I’ll take a shortcut if I can take it.



... the toughest act I had to develop and fine-tune was my motivational high school assembly show. Teens can be an extremely demanding audience ...

# DSP

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**Danny Archer**

A prediction effect that is practical and easy to perform with minimal sleight of hand.

### WHAT

A package is mailed weeks in advance to an authority figure at an upcoming performance. The package is opened and a clear box containing a micro digital recorder and a piece of balled up newspaper is removed. The contents of the clear box are removed. The paper is unfolded and a sports event has been circled on the paper. The recorder is played and your voice is heard to predict the correct score of the game.

### WHEN

You will need two small identical digital recorders (try Radio Shack for inexpensive ones), a small clear plastic box that snaps shut and can be opened with one hand, a section of newspaper, scotch tape and some clear fishing line.

### WHAT

: Using about two inches of the fishing line and some tape, attach one of the recorders to the inside of the clear plastic box. The recorder should move around inside the box, but when the box is inverted, the recorder is held inside the box by the thread. Cut from a newspaper a small piece of the sports section showing an upcoming game; circle a game that occurs the day of the performance, ideally hours before the start of the show. If no game starts that day, select a game from the previous night. Wad the paper up and put it inside the clear box (Fig. 1).

Wrap the clear box with opaque paper and sealing tape. Write on the paper DO NOT OPEN and place it in a larger mailing box. Include a cover letter explaining that the recipient should bring the small, wrapped UNOPENED box with them to the show. It's not a bad idea to call them a day or so before the show and remind them to bring the package. I also bring along a duplicate wrapped package just in case.

### HOW

Suppose you are performing on April 3rd, a Saturday night and that after-



FIG. 1

The method is easy enough for most performers and the impact is very strong, making this a practical prediction.



FIG. 2



FIG. 3

noon Penn State is playing Pittsburgh. After hearing the score of the game (Penn State 35, Pittsburgh 20 ... Go Nittany Lions!), record your prediction on an identical recorder. Here is what the prediction should say ; "Today is March 18th (name a date weeks before the current date), and I will try and predict the score of the upcoming game to be played on April 7th between Penn State and Pittsburgh. Though I believe it will be a hard fought battle, Penn State will prevail and win with a score of 35 to 20".

Have your prepared recorder in your RH jacket pocket at the start of your program, or put it there before you begin this routine. To begin, ask the person to whom you mailed the box to come forward. Explain to the audience, and have your helper verify, that you mailed this box to him a week ago and that he has had it in his possession the entire time. Have him stand on your right and open the sealed package and remove the clear plastic box. As he is doing this, you finger palm the duplicate recorder in your RH.

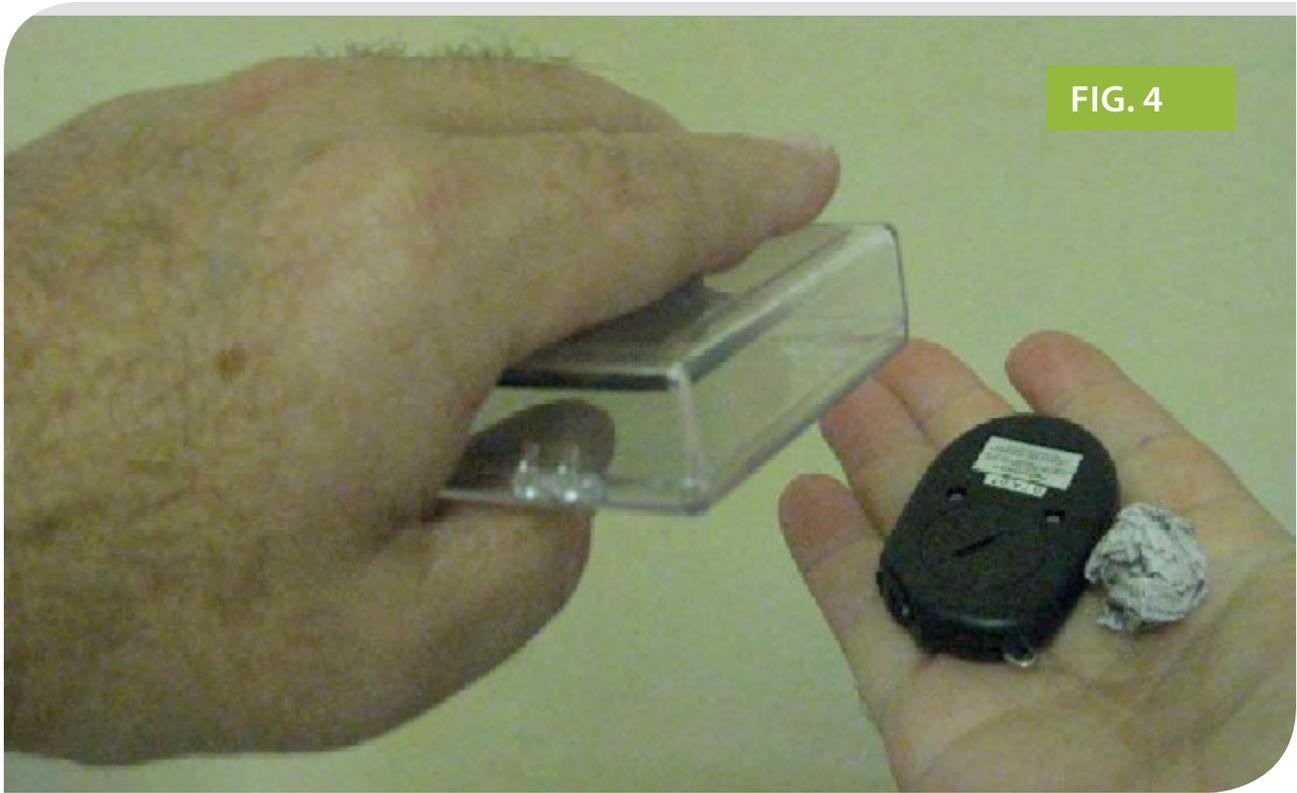
Ask for the box and display it to the audience on the palm of your LH. The audience and the spectator can see inside and they see a balled up piece of newspaper

and the recorder. Shake the box and the contents move freely inside. As you explain that the recorder contains a prediction you made earlier in the week, the RH opens the clasp on the box and flips the lid back (Fig. 2).

You appear to dump the contents of the box into your RH, but you actually do a shuttle pass. Basically, the LH turns over inverting the box, which causes the paper ball to fall from the box as your RH turns palm up exposing the recorder, which is palmed in the RH (Fig. 3). Properly done it appears that the newspaper and the recorder are dropped from the box into your RH. The left thumb swings the flap closed (Fig. 4) as you immediately extend your RH and ask the spectator to pick up the paper and the recorder. As he is doing this, the LH pockets the plastic box. Have the spectator open the paper and read the names of the two teams you have circled. Ask him to press play on the recorder. Take your bow!

THIS

Obviously you could use this method to predict anything (headlines, stock market, etc.). Using sports gets away from doing a headline prediction where



something tragic is the lead story. I like to use sports because they are so popular, and there is a sporting event every day of the year except for two days. The day before and the day after the Baseball All-Star Game there are no sporting events.

#### ARCHERS ADDITIONS

Why are magic tricks created? Sometimes it's because you have a really cool method for a trick. Sometimes a presentation occurs to you and you craft an effect around it. And sometimes it's because you found a cool prop or item that you could turn into a trick. That was the case with DSP. Radio Shack had these keychain digital voice recorders. They only recorded for 30 seconds, but that was enough for me. I bought six and started to play with them. Right away I could see they were small enough to palm and that made me think of switching them.

As I started to think of a presentation, I thought of a headline prediction, but that wasn't me. The chance of something bad happening that day also didn't thrill me. Then I thought of a sports prediction. Not a lot to add on this one. These small recorders are still available... just looked on eBay and saw a bunch for sale (search for micro digital recorder).



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# TIN MAN

## TC TAHOE

*I have been fortunate enough to visit the city of New Orleans on several occasions. So much of the city just screams magic.*

---



Levent Cimkentli Photo

On one particular visit to the sugar cane state, I was in a walking mood...and an eating mood. You can't really be in the Big Easy very long without getting in an eating mood.

I was out for a walk when I saw him. Feet wrapped in old rags, bottle in a brown bag, pushing a shopping cart. Knit cap pulled low, over his ears. I watched him pick through the trash can outside of a café.

The thing that struck me as odd, the café workers didn't seem to mind this man rummaging through their garbage. Granted he didn't stay long, then moved on to the next can. I found myself following this ragman.

I soon realized his cart was filled with only one thing. Foil. Foil from gum wrappers. Foil from cigarette boxes. Foil from candy, left over...foil I didn't really recognize.

I asked one of the waiters at the café if he knew anything about the man. "Who? Tin-Man?" he said. I learned that he'd been on the streets for years working on his collection of foil.

I followed the Tin-Man a little more...

"You wantin' somthin' boy?" his voice was raspy and filled with phlegm.

"I..." not one of my more eloquent moments.

"You lookin' at my foil?" He coughed.

"It's a lot of foil." I said

"Do you need some?" He turned to look at me.

"No. No thanks...I just can't imagine what you would do with all that foil." I said

"Ha!" he laughed " And here I can't imagine what you couldn't do with it." He waved me over to him.

"Lookie, this." He said as he pulled out a clean 6 x 9 inch sheet. " Someone threw this out, probably thought it was

too small to be any good...You wanna see somthin'?"

The Tin-Man spread the foil out on a small patch of grass. "Press yer hand down on the foil. Not too hard."

I did and it left a nice imprint of my hand.

The Tin-Man took out a half a cigarette, lit it and took a long slow drag. "You ever hear of Voodoo, son?" There was something different in his voice when he asked me that.

I looked back to the imprint of my hand in the foil.

The Tin-Man reached down and tore a little piece of the foil off, he rolled it into a ball.

"Here, hold dis, but not too tight, it may git a little warm."

I held onto the foil. He touched the lit end of his cigarette to the center of my handprint.

I felt nothing. The Tin-Man blew a lungful of smoke onto the handprint.

I felt a tingling in my hand...the torn piece of foil started to get hot. I yelped and dropped it.

The Tin-Man folded up the foil with my handprint on it and put it in his cart.

"Don't give nothin' of yerself to no one ya don't know." He coughed and pushed his cart away.

-----

Now, I suppose if you would like to 're-create' my little misadventure, you could use our old friend "Hypno-Heat". I'm not saying that's what the Tin-Man did, but thinking so helps me sleep a little easier at night.

**ABOUT TC**  
TC is a full time professional who has performed around the world. He is a well respected performer, author and creator of magic. Look for a list of his books at:  
[www.lybrary.com](http://www.lybrary.com)



# BACHSTAGE

*Illusions, Creativity, & Performance*

*with Charles Bach*

## ROUTINING YOUR ILLUSIONS: CREATING PICTURES

***“Take a Picture...It’ll last longer.” -Pee Wee Herman***

One of the biggest routines and works in progress that I’ve worked on was an illusion with me in a cartoon animation.

It involved far more than creating an illusion and then finding music to perform it to. I had to create a storyline that included all the important magical and theatrical elements. Then, edit out all the unimportant elements that did not directly impact the flow of the action to find the essential “key” frames. Finally, after a year of development we had a stack of nearly 3,250 hand-made drawings by animators that made a stack from the floor to above my knees. The final product was a 2 minute and 18 second animation that is only a part of an entire magic routine.

There are two disciplines of the

arts that make every moment count. Dance & Animation.

While I got into magic at an early age, I’ve also been a dancer since I was young. I studied, trained and performed in ballet and dance companies for many years before I moved on to pursue a career as an illusionist. These life experiences brought me to the conclusion that inspired this discussion.

Imagine if every step you take was planned and every part of your body and its position was intentional. Now imagine that it’s not only your feet moving one in front of the other, but also the position of the torso, the arms, the head,

the eyes, the shoulders, the hips, the knees, the hands, the fingers. Now imagine each changing constantly and over the course of an entire scene. This constant detail to each and every movement takes place in dance choreography and animation. In fact, animators often use dancers to perform the movements they try to replicate in their drawings. Dancers can reproduce the movements repeatedly and even break them down to their isolated kinetic motions.

With the advent of movies like Iron Man, the line between live action and CGI animation is becoming blurred. It's becoming harder to tell the shots filmed for real from the ones done on a computer. Animators are illusionists, too.

## **KEY-FRAMES - MOMENTS OF IMPORTANCE**

Key-frames in animation are the highlights of important movements that a character performs. Elmer Fudd

aiming his gun at Bugs Bunny. Jerry the mouse sticking out his tongue at Tom the cat. Road Runner stopping at some seeds on the highway. These are all "key" moments that need to be clearly communicated to the viewer. They are usually drawn by the best and most experienced animator. Then, in-between motion is drawn by many animators to complete the action. Getting from key-frame A to key-frame B is known as the "in-between".

There are few wasted moments in animation because no one wants to throw out drawings that took hours to complete for just 1/12th of a second of viewing time.

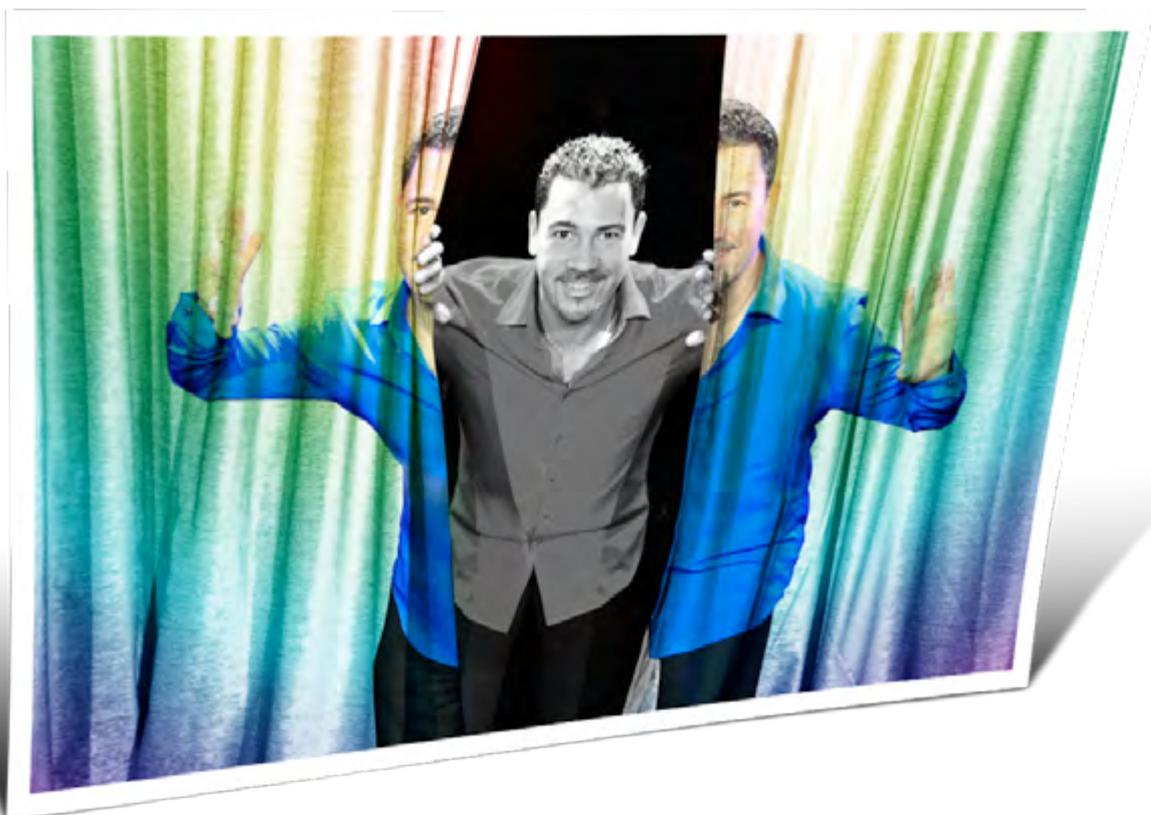
Imagine that a media photographer is clicking photos of your performance. How many photos will have to be deleted because of sloppy positions, eyes closed, and poorly designed visuals to find a good picture? It's our job to make it easy for the photographer and the audience to take pictures (real or mental) that are cleanly composed.

Have you ever watched one of your

routines frame by frame on a video? When you do, you may notice all kinds of unexpected or unwanted "pictures". Some might be unusual body positions, a blink on the steal, strange facial expressions, eyes focused down, and many more possibly embarrassing images. You can also use this to find the Moments of Importance or Key-frames that need to have more attention drawn to them.

I remember watching Michael Ammar prepping for a video shoot at Caesars Magical Empire. He explained the key moments of his routine directly to the cameraman by showing and saying, "When I hold the fruit here." and "When I reach into my pocket." This short rehearsal allowed the cameraman to know when and where the essential details would take place and to move the camera accordingly.

Michael also showed the best angles to shoot from to make the magic and him look good while not exposing anything magically.



With limited time for rehearsal and no time for re-takes, this was essentially a live performance for the camera. By acting as his own DP or "Director of Photography", Michael was able to get the shots he wanted.

A good cameraman knows how to frame the picture and get the best possible image, but will always appreciate your knowledge and experience by knowing and sharing the key-frame moments to get the best possible end product.

What are the "key-frames" or Moments of Importance in your routine? Are they obvious? How can I find them?

Asking another magician is not always the best way. A theatrical director, choreographer or non-magician may actually have more insight to the important moments and visuals you are creating. It's like watching magician's performance at a magic convention. There are too many people applauding the perfect steal and not the production of the bird. Wrong key-frame entirely.

Let's look at the main "Key-frame" areas of a routine that we should use to create the spectator's mental pictures.

1. Opening Image
2. Moments of Importance
3. End Pose

## OPENING IMAGE

This is the first image the audience sees and sets the tone for the entire routine.

What picture do you want to create? Make it interesting! Are you facing the audience? Back to the audience holding a flaming torch with the flame flickering on the back-drop? Running in from off-stage as if late?

Walking down the aisles of the audience? Sitting? Lying down? On all fours, barking?

## MOMENTS OF IMPORTANCE

What are the key-frame moments throughout your piece? These will continue the action of the story and are necessary elements for it to make sense. If you're not sure if a moment is important, take it out and see if the action still can be followed.

Girl gets into box, first blade enters, doors opened, split in half, restore, girl out of box unharmed. These are the important elements that the audience needs to absorb for the magic to be understood. It's our job to make those moments into memorable pictures in the audience member's mind.

A key-frame is added each time a character, object, or situation is introduced.

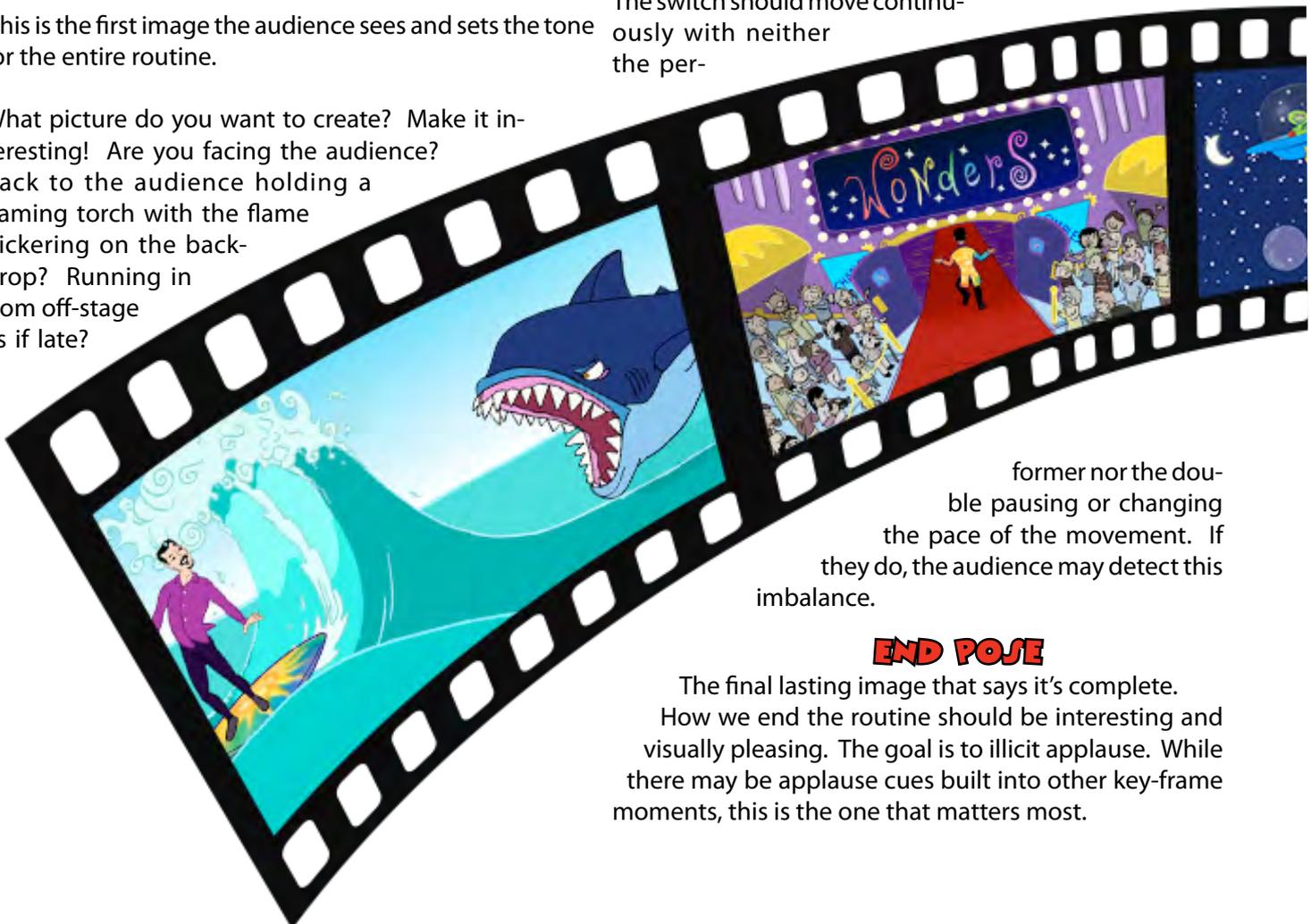
The "in-betweens" should still be interesting and lead us to the next important "key-frame". Maybe the in-between of a bigger motion continues, covering a smaller hidden motion. By continuing the motion from A to B, we control the audience focus and this can provide misdirection to execute a steal, load, or hidden exit.

For example, if a switch of magician to a double is required, you want to have another bigger action taking place to pull focus from the smaller movement of the "switch". The switch should move continuously with neither the per-

former nor the double pausing or changing the pace of the movement. If they do, the audience may detect this imbalance.

## END POSE

The final lasting image that says it's complete. How we end the routine should be interesting and visually pleasing. The goal is to illicit applause. While there may be applause cues built into other key-frame moments, this is the one that matters most.



Do you do the classic tableau with “girl on the floor embracing the magician’s legs as he reaches up triumphantly to the sky” pose? We’ve seen plenty of these. We get it. You are cool or trying to be and in control of the world. Now, show us another side of your personality or character. Your ending can be anything you want it to be.

Do you finish in a single pose facing the audience? Your back to the audience in a silhouette? Fly up to the sky? Vanish in a puff of smoke? Ride off slowly while sitting on the prop? Run off-stage being chased by two halves of your assistant? Are you looking out at the audience smiling or possibly embracing your assistant while looking at each other and involved in your own final scene?

Lighting can also be important for the final picture. Do the lights blackout instantly on the last note? Is there a slow fade out? Maybe a bright bump or color change to mark the end?

## THE POWER OF THE PAUSE

Let’s look at the moment just before the magic happens. A pause, a look, or a pose helps to impress this moment in time. It also allows the audience to prepare to absorb the impact of what is going on magically.

There is a term in the theatre called a “pregnant pause”. It is when the performer waits for a moment before revealing an important detail,

plot-point, or climax. This brief pause is like a mother about to give birth. There is an anticipation, energy, and build up before the final joyous moment when the child is born.

Jason Byrne is a very good example of using the pause effectively to enhance the strength of his magic. Before a production, he stops for a moment and makes direct eye contact with the audience as if to say, “Here it comes.” All the dirty work is already done and he makes the audience wait, and then he executes the magic. This pause enhances the effect of his magic measurably.

A pause can be used for pointing up something that is about to happen, and it can also be used to control the focus of the audience after many things are happening on the stage. I’m sure you’ve seen videos where the lead is

walking slowly while all the action around is moving very fast. By being the sole individual standing in place, you pull all eyes to you. Interestingly, the lack of movement becomes the bigger movement.

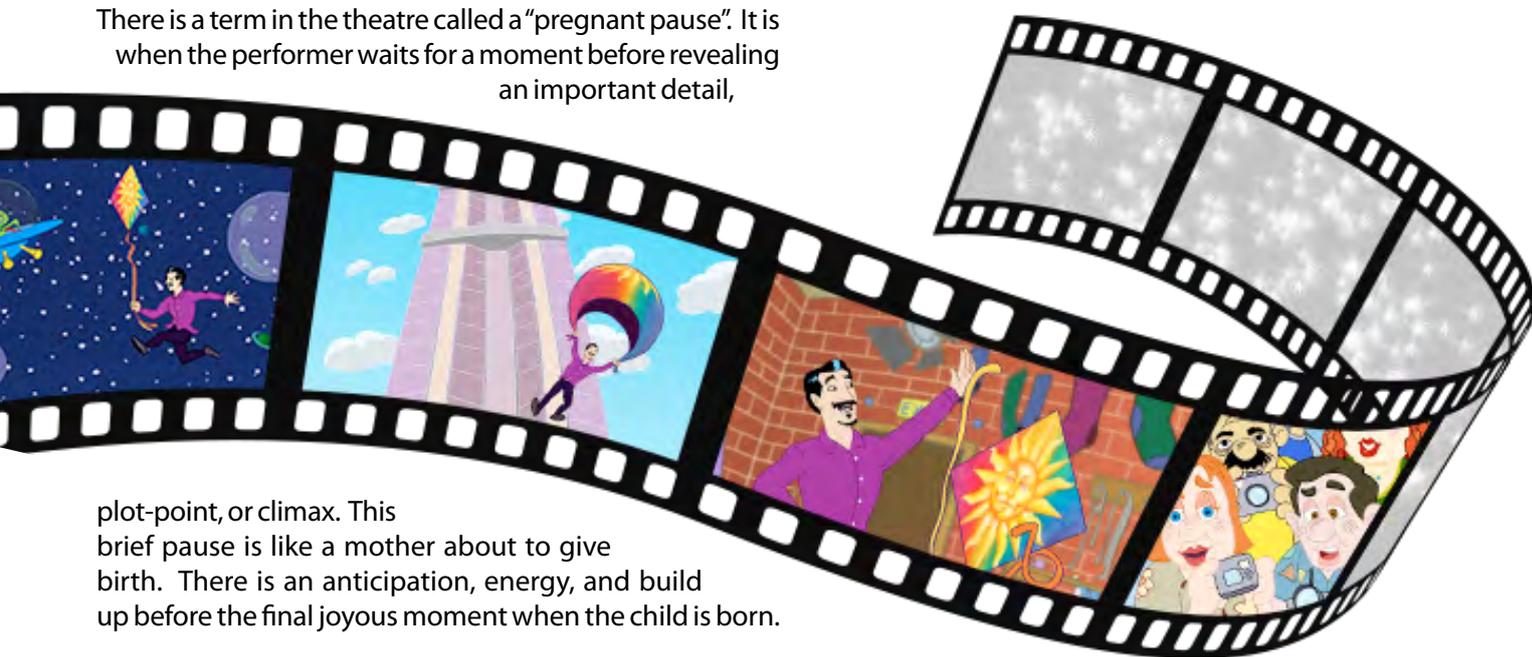
On-stage, we can become the director of photography for our own performance by telling the audience where to look and when something is about to happen. Find those important key-frames and enhance them visually through your body position, eyes focus, and use of pauses. Like choreography, use the motion between the key-frame moments to keep the action flowing in an aesthetically pleasing way, without wasted movement.

Like animation, magic makes the impossible seem possible. Try to make each of those moving pictures matter in your own live animation.

That’s all folks!

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# CREATIVE MAGIC CLOSING UP SHOP

By Randy Burtis

**“Creative Magic was founded in 2004 and in 2011 when Brian Daniels felt it was time to wrap it up he created a risky but creative way to wrap up. He decided to sell off the inventory, to portion it out to anyone who would purchase it- oh and they would portion it off over 2 years! He advertized changes were ahead, took a risk, and what resulted was another grand adventure for Brian and Rebekah. As we near June 2013 the final portions are being prepared and ready to be shipped out. I took some time to ask Brian and Rebekah how this two year journey of closing up Creative Magic has gone and some of the stories and lessons learned along the way!”**

***How has the portioning off the company idea worked? What has gone as you expected/hoped, what has surprised you(good or bad)?***

First off it was a HUGE gamble for us. We spent over \$10,000 just promoting the dang thing with count-down ads full page back cover ads postcards and online advertising. And all this with only about 4 people knowing about the idea – normally we run ideas past 40 people before moving forward but this HAD to stay a secret for it to work right. And then if midnight struck and no one called we were committed. After all that hype if two people bought in they each got a semi-truck full of stuff and we had a good amount of debt and no job. This was a HUGE gamble.

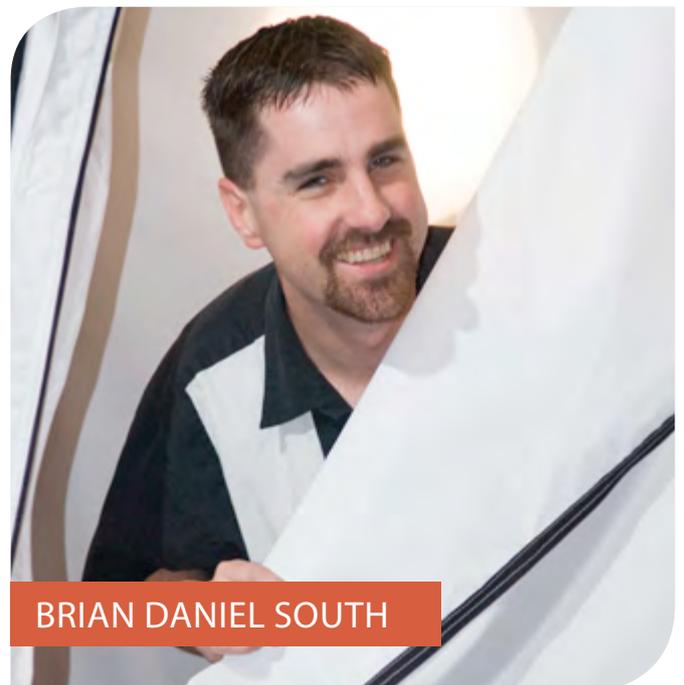
Then it was a gamble for our portion holders – do you trust us enough to buy mystery items years in advance? What if we die while visiting the pyramids (which almost happened)?

***There have been CM limited edition items you have created just for portion owners, so you have not just been moving items out of the garage, you are still be producing things. What made you go down that track for portion owners?***

Well again we had noooo idea how this would go. We thought it might sell out and hoped it would but we also would not have been surprised if we only sold 40 to 60 of these – we really just had NO idea how

this would be received. When it sold out in just days and we had a HUGE waiting list we realized 1) people would not be getting as much as they would have had we only sold 75 spots. And 2) we would be making a respectable amount of income and we were just filled with gratitude for the overwhelming response and wanted to show thanks with actions more than words.

***There have been some adventures in getting some***



BRIAN DANIEL SOUTH

items/some boxes put together in a timely fashion. As an example when you went to send off Invisible Paint as an example. Can you share a bit about that adventure.

So to fully understand our drama it is important to realize that not every single thing was manufactured and ready to ship. We have some products that we had plenty of bags and DVDs and poles but still needed coverings (like Flip Switch) and some products like Wands where we thought we had enough wands and just didn't have the pool noodles but once we opened boxes we realized they were mislabeled and we had a lot more biggest wand inflatables than we thought and nowhere near enough covers. So we had to go get more wands made and we decided to make enough to give everyone two in that case, but there were multiple layers of drama with the wands. They were supposed to come in in October for the March box but the factory stiffed us (yep kept our money) and never delivered so we had to go to another factory that took our money and then lied to us for months about it being made but being stuck in customs. We wanted to ship those with Invisible Paint but that drama delayed that so we had to find another factory that would only sew the covers so we got the covers there and then paid people to stuff them and sew them here and that was drama and it goes on and on. There was some drama with the paint cans as well but there was drama with almost every element in one way or another but the biggest drama was getting those darn wands – make sure to ask me about my trip to the pool noodle factory someday as well. Getting the noodles was an issue too and then we thought we had enough dowels and 3 days before shipping we realized our math on the dowels

*“Chris Stockton: It has been a fantastic experience, and it's not quite over. So happy I decided to go for it. Each box has been well worth the wait. I had decided to increase my market by expanding my show, and this has been perfect for me.”*



was wrong we only had enough for 1 set per box and we seriously contemplated just saying here is one set with dowels and one without but in the end we rushed an order of dowels. I went to the distribution center for wood, picked up a few hundred, came home, cut them and sanded them and painted them through the night in the back yard so that each portion holder would have two complete sets :)

***There is a big mystery item in the last box. Without spoiling anything can you share a bit about the journey to creating this. This is unique in that unlike other Creative Magic products, you haven't field tested it with customers like you have with other items. How are you ensuring this last Creative Magic item leaves the legacy of the products in the same high level as the other products?***

WOW – yeah this is a tough one to answer. Yeah, little to no field testing. I can count the people on one hand that know about the final

## WHAT THEY ARE SAYING

*Portion owner indeed are pleased, here are just a few thoughts posted from the Creative Magic Facebook page:*

**Jeremy Haak:** It is GREAT!!!! I have not been this excited about getting new props for a long time!! Creative magic is the best.

**Donald Dunphy:** One of the things I like about it was being able to purchase all of their compact illusions at a discount price. I already have several stage illusions, but now I have a bigger selection to work with.

item outside my local magic club. My SAM club has been invaluable all along the journey and they have a wealth of qualities amongst the group and I am just counting on their, and my, gut that the final item will be a fitting finale.

As for the journey – we had three items that we never got around to doing and the final illusion is one of them. In fact it is one we had nearly 7 years ago now. I am choosing my words very carefully here so once the boxes are out this will make more sense.

***How long has the idea(for the mystery item) been in mind? You recently traveled to China to do final checks tweaks on it, can you share how that went. Can you share if this is a 1,2, 3 person illusion, does it come in multiple color options, what inspired the trick?( If any of these tips too much obviously avoid it, but it may be a nice chance to drive some of us portion holders even crazier :)!***

Wheew. Well the core idea for the final illusion was yeah 7 years back – obviously it has evolved and the tweaking is still not perfect as I type this. The trip to China was supposed to be to finalize it but that factory actually failed and we ended up having to find another factory – we may need to go again if these guys don't deliver soon but these are the joys of manufacturing and one reason why I don't want to do this ever again. I won't answer the number of people but it will fit in a small bag of course and the inspiration was that – someone came up to me (he will be credited on the DVD) and said why don't you do this tiny tiny. And from there we brainstormed until we had beta version A (I bet this illusion has been through about 12 reworks over the years).

As for teasers – we could have offered multiple colors on the final trick but in the end went a route that is universal with the ability for you to add your own personal touch so once they are in the hands of portion holders people will end up with colors that fit them best.

***Trip down memory lane, you are saying goodbye to each of your products, when you think of each item what comes to mind, it may be a word, a story or thought...***

Brian's Answers:

Shadow Tent-

The moment I first had the idea while Rebekah was at the store and when she walked in to our tiny apartment and I said "I have an idea" to the moment that Mac king bought one of the first ones to the moment that McDonalds bought over 100 of them.



MAC KING  
SIGNING  
AUTOGRAPHS

Victory Cubes- one of the first manufacture samples came in pink (man I wish I still had that one) We bought a house because we bought so many victory cubes but the first shipments went out at the UPS store – (lots of UPS store stories) but we probably shipped 100 that first day and we did all the unpacking inspecting and repackaging in the parking lot of the UPS store.

Cube Squared-this was Rebekah's FAVORITE illusion to sell.

B Screens- chatting with Bryce Chambers, the inventor of Bryce's Screens, to get his blessing in doing this, hearing some great stories and then just months later he passed away.

Flip Switch- We took this one over to my assistant's house and she has triplets. As we were working out the dimensions and handling we ran through the trick over and over and over again and the triplets (about 7 years old) kept taking turns being in it (both front and back). They laughed and laughed and it never got old.

Change Cap-

Having the idea on the way to film the Tent promo –

and the best experience ever was sharing the Change Cap with a deaf-blind man in the UK – one of the best life experiences EVER. Also getting the patent, getting sued, and the Cap going to space.

#### Flash cards-

I still get Matel's catalogs because originally these decks were going to be UNO cards.

#### Invisible Paint-

Ironically I painted and painted and painted for Invisible Paints.

#### Bigger Wands-

Being told they will never sell by a top name kids show performer. HA. Buying cartloads of pool noodles at every Walmart in Utah and making kids jealous. Literally, kids would point and say "Look mom!" Later going to the pool noodle factory – that was a fun story.

#### Biggest Wand-

Thinking it was the most absurd request ever but getting it over and over again until it became one of my favorite things to do in my show.

Pandora Bags- being told that I knocked off a bag that could not be more different – ah, the joys of creating.

Bruised- People pulling Rebekah aside and offering her hotlines and help because she had so many bruises on her (hey, we had to test them).

Mystery Illusion ;) Visiting China for the first time even though we have been doing business with them for 7 years – and then the factory we visited didn't even turn out to be the factory to make our last item.

#### **Rebekah's answers:**

Shadow Tent- I'll never forget the day I came home from the grocery store to find that Brian had

sketched this illusion while I was gone. I didn't know my life could change so much from a trip to Smith's!

Victory Cubes- Mostly I remember the many (it seemed like hundreds) of prototypes! It took forever to get this one right.

Cube Squared- This was my favorite illusion to sell. I knew the customer would be very happy with it, it was reasonably priced, and it was so easy to package and ship!

B Screens- We did a lot of fabric hunting for this product before we settled on a fabric. We couldn't pass any fabric store by without going to in to see what they had available! It still makes me happy when we can drive by a fabric place without going in!

Flip Switch- I remember working on the prototype at friend's house – she has triplets. They wanted to help, so we kept switching one of them for the other. All three of them, whether they went from front to back or back to front or were just the audience, were amazed at the magic! They screamed and laughed and wanted us to do it again and again.

Change Cap- So many things come to mind. The day we came up with idea - driving back from Moab where we filmed a promo video at Arches National Park for the Shadow Tent, the many, many, VERY many bunk ones we had

to toss, and the law suit that resulted in our getting a patent.

Flash cards- I have strong memory of lining up envelope after envelope on the table and stuffing them all with Flash Card decks the day the product got released. We had a ton of pre orders!

Invisible Paint- Brian sketched out this product for many years before we finally pulled the trigger on it. We were so glad when we got it to market because, really, why didn't someone think of this sooner??

Bigger Wands- A very well-respected kids' magician told us that these would never sell because they didn't do anything magical. Well, we went through a phase where we were selling 20 of these a day. As we readied each crazy part, Brian and I would look at each other and say, "These will never sell! Ha!"

Biggest Wand- We really didn't think anyone would need a bigger wand! But our customers proved us wrong and we sold a ton of these.

Pandora Bags- Brian wanted to surprise all our Portion Holders with a Christmas stocking version of the Pandora Bag for



Photo below shows Brian working on box 6.

Photo on right is from their trip to China for the latest box.



one of the December boxes. We thought that would be easy enough. Nope. :) We went through several seamstresses who just didn't have the time until we found a local group willing to put a lot of their holiday on hold to make them for our customers.

Bruised- We put a lot of samples on ourselves when we were testing the colors and shading of the tattoos. One day I went into the grocery store wearing a bunch on my arm and a very concerned woman walked up to me with a women's crisis center business card. I knew then that we had it right!

Mystery Illusion ;) – The production team in China got a huge kick out of Brian performing this illusion for them! They had to have him do it three times because they kept calling other people in to watch. :)

***What is your favorite CM prop and why?***

Wow – who's your favorite kid? I love the tent for starting it all and I just love performing the tent. I love invisible paint because... well I just do. And I love the wands because we sold soooo many of them and it is fun to think how many kids are laughing and having fun because of them almost every hour of the day around the world. And I love the change cap because it helped me realize my bucket list item of getting a patent.

***What is on the horizon for Teach by Magic?***

TBM is picking up speed. We have more books, a totally new site which is long overdue, and then we are going after some serious sponsorships to take things to the next level.

***What has been the worst/hardest thing about closing up shop?***

The hardest thing was taking the leap of faith – even knowing how well it went we still look back and think "how did we have the guts to do this". It is always sad closing out a chapter but this was an amazing run and we will always look back on this chapter of our lives with fond memories.

***What has been the best/most exciting thing about closing up shop?***

Getting a house – as I said before we bought the house for CM so finishing our basement – parking our car in the garage and not having to answer phones at all hours of the day all days of the week. And ship things every day. We are also excited about being forced to explore new horizons. Oh and of course there were a few trips around the world thanks to the success of the deal. In the last 2 years we have been to China, Brazil, England, Rome, Greece, Egypt, Turkey, Honduras, Alaska, Jamaica, and after we ship out the



last box we are hoping to go to Ireland to celebrate.

**Hypothetical question- What would have been the NEXT CM prop you would have made?**

A table – I had been exploring a few new ideas for a table that is SUPER light and easy to set up and blah blah – and then about 6 months before we pulled the plug I was contacted by a young magician with the best idea for a table ever (a table in a bag – and he thought I was a perfect fit for us (and he was right)) but I had to tell him – sorry won't work for us – (to his confusion) I encouraged him to still make them and sell them – he could have sold 1000s of them but he never did - later that summer he realized why I could not take on his project.

I don't blame him though for not releasing the table – it is a lot of work.

**One of the surprises in the portion was a piece of the original shadow tent signed by Mac King- How therapeutic was it doing that part of the project, it was very symbolic of the whole portion idea...**

That was a top 10 CM moment for sure – Mac is a great guy and we had a lot of fun doing that with him

but we did it in between his shows in his dressing room. We reflected on the whole journey remembering the first time we showed the tent to Mac and then there we were cutting it up to share with all the people that made this possible. It was super cool.

**You are having a wrap up party for portion owners, as well you have**



**produced new items and included them in the portions (such things as portion holder water bottles, customized Christmas stocking pandora bags, etc). What is your reasoning behind all the extras...**

Well part of our business model/ mission statement with CM was/ is to always give them more than they expect and specifically we always put an extra something in every shipment, and we did birthday cards and Holiday gifts and we did not want that to end until the very, very end. I will admit it is a bit tougher now that we are on a fixed income (we could justify the cost of the extras before because I knew that goodwill would result in more sales in the future). I am pretty sure those water bottles will not be bringing in anymore sales. But we committed ourselves to those things from the beginning – we were overwhelmed with the success (sold out in three days) and we wanted to show our appreciation – so we mapped out a few surprises

(like the jumbo deck and Pandora stocking and Mac King piece) and then we planned other things like the bonus cards, and promotional items (water bottle, booklet, puzzle) and we committed to just over \$10,000 in thank you gifts – we set that money aside so we would not be tempted to use it on a trip to Australia.

**What is next for Brian and Rebekah?**

We still hope every day for that phone call saying come get your baby. Part of closing CM was so we could start the adoption process. We did all the paperwork and got approved shortly after we sent out the first box (we were out of debt and had some steady income) We are adopting through an agency that lets the birth mothers choose where the child goes – so we could have been selected the next day or it could still be 5 years from now – the average wait is just over 2 years. So we wait and hope but meanwhile we pursue other adventures- Rebekah wrote a children's book, I am working on some non-magic products that you may see on Kickstarter someday and we travel and enjoy each other – we really do love each other A LOT and as much as we have tough moments when we wish we had little ones to drive us crazy – we mostly count our blessings that we have each other to drive crazy.

# THE MAGIC OF OS!

The 1st International Magic Festival "Magic Os



BY LEE ALEX



"MagicOs" is the brainchild of convention founder and promoter, Croatian magician, Saša Gerber. Sasa is president of the Croatian magic association "MagicOs" The convention evolved from a wish to organize a gathering for magicians, but soon it developed into a festival of magic with all-day activities. The City of Osijek recognised and supported this project and it was evident even before my arrival to Osijek in East Croatia that there

was a media buzz about the arrival of magicians to the town, the fourth largest in Croatia. I was contacted by a local newspaper to give an email interview, and Sasa's Facebook was full of newspaper articles relating to the event, and photos around the town of posters promoting the International Gala show, an event open to the public.

I flew in to Zagreb early morning from Istanbul and was greeted by

local magician Vladimir Stimac and his Thai wife Pattama. Vladimir and Pattama are always busy entertaining the children of Croatia with magic, face-painting and balloons. It was encouraging to learn that it is possible to make a living from magic in this country, and throughout the day Vladimir's phone barely stopped ringing with various customer enquiries for future events. After being treated to lunch in a local restaurant in the old town of Zagreb (a beautiful city I have visited on several occasions before, whose streets are lined with coffee shops, literally hundreds of them!) we travelled by car to Osijek, a journey which took just over two hours on a flat, open highway.

We were greeted in Osijek by a small entourage composing of Marina,

*Christoph Borer performs in the gala show*



Sasa's partner who spoke perfect English and helped with the organization for the convention, another Sasa, visiting from Germany, and Sasa Gerber himself. One thing I have to say about the Croatians is they are a very open and friendly race, who certainly know how to enjoy themselves. Hospitality is their forte.

I was checked in to my hotel, a quaint establishment in the centre of the town and had time to relax before our meeting in the early evening. The hotel was located near the cathedral of St. Peter and Paul, and I was reminded of that every fifteen minutes as the bells chimed. Luckily it also reminded me to change the clock on my mobile phone to local time, otherwise I would have been an hour early for everything!

Dinner had been arranged in a traditional restaurant "Slavonska Kuca" situated in the old town known as "Tvrđa" or "citadel". I love to try local specialities whenever I visit a new place, and tonight was no exception. We were presented with a communal meal in a small cauldron.



Known as "fish paprikash" the dish is something like a gulash made with carp. Homemade noodles completed the soup like dinner, and all guests had seconds, in some cases third helpings, washed down with local wine and "rakija" (a Croatian spirit), this one made with honey ("medica")!

After dinner it was straight on to the local radio for an interview to promote the magic festival on a culture and entertainment programme. This promotion was most important to

Sasa Gerber, as in his own words in general magic is not viewed very highly in general in Croatia:

"The magic scene in Croatia is not much developed, but there are people who strive to make magic alive and make changes. I think that people in the past few years gained the impression that magic is only for children, for children's parties and birthdays. People still don't realize that magic is a form of art, and that we magicians devote our lifetime to study magic, to practice it and to perfect it." (sic.)

The interview at the radio station lasted a good twenty minutes. The interviewers were enthusiastic and interested to hear about the magic convention and magic in general. Fuelled by honey brandy and wine, both Sasa and I were relaxed and the conversation flowed at ease.



After a stroll around the town and a stop for ice-cream, everyone retired to bed, satisfied and content. The following morning I was woken by the chimes of the cathedral and after a hearty breakfast was set for a day of sightseeing. The weather was perfect and Sasa was praying that the weather would continue into the weekend...

Osijek has many places of interest and due to various cultures, conquests and a colorful history there are many tales and legends to be discovered. Of course our walks were interspersed with obligatory coffee breaks! Lunch was followed by a visit to a nearby pension which produces its own fruit, vegetables, milk and eggs. We learnt that guests can choose which species of chicken they wish their morning egg to come from! In the evening we were joined by other visiting magicians taking part in the convention from Switzerland, Slovenia and Serbia. Now with other conjurers amongst us I realized that the tourist part of my trip had ended and it was time to turn my attention to the convention in hand. Saturday morning I was taken to the convention which was to take place in the cinema complex of a shopping mall. Various cinemas had



been assigned to the convention, the largest one seating 300 people, which would house the gala show later that evening. A smaller cinema had been allocated for the four lectures throughout the day. I was first to lecture and despite a considerably early start the crowd of about 40 magicians from several countries was enthusiastic to get into the full swing of a magic convention. The advantage of the cinema was the tiered seating which was well suited to performing a lecture, giving everyone a great view and in comfortable seats. Three other lectures were scheduled for the day: Christoph Borer from Switzerland demonstrated various mental effects from his own repertoire which could easily be adapted to different situations for a variety of audiences. The methods were subtle and clear, signs of a professional, working magician. Vladimir Mikek from Slovenia presented a lot of effects which could be performed for cabaret or close-up. Once again the professionalism was evident in this lecture and there were effects for all kinds of performers, so I am sure that everyone learnt something from the performance. The final lecture of the day was by Bobby Nesh from Serbia. Unfortunately I missed this lecture as I had moved to the big room by this time in preparation for the evening gala show.



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# A FIRST GOOD IMPRESSION

The most important moment in any show is the first one.

There is an old saying that says that you never get a second chance to make a first impression, so you need to get it right or you may as well not do it at all. This raises a question - how do you make a good first impression? And what do you do when it all goes badly wrong?

Well let's start by doing a little exercise. You are just about to perform, and for the purpose of this exercise it could be a children's show, a close-up spot, or where-ever you usually perform. Put yourself there now. OK, what is the first thing you are going to do or say?

Now imagine something like the following happens...

Close-up - Your props are all set, your pockets are loaded, you are ready to go. You have chosen your first table (always the hardest) and as you walk up and open your mouth to deliver your opening line you discover you have mis-timed it perfectly. You have arrived at the same moment as a tray of drinks. You press on and strike up the old fire wallet, a spectator over reacts bumping into the waiter who promptly deposits the drinks into the laps of your audience.

Children's show - The little darlings have just sat down and there has been a bit of interaction as they arrived. You are feeling good and about to crack into your schtick. The kids are eating ice cream (I know, you told the mother that food and a show was a bad idea but would she listen?) One of the kids looks down to see something moving on her treat and lets out the cry 'WASP!' Chaos ensues!

Stage show - the cards and coins are loaded, the emcee has just introduced you, your music is playing. As you walk on you see a smiling face as he walks towards you and gives you a tight 'good luck' show-biz hug before you start the show. Cards and coins tumble from their holders, doves fly out of their secret pockets and the fiasco begins.

There is another old saying that tells us that anything that can go wrong will go wrong and if this

FROM THE DESK OF KEITH FIELDS



was you, you have just totally blown your chance of a good first impression, or more accurately someone else blew it for you.

These scenarios are all pretty extreme but I am prepared to bet that they have all happened to someone, somewhere and fairly recently. And if something similar has happened to you then I would love to hear about it. Send me an email and I will exaggerate the story (for comedy purposes) and use it in a future article.

So what do you do when your first impression has been shot to pieces, apart from the obvious one of considering a new career? Well, it is at times like this that you have to learn to improvise.

How many different opening lines or opening gambits do you have? If you always say or do the same thing at the start of every show then sooner or later you are going to run into trouble. Sooner or later someone or something is going to throw you a curve ball (a baseball reference from a Brit... you're right I have never faced a curve ball and wouldn't know one if it hit me in the face, which it probably would!)

If you have seen me perform you will know that I like to improvise and play with the audience. I do have many set pieces and set routines but I also have large spaces in my show where I have no idea exactly what is going to happen next. Problems like those listed above are a lot worse at the beginning of a show but they can happen at anytime and if you want to learn to handle them then you have to learn to let go of your set routine and go with the flow.

'I can't improvise' I hear you cry. Yes you can says I, you do it all the time, you just don't realize you are doing it. In any conversation you have no idea what you are going to say until you say it. You don't rehearse the act of buying a newspaper, you just respond to the situation as it unfolds, and that is all improvising is. reacting to whatever someone else has said or done. Learning the skill of letting go will make you a better performer.

It will also pay dividends in other ways. By being prepared to step away from your normal way of doing something you will find a new way of doing it. Many of the best and funniest lines in my act have come about from a moment of improvisation followed by a flash of inspiration (I would say genius but I am to humble).

So next time you are about to launch into a trick, do something different. Go with the flow and see what happens. You never know you might just have a moment of genius.

\*\*\*\*



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# THE SECRET TO SORCERER'S SAFARI'S SUCCESS

## Nicole Lee

**F**ifteen years ago, armed only with the idea of making magic more accessible to kids who want to learn magic, "Magic Mike" Segal opened the doors to Sorcerers Safari magic camp. Flash forward and see how far Segal's magic camp has come from its humble beginnings. Today Sorcerers Safari is Canada's only sleep away magic camp hosting, up to 150 campers a year. What is the secret to this Canadian magic camp success story? I spent 24 hours at camp this summer and here's what I discovered.

### LOCATION

For the last ten years Sorcerers Safari has been located in the

picturesque Haliburton Highlands in central Ontario, at Camp White Pine. The air was fresh, the private lake was inviting and the cabins were spacious. The camp boasts a fantastic Mess Hall and has facilities for things like swimming, miniature golf, and volleyball for campers to enjoy.

The location is the perfect place to "wash away the city" as Segal put it. He believes the natural setting is integral to the camp's success. "Removed from their day-to-day distractions, everyone is able to relate to each other in a different way than would otherwise be possible," observed Segal. Classes Each day, campers participated

in card or coin classes. In beginner card classes campers learned the patter and workings of simple scripted routines. Techniques such as the biddle grip, were taught. Handling tips are passed along, like placing a deck on top of a card box to make it easier to pick up with one hand. During beginner coin classes, basic coin sleights such as The French Drop were introduced. Beginner classes had children of all ages, including many of the younger campers. For the younger children especially, this type of instructor lead teaching is often more effective than self-directed learning via books and DVDs.

There was an increase in the average age in the intermediate card and coin classes. More advanced techniques and presentations are demonstrated and absorbed. Campers are eager to show their skills to their peers. The advantages of learning in this setting were made obvious when during a coin class Steven Kline said, "Here's what people do wrong." He showed an open empty palm where in the spectator's mind a coin should have been. Kline, an instructor at Sorcerers Safari for eleven years, quickly followed with "And here's how to fix it." He then shaped his hands to conceal the secret of the coinless hand. Lee Asher had the campers in the advanced card workshop present routines of their choice. Then the spectators offer their comments and impressions. While method and technique were sometimes discussed, the bulk of the conversations focused on artistic presentation, pacing, respecting the moments, and upping the stakes of the effect. "What can you do to increase the impact of the divination?" encouraged Asher. In addition to providing a fabulous way for the campers to workshop and get feedback on their routines, Asher was also teaching the valuable skill of respectfully offering and responding to constructive criticism. To one of the participants, Asher said, "It's awesome the way the originator did it. Now make it yours, which can only make it more awesome." He finished the session with this thought, "You need the feedback of others to finesse your performance. You can't finesse it at home by yourself."

Ryan Heiner, an 18 year old restaurant magician from Wisconsin, found his tips increase significantly after implementing suggestions made by Shawn Farquhar at camp in 2010. Heiner now pays his own

way for camp. At the "Pinetages Theatre" Kline hosted one of many Performance Workshops. At these sessions, campers perform on stage in front of their peers. The focus of this particular session was general presentation skills, something common to the stage, close-up and restaurant performer. Volunteers were asked to enter stage right, walk down stage, and address the audience with their name and the generic opening remark: "You're in for a fantastic show!" Campers took to the stage and were provided with observations about their posture, articulation, as well as physical and verbal habits. Positive comments flowed from their peers and suggestions for improvement were politely presented. Not only do the campers get to learn from each other, but they also experience being on both sides of a peer review. In addition they are better able to appreciate an audience's point of view as it relates to their own performance.

Respect is a common thread throughout the camp experience. Kline offered that, "Everyone is deserving of your respect." Respect for one's peers, naturally. Also important is respect for all of the people that support you, including the sound technician and the janitor at the community centre where you're performing.

On top of the mandatory classes, campers are had an opportunity to take advantage of a wide breadth of electives such as juggling, show tech (lighting and sound), straight jacket escape, dancing cane, marketing, balloon twisting, linking rings and many more!

With all of these fabulous classes and electives, one could get the impression that Sorcerers Safari is structured to churn out professional magicians. "Camp isn't about being a magician," insisted Segal. Sorcerers Safari helps young people "appreciate magic as a performance art. It helps develop public speaking skills, problem solving skills, critiquing skills. It gives them the skills to be a discerning audience for theatre," said Segal. At magic camp, self-confidence is boosted every time camp-



ers master something new. He believes that being at a sleep away camp provides children with a huge opportunity for personal growth and independence, while being in a safe and nurturing environment.

## PEOPLE

The atmosphere at camp was very inclusive. I went to magic camp expecting to be a spectator looking in at the events. Instead, I felt like I belonged there just as much as the campers, counsellors and instructors. Apparently you can't be an outsider looking in at magic camp. You can only be a part of magic camp. Kline encouraged campers to maximize their learning by asking questions. "The worst question is the one you don't ask," he advised. And it was true. At magic camp, no question was too big or too small. Every voice was heard. Kline said, "Every professional that's here is an open book." He reiterated the oft heard

refrain that at Sorcerers Safari "egos are checked at the front gate."

A genuine camaraderie develops among campers, among instructors, and between campers and instructors. In a profession where who you know is often as important as what you know, Segal thinks that the opportunity for campers to create a rapport with the staff, gives the campers a tremendous leg up on networking. Alumnus Rosemary Reid said, "My first true magic teachers are people who still attend camp, and many of my jobs as an adult have come from the connections I made at camp."

## CAMPERS

When asked if it's hard for new comers to feel at home at a camp that boasts an impressive return rate – roughly 70 percent of this year's campers were returning campers – nine year counsellor Jeff Hinchliffe said, "by the second day, everyone

is a part of camp." He also said that there is "very little homesickness and there have never been any major discipline issues."

The first timers said that everyone is welcoming and they quickly made new friends. On the bus ride up to camp, everyone showed each other magic they'd learned or improved on since last summer. The enthusiasm was infectious. This year, campers came from across Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom. Camp alumni have come from as far away as Spain, France, Germany and Japan.

The campers were personable, passionate, energetic sponges for information. Take for example thirteen year old "Garnett The Great" Schmidt from Toronto. A three year camp veteran, Schmidt didn't waste any time once he identified me as an untapped audience. He





approached with confidence and earnestly showed me a wonderful three card monte routine freshly mastered from his elective with Trevor Watters. His presentation was charming and his technique was solid. It is no surprise that Schmidt has been pursuing magic as a business for three years now.

One of the things campers universally love about Sorcerers Safari is that it brings together other young people with whom they can share their interest in magic. Not all cities have a magic club, let alone one that encourages youth members. Here the campers are grouped into cabins based on their ages and experience.

In the girls' cabin there was a wider range in age (10 to 17 years), because of the smaller percentage of girls at camp. What they lacked in numbers, however, they made up for in their dedication to Sorcerers Safari. Of the nine girls, all but one

was a repeat camper. Each of the other girls has spent between three and ten years at magic camp. While they were aware they are in the minority at camp, none of the girls bought into the notion that magic is a masculine art form. The cabin was unanimous. If you're a girl and you like to do magic, "Just do it!" "Since I live in Alberta, Sorcerers Safari provided me a great opportunity to meet magicians from Ontario. I made many friends at camp and stay in touch with many of those magicians to this day." -- Sheldon Casavant

Alumnus Rosemary Reid had a fabulous idea for a new camp-wide activity. This year they did the first ever Sorcerers Safari single-take lip dub to the song "Magic" by B.o.B featuring Rivers Cummo. (A lip dub is a video that features one or more people lip- synching to a song. The song is then dubbed over the video.) The youthful exuberance for both the project and magic is

clearly evident in the video filmed by Mark Baluk, magician and third year York University film student. (The video has been viewed over 8000 times and can be found on Sorcerers Safari YouTube channel <http://www.youtube.com/user/sorcererssafari>)

Upon viewing the lip dub, Penn Jillette tweeted, "This is so wonderful. It made me cry." Teller had this to say, "Things that are sweet and joyful often leave me choked up and teary-eyed. Penn sent me this magic camp lip dub ..."

#### STAFF

Sorcerers Safari was bursting with skilled instructors who are who are beyond passionate about magic. This year's line up included: Asher, Kline, Hinchliffe, Watters, Dick Joiner, Eric LeClerc, Mike D'Urzo, Shawn Farquhar, Eric LeClerc, Chris Pilsworth, David Mitchell, Ben Train, Dan Weibe, Craig Douglas, Jason Palter, Wayne Houchin, Mike D'Urzo,

Chad Juros, Mark Chalmers, Carey Lauder, Eric Jones (this year's special guest) and many more!

"It [Sorcerers Safari] enabled me to be confident, to meet professionals in my field (friends too!). It allowed me to believe in myself that this is something I could do every single day for the rest of my life."

--Keith Brown

Counsellors and instructors alike volunteer their time and pay their own way to magic camp. Many of them have been known to turn down the opportunity to do shows in order to attend. Sorcerers Safari is a not-for-profit organization which runs under the umbrella of the registered Canadian charity, Magic Unlimited Theatre Productions Ontario.

While it's obvious that everyone at camp has a passion for the art of magic, a large part of what makes the camp successful is that so many of the instructors also have a passion for teaching children.

For example:

- Lauder, who has taught at Sorcerers Safari for 13 years, is a Winnipeg high school teacher. He is also an executive member of the Winnipeg Society of Young Magicians (SYM) which is the youth program (7-16yo) for the Society of American Magicians. He's been involved with the SYM for 17 years.
- Weibe, also from Winnipeg, has been an instructor with Sorcerers Safari for three years and "would come back in a flash." His son Graham spent seven years at camp. Weibe has also been an instructor with the Winnipeg SYM for 10 years.
- A ten year veteran of magic camp, Douglas from Toronto also teaches with "Scientists in Schools," and taught in over 120 schools last year. Douglas' children have each spent eleven years at camp.
- LeClerc, an Ottawa area magician, is in his seventh year of organizing summer day camp magic lessons for Ottawa area children. This was LeClerc's second year of instructing at Sorcerers Safari.
- Hinchliffe and Segal also teach magic in a summer day camp setting throughout the Greater Toronto Area. In addition, Hinchliffe can also be found teaching card clinic classes out of a local magic shop.

## ENTERTAINMENT

Each night campers were treated to a show by instructors, counsellors and guest performers at the Pinetages Theatre. The show I saw had the tech flawlessly run by by Asher and Kline. The line-up show-



### MIKE SEGAL

Opened the doors over 15 years ago.

cased Segal, Jones, Greg Frewin (assisted by the bound and gagged Houchin), Douglas, and was closed by Trevor and Lorena Watters.

On the final night at camp, it's the campers' turn to dazzle the audience with what they'd learned and polished during the week. The entire show is camper run, including the emcees, tech (light and sound), and stagehands. Running their own show demands leadership skills, peer trust, peer respect and is the highlight for many at camp. Experiences like this are tremendous confidence builders.

## NON-MAGIC ACTIVITIES

It's not all cards, coins and illusion at magic camp. After breakfast campers participated in a camp stretch prior to a camp run. After lunch there were camp-wide activities held such as "Capture The Flag" and "Survivor." "Field activities give kids a chance to do non-magic things with magic 'legends'" said Juros, a second year as counsellor. "This helps to foster a relationship outside of the traditional student-teacher role." Mid-afternoon, there was unstructured "free time" where campers can enjoy the many outdoor amenities that Camp White Pine has to offer. During these breaks, many campers continued to work on their magic or



seized opportunities to ask questions of the instructors. It wasn't unusual to find Farquhar holding court with campers looking for tips on flourishes and forces, LeClerc bringing Rocky Raccoon to life on the beach, campers juggling, Asher rocking his Continental Divide, and other campers showing each other what they learned during their electives.

There were many non-magic traditions to look forward to such as before show games, the dance, Gavin's Beach Party (formerly Steven Kline's Beach Party) and the Polar Bear Swim. Everyone wants to return to camp next year. Life-long friendships are formed at Sorcerers Safari.

"My best friends in life are those that I met at camp. As a kid who didn't quite fit in when I was younger, magic camp was a second family where I was accepted each year no matter what awkward adolescent phase I was going through." – Rosemary Reid

One question, however, proved difficult for campers to answer. I fished for dirt asking, "What don't you like about magic camp?" The campers looked at me completely dumbfounded. No one has anything bad to say about magic camp. A handful of campers took a few moments to dig deep. They all gave me the same response: "It's too short."

## CONCLUSIONS

Back to the original question: "What is the secret to this Canadian magic camp success story?"

There is no one single thing that makes Sorcerers Safari so successful. As Segal often said, "it is more than the sum of its parts." And he's right. He's created, seemingly by alchemy, a unique opportunity for young magic enthusiasts to learn from and network with, professionals who are open and approachable. When asked how he came by this elusive recipe, a humble Segal said, "I'm totally amazed. This is the best trick I have ever pulled off in my life."

Farquhar has one outstanding question: "When's magic camp for adults?"

[SIDEBAR]

In their own words:

Given the chance to talk about their experiences at Sorcerers Safari, here's a smattering of what staff and campers had to say:

- "[Sorcerers Safari has a] different atmosphere than any other social group" said 15 year old Rob Lewin who is from Thornhill. "It's a life changing experience. It's nice to spend time with people here who are just like me." This was Lewin's sixth year at magic camp. He was recently accepted into the Toronto Second City conservatory."
- Hinchliffe, when asked what keeps bringing him

back replied "what doesn't? The location out of the city is beautiful. Being with kids passionate about magic reminds me of myself when I was a kid. It truly is a level playing field where everyone is treated as an equal. The staff and instructors are equally as passionate as the campers. Everyone knows why they are here."

- LeClerc said, "There's a synergistic effect of the energy of the campers with the energy of the instructors that leads to a really great overall energy." He finds the experience personally rewarding. What does he love about camp? "Seeing kids return having mastered skills they learned last summer," enthused LeClerc.
- Seventeen year old Matt Williamson came to Sorcerers Safari as the 2010 winner of the Dr. Jeffrey Jay Memorial Scholarship. "Camp lets kids share skills and be rewarded for their efforts," said Williamson. "It shows kids where to find courage, strength and knowledge." The staff and the nurturing envi-

ronment brought him back this year.

- First time attendees and scholarship winners 12 year old Jack Grady from Ohio (winner of the Dr. Jeffrey Jay Memorial Scholarship) and 13 year old Mario Seki from California (SAM winner) both said that camp exceeded their expectations. "The people are awesome," said Grady. "It's nice to be learning with people my same age. I knew I was going to have fun. I didn't know I was going to learn so much!" Seki concurred, "The people are awesome. Professionals are teaching their own effects to kids! This wouldn't happen anywhere else."
- Asher, in his eleventh consecutive year as staff, thinks that one of the best things about magic camp is "Being able to immerse yourself into an environment designed to help improve your performance, technique, and showmanship skills." In his opinion, Sorcerers Safari is "The World's Premiere Magic

Camp." What kind of impact has Sorcerers Safari had on his life? Asher beamed, "I met my wife at Sorcerers Safari Magic Camp." Chad Juros, a full time college student from New Jersey is spending his sixth year at camp. He said, "[he] loves being with kids who are so excited about magic. It [Sorcerers Safari] is a very nurturing environment that fosters personal growth and minimizes competition between campers while emphasizing peer respect." Juros is also the founder of the "Spread the Magic Foundation" whose mission is "to spread hope and inspiration to children battling cancer through the power of magic."

**Sorcerers Safari Alumni:**

Bilal Rajan (2004-2005):

- A UNICEF Canada Child Representative since 2005.

Nathaniel Rankin (2002):

- Recently performed in "Cirque Starlight" touring Switzerland for six



months with over 180 shows.

Scott Hammel (2001 CIT, returned as staff):

- A motivational speaker and world record holder for the "World's Highest Suspension Straight Jacket Escape."

Daniel Steep (2007):

- Recently performed his "Agri-Kidabra" show four times daily through the eighteen day run of the Canadian National Exhibition

Sheldon Casavant (2003, counsellor in 2004 and 2007)

- Selected to perform at the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver and author of the illustrated children's book, "Morton the Magician and His Magnificent Magic Show."

Rosemary Reid (2001-2009, 2010 staff)

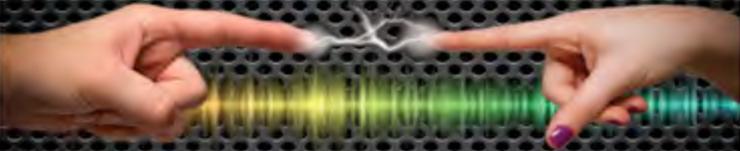
- Won grand prize in "2010 Dalhousie's Got Talent."

Keith Brown, 19yo (2006 – 2009 CIT; counsellor in 2010)

- Winner of the 2011 London (Ontario) Fringe Impresario (The Patron's Pick) award. Currently studying Communications in Jönköping Sweden (part of a Dramatic Art & Communications double major).



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# Subbed

## Peter Loughran



As many of you in the industry may know, I used to perform full time in my late teens and early twenties, but in the past decade I took a break from performing and focused more on building and creating magic/illusions through my company Master of Illusions Entertainment. However there is a part of me inside that still craves the stage. So a couple of years ago, I decided I would take my time, and begin to build a new stage show with all new illusions, and featuring a concept for illusion shows that has never been done before. Unfortunately I am not here to discuss that. But there is one idea that I am working with for my show that I am willing to share.

While I may be using a different illusion in my show, this idea can be applied to a more common illusion which many magicians may already own or are very familiar with. That illusion is the substitution trunk, made famous by the late Harry Houdini. The effect behind the illusion is to lock and shackle the performer inside a bag and then locked inside a wooden crate. The assistant stands on top, pulls up a 4 sided screen and counts to three, dropping the screen and the magician is now seen free and on top of the trunk. The assistant is now locked inside the bag and crate.

This is also known as the metamorphosis illusion. I personally prefer the wooden style crate as it looks more like an un-gimmicked magician's trunk or magic box. The wooden crate style to me looks more genuine, and I would use that for my idea I am going to share.

The idea is simple, but you will need the trap to be a locking type, so that the secret of the illusion cannot be discovered when the crate is inspected. But basically in the lobby, the trunk has its lid hinged open and is on display before the show. As people enter the theater, they see the trunk (the very same trunk or crate that will be used live on stage that night). The trunk is roped off, but there is an attendant there

with a camera and a marker. As people enter the theater they are offered the unique chance to do three things:

1). The person can get their picture taken standing inside the trunk with in handcuffs or another type of prop. (This is great PR and it is also recommended that you have a banner behind the trunk with your website or contact info, Name of the show, and the name of the illusion (for example "The Trunk of Death" hehe). This way the photo will not only act as a keepsake but also as a living business card for you and your show.

2). They get to thoroughly inspect the crate or trunk and will later make the illusion performed on stage that much more impossible to these guests.

3). They get to sign the trunk anywhere they like in a small 1 or 2 inch square space. This also legitimizes the trunk that it is the same once they got to inspect, is in fact the one you will be using on stage. This also gives people the sense that their name or message will live on and tour other cities where others might see it, which



“Peter has been in the business of creating cutting edge new illusions and effects for professional performers worldwide as well as presenting spectacular illusion shows for all ages, since 1990.”

is very appealing to people, even though the signature may be removed at a later date, but more on that later.

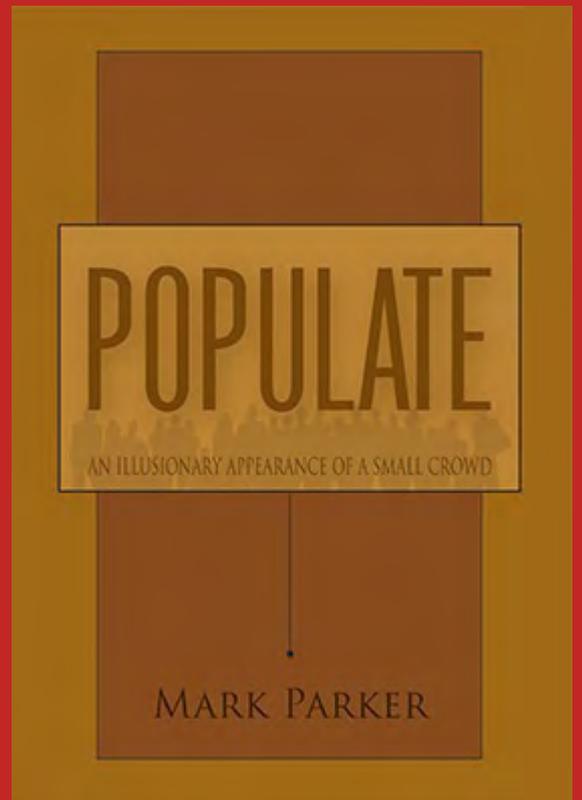
Finally you will be able to charge a small fee for this very unique opportunity you are offering your guests. So not only are you making your show or this one illusion seem more impossible, but you are giving people a very cool feeling of a small travelling legacy, you are creating a business card that is like no other, and you are also making some extra income from the show, boosting your overall profits.

When the show finally begins, and you reach the part of your show that calls for the trunk you can have a couple of assistants come from the back of the theater carrying the signature loaded trunk from the lobby right up on stage as if you have had no prior prep time with it either. This is also very theatrical for the audience to watch and seems very interactive as the trunk is carried to the stage down the center aisle. Then do the illusion and wait for the standing ovation.

Alternatively if you do not own a trunk with a locking trap, you could simply switch out the lid during the show. You would have a non gimmicked lid in the lobby prior to the show, then when the show starts your assistants that will bring the trunk to the stage, can switch the lid in the lobby while everyone is in the theater watching the show. However the underside of the lids which can be clearly seen on stage, will have to have matching signatures, which you can do yourself with bogus signatures. And when people come to sign the trunk the attendant can simply point out that the underside of the lid is already full from the previous shows, but they can sign in any of the other free spots left on the trunk. Now you can simply sand off the signatures after each tour, or if you want you can apply several fake signatures with a permanent marker then use a nice poly acrylic clear coat on the trunk, that way when people come to sign the trunk they are actually given a dry erase marker, which can be easily wiped off after each show, to allow for new signatures at the next show.

Enjoy!

Peter Loughran



**Populate - An illusionary appearance of a small crowd.**  
Introduction by Eric Olsen of EDF Magic

This is the first in a series of single illusion publications by renowned Illusion designer Mark Parker, author of illusion books 'Vivify' & 4E Illusion Design. Populate is Parkers take on the Guy Jarrett 21 person cabinet.

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# TECH TALK

CARL ANDREWS

Photo above shows part of the iunlockyourmind App and next page shows Handzoff App

I am very pleased to start my column in Vanish magazine with a review of two new iPhone Apps.

The first App I am reviewing this issue is called "iUnlockYourMind" by Myke Phillips and Salah Aazedine.

**The basic effect:** A spectator is asked to unlock your iPhone. They are unable to do so after several attempts. Anytime they choose, they may stop. You then mentally send them the correct numbers. The spectator enters the numbers they feel they have received from you and successfully unlocks your iPhone. That's pretty amazing but it gets better. Without any fishing, you are able to read the specta-

tors mind and unlock their phone! Let me repeat that, you unlock their phone!

This is a mentalist dream tool. "iUnlockYourMind" allows you to secretly get information that could be used as part of pre-show work for a mentalist. While using the App, information is cleverly gathered from the spectator, and stored for later use. The App comes with 4 fully scripted routines, 3 studio performances and explanations.

My only constructive suggestion is that the instructions could have been more clear. The video tutorials were shot at a distance with one camera and no

screenshots. I had to go back and forth several times between reading, watching and then reading again to understand how it worked. However, it was worth the time it took to learn. There is one handling on the video that is not yet available in the App. Myke informed me it will be in the next update. It is good to know that because the method I am referring to makes for an even more completely baffling, hands-off, routine! "iUnlockYourMind" is easy to perform, it does not appear that an App is running when you use it and there are several custom options you can choose in the settings. For the mentalist this is an incredible real world professional tool!

I find it very helpful that Myke provides a Facebook group where users can share tips and ideas. I am pleased that "iUnlockYourMind" is offered at a more expensive price point. A lot of work goes into development and the price helps keep it out of the hands of the mere curious. The cost is \$45.99US in the App store and well worth it! I expect to use this App often, I think you will too. Highly Recommended!

The second App for review is "HandzOFF" by Salah Aazedine. This was created by the same programmer that worked with Myke Phillips on "iUnlockYourMind".

"HandzOff" comes with 3 routines and a two different methods. The first method is touch and slide, where you give the App the needed info in one secret touch. The second method is hands-off. In this method, once you introduce your iPhone, you don't touch it again. This hands-off method is incredibly clever and of course

from the spectators point of view, simply mind-boggling!

Let me describe the routines:  
**Social Prediction:** A card is freely chosen by the spectator. The magician says he posted a prediction on his Facebook wall. The spectator logs in and finds a picture of his chosen card. The effect can be performed using any social network.

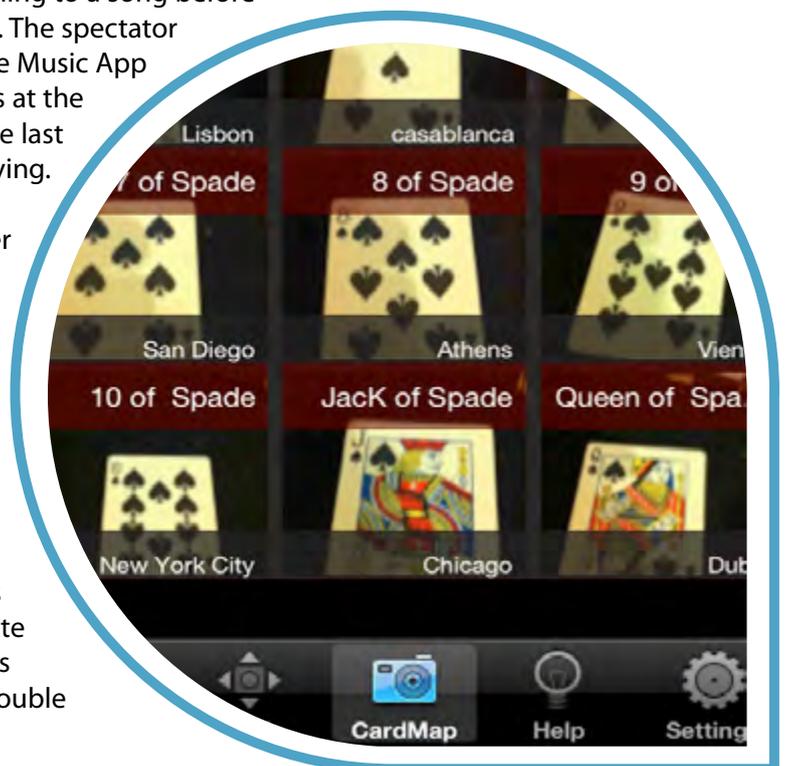
**Song Prediction:** The spectator names any card in the deck. The magician spreads a deck of cards face up and the card is pushed forward. To prove the magician knew what card would be named, he removes his iPhone and hands it to the spectator. The spectator is told a photo was taken of one card before they met.

The spectator opens the Photos App and there is a photo of their freely named card! The magician then shows the backs of the cards all have a different song title written on them. He says he was listening to a song before they met. The spectator opens the Music App and looks at the title of the last song playing. When he turns over his card, that is the song title written on the back! This routine is my favorite and packs a great double punch!

**Places Prediction:** has a deck of cards displayed with a famous city written on the back of each card. After the spectator freely selects a card (no force), they are asked to open the Maps App to see a pin has been dropped on a city. It is the same city written on the back of the selected card. Again for a kicker, the performer asks them to open the Photos App and see their card photo.

The effect can also be performed without a deck of cards by having the spectator verbally name a card. You don't touch the iPhone after handing it to the spectator and the named card appears in the photo album, amazing!

There are already a lot of Apps on the market that do card tricks. Even so, this one uses a nice hands-off approach and I recommend it! Priced at only \$19.99US on the App store.





## THE JOLLY JESTER

# STEVE SPILL

Making magic at The Jolly Jester in Aspen was seasonal work. Sure, we had local patrons, but its survival was tourist dependent. Winter and summer we had tourists... spring and fall The Jester would close for six to eight weeks during the off seasons.

I spent spring 1976 on a coast to coast busking tour with my friend Johnny Fox. Busking is thought of as a fancy word for street performing, but by definition, it also includes indoor hat passing. We traveled in Fox's vintage auto which was in constant need of repair. Today Johnny drives fine late model vehicles, but he is still working the street... in a protected environment. He is a successful sword swallower on Ye Olde Renaissance Faire circuit. In 1976 he wasn't hanging with craft vendors, wearing Friar Tuck costumes, speaking like Shakespeare, or swallowing swords.

Fox was, however, a talented sleight-of-hander specializing in coin tricks, who liked performing outdoors in the daytime. I specialized in sleight-of-hand with playing cards and preferred performing indoors in the evening. When Johnny was performing on busy street corners... I was available to keep a lookout for the cops, or the juggler who



seemed to think the corner belonged to him. At night, when I performed in bars, Fox was available to drink cocktails. We played with cards and coins morning, noon, and night. That's all we did, usually I fell asleep with a deck of cards in my hands.

The South seemed to work best for us... Austin, New Orleans, Memphis, Key West; these were some of the cit-

ies where we found success. But we worked everywhere on both sides and in between. We did our magic commando style... which meant we kinda assaulted people with our tricks, or at least I did. I walked into a crowded bar, often connected to a restaurant with a long dinner wait, or a tavern full of construction workers, or a disco... went right up to a table, or the bar, interrupted conversation with a fan of cards, "reach in and grab one."

If someone grabbed a card I was on my way... "show everyone your card, I won't look, I've seen the trick before..." The selected card disappeared, floated, changed to another card or... at the time I was a walking encyclopedia of card tricks. Sometimes they just kept the card, or tore it up, but I wasn't deterred, I just went somewhere else.

Commando style... no introduction, no permission, just right into the routine. If I was able to complete that first trick and got a decent response, I continued for five or ten minutes... then held out my hat and said, "help me get a room tonight." When I'd successfully entertained a little group of folks, others in the vicinity would notice and want to have fun too.

At times I'd get kicked out of places by managers or bartenders. But it didn't matter. We never spent more than a few days anywhere. It was tonight and then tomorrow would be today again. New day, new locale, and

we never got tired of it. It was exhilarating. It was life magnified. We had no other cares or interests besides busking, and our lives were scheduled around it.

Most people were extraordinarily generous. Almost everywhere we stopped to do a show someone offered us a place to stay, food, drinks, money... they knew we didn't have much money, but it wasn't because they thought we were poor that they were so kind... it was because they enjoyed our tricks, liked talking to free spirits, and above all, because they wanted to offer tokens of friendship to traveling strangers.

Here's one of a million examples... a manager in Atlanta came up to the table, watched my tricks, "don't show your face around here again," and kicked me out. The six people I was amusing left with us and took Johnny and me out to dinner.

The flip side of the coin... I had to talk loud to be heard over the disco beat, but the guys and gals in Nashville seemed to be enjoying my show. I held out my hat and ... suddenly lit cigarette butts were flicked at me from an adjacent table. Orange embers everywhere... my hat smoldered as the big fellows next door were laughing at their handiwork.

The guys I'd entertained didn't take kindly to this. Words were traded, the situation escalated to a fist

fight, thrown chairs, broken glass, and the club's bouncers got involved. Fox and I were able to slide out unscathed, just as the police arrived. We never found out if this was really a dispute between rival gangs or just a bunch of guys who worked at the serious business of committing felonies. I've seen some bad card tricks in my time, but never any that provoked that kind of reaction.

At a Phoenix coffee shop we spotted Fernando, he ripped a page from his sketch pad and walked the paper over to a table where an elderly woman was seated. Hardly a word passed between the two, the woman took the paper, smiled, and handed him five dollars. Fernando returned to his table and started drawing in his sketch pad... five minutes later, he walked up to Fox and handed him a piece of paper, on it was a perfectly rendered pencil sketch of Fox.

We hit it off right away. Our Latin brother was one of us... a clever busker. He didn't spend a lot of energy gathering a crowd, doing a show, or passing a hat. He leisurely drew pictures and let his talent do the talking. Fernando was a Mexican citizen who felt his talent also made him a US citizen. America felt differently.

Fernando joined our tour, temporarily. Between Arizona and Texas we were stopped at an immigration check point. Officers asked for our identification, Fox and I complied, Fernando did not. They detained him and informed us he would be deported. We were fingerprinted, photographed, and accused of smuggling an illegal alien... They let us off with a warning. "If we catch you harboring a fugitive again, we'll toss you in jail and throw away the key." It took a while for Fox to locate a good spot in San Antonio. He started working his magic at the edge of a park, at the bottom of a hill, near a busy intersection. Today, when Johnny does his sword swallowing act he can entertain hundreds at a time. In 1976, Fox was a coin man who was a master at entertaining an up close group of ten people. While Johnny was in the park making silver dollars appear and disappear at his fingertips...

I was scouting out The Riverwalk, looking for bars to return to that evening. Bars where people might appreciate sophisticated properly performed card tricks. I picked my spots, and went to meet up with Fox. As I walked down the hill toward the park, I saw a huge crowd, maybe a hundred people. As I got closer, I saw Fox making four silver dollars appear, then, one at a time, the coins became invisible. I couldn't believe the size of the crowd he'd drawn. Johnny had finally done it, the hat was gonna be huge on this one. As I got even closer, I saw that about ten people were engaged in Fox's routine. The other ninety people were looking behind Fox, across the street, at a man standing on the roof of a ten story building. It looked like he was gonna jump. Was he really gonna do it?

Everything seemed to happen in slow motion. It was dead

quiet as we watched the figure high above dive, head first, straight down. Spectators blocked my view of the landing... but I can tell you the accelerated speed of his departure from the roof to his meeting with the surface of the sidewalk produced a loud, sickening, thud. I half heard it, half felt the impact come through the earth... and I was across the street... a haunting memory. The jumper drew a huge crowd, but he didn't pass the hat.



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# WHY FEAR AND LOATHING IN THE MAGIC MARKETPLACE

## BIZZARO

Imagine you  
come up with a  
great magical  
effect ...

You work tirelessly dumping money and time into research and development. It's your signature piece. Audiences love it. You have been doing it for a decade or more.

Now imagine you get booked on TV doing said effect (or worse yet a magic convention). It seems your hard work is now fair game to any unscrupulous D-bag who lacks the moral and ethical fortitude the rest of us do. They go out and start performing it or worse yet SELLING it.

Sound familiar? It should. It happens in magic all the time.

Not only does it happen all of the time, we hear about it ALL.OF.THE.TIME. In magic we tend to have two types of theft. 1. Performance 2. Product. People who take your tricks/routines that are NOT for sale is pretty effed up. Let's step aside from all of that for a second tho'. Sweep the obvious under the rug and step into a different head space.

What I am about to say might not make me any friends but I think it needs to be said. We get down on "pirates" for copying and distributing other people's work/ product. I've even talked about it in a previous article in this very magazine. What I want to say now is not to the kids uploading the DVDs, scanning the books, and revealing methods on forums. This goes out to the ones releasing the material in the first place.

How dare you!?

I was watching a recent Penguin Live lecture and the subject of how having someone's life work put out there and then ripped off was abhorrent. Let me ask you something: Why in the hell are you releasing your life's work so cheap? Is your personal perception of your own work that low or is it something more sinister?

Magic product is released for a handful of reasons:

1. Money
2. A timestamp of creation or publication
3. To positively contribute to magic as a whole
4. Money

None of them are mutually exclusive obviously. I am sure many would say they are doing it for all of the above reasons. However when I see people complaining about money being lost from their sales you can't say that #3 on that list was EVER part of the equation.

If you are going to take something that you have spent countless hours honing thru performance and research and release it to the mass magic market at an affordable price then I have little sympathy for you when others start getting it for free. If it's something you truly regard as a highlight of your magical repertoire, then you better be selling that bad boy for a fat stack of cash.

If you truly are putting it out there to contribute or put your name on it and you find out a bunch of people are seeing it regardless of monetary compensation then you better be walking around with a huge grin on your face and not make so much as a peep about it.

I am not necessarily referring to every product released obviously. I don't mean

the impulse downloads, the one off DVDs, or any number of the effects that should be on a compilation or in lecture notes. That's all magic popcorn. It's meant to be consumed and forgot about. I am referring to the effects that at one time started as the bread and butter go to routines for some notable performers they just put out there so everyone could get their grubby mits on it.

Obviously not everyone has let their babies go so cheap. Some of them are forced to show their hand due to rip offs. However they kept the price tag high as to keep it in the working pro market and still make it worth their while. Kevin James' Bowl-a-rama and Losander's floating table come to mind. Sure they still get copied and sold on the cheap but you get what you pay for. Those guys have the right to air their grievances in my opinion. Technically so do the guys who just release magic solely to make money but I don't have a lot of tears to shed for those guys anyway.

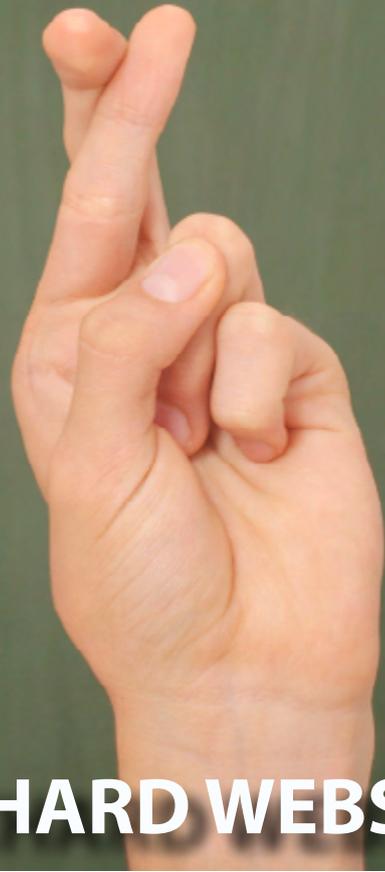
I myself obviously walk a thin line as someone who has released things into the magic market and before you send me letters asking how my high horse is doing let me clarify something. My reasons for doing so are not monetarily driven. If I could will the items into being without spending any money to make them I would give them out to people in person like Halloween candy. I like to try and release magic that has multiple uses. I know people can come up with things I never could have dreamed of because I created them for one specific use initially. My reasons would likely read like this: 2-3-1.

My point is that it kind of makes me angry to see people selling their art for so cheap. We have turned into a community of magical whores when it comes to product releases and I'd like to see that happening less. If you are going to sell something that is near and dear to your little black magical heart then ask yourself why you are doing it. If it's because you think others can benefit from it being in the market place and want to see everyone doing it then by all means sell it for a pittance. Just don't suddenly start bitching when you find it on a file sharing website later.

My art isn't cheap, why is yours?



“  
Why in the  
hell are you  
releasing  
your life's  
work so  
cheap?”



**RICHARD WEBSTER**

# IT'S BAD LUCK TO BE SUPERSTITIOUS

**The magician displays twelve business cards. On the back of each one is written the name of a lucky charm. The ones I use are: acorn, ankh, butterfly, button, cameo, white cat, coal, coin, fish, money sword, ring, and thimble. The cards are turned face down and mixed.**

"Seven has always been considered a lucky number," the magician says to a volunteer. "Would you please move seven of the cards to one side." The unselected cards are placed to one side.

Once this is done, the magician displays twelve sealed coin envelopes, and explains that they also contain the twelve lucky charms. Another spectator

chooses one of the envelopes, and the rest are put away. The magician takes the envelope, and arranges the seven face down cards in a circle, outjogging one to indicate the starting point.

"We have seven cards here," the magician says to a spectator. Please name a number between one and seven."

Assume the spectator says three. The magician pushes one card slightly out of the circle to indicate it. He counts to three, starting with the slightly outjogged card, and using the envelope to count each card. He writes a cross on the back of the card lying in number three position. He then counts another three, again drawing a cross on the third card. He continues doing this until one card remains without a cross drawn on it.

"One card remains," the magician says. "You chose which of the cards we should use," he continues, indicating a spectator. "And you decided the number that dictated the count," he continues indicating someone else. "Finally, you chose one envelope. It was a free choice, was it not?" The spectator agrees. "Let's see if luck is on our side tonight," the magician says. He turns over the one card that does not have a cross on it. It is, say, the button. The magician hands the envelope to someone to open, and she removes the card inside. It contains one word - button.

"Thank goodness for that," the magician says. "With your help, we've attracted good luck to everyone here tonight. Make the most of it!"

## METHOD

One of the business cards is marked on the front. This card has the name of your forced lucky charm written on the back. The cards are given to someone to mix and they are then placed face down on the table. The magician picks up two of the cards, one in each hand, and asks, "Left or right?" One of the cards is the force card. No matter what the volunteer says, he or she is given this card. If it's in his left hand, and the person says left, it will be given to him or her. If the person says right, the magician immediately drops the card in his right hand to the table and hands him or her the card in his left hand. Once the pattern has been created, the magician continues doing it until seven cards have been chosen.

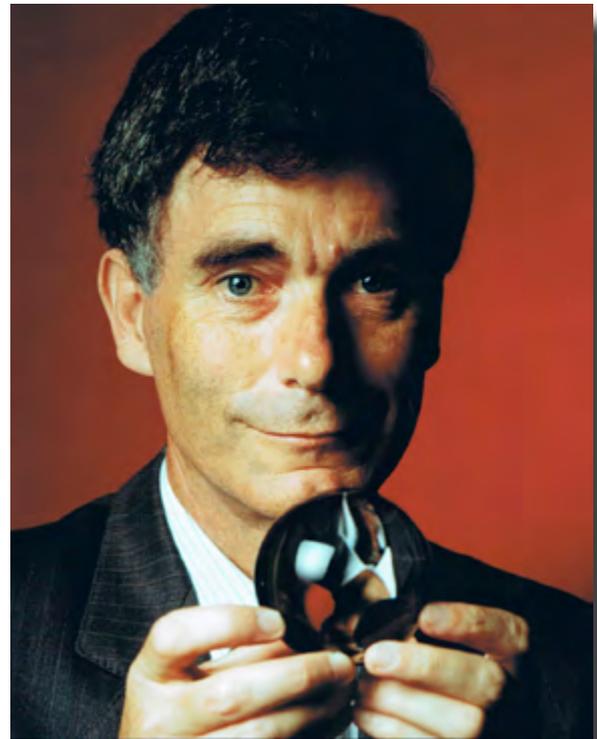
The twelve coin envelopes all contain a business card with the force lucky charm written on each one. One envelope is selected, and the magician casually pockets the rest.

A spectator is asked to name a number between one and seven. It makes no difference what number is chosen as long as it's between one and seven. The magician needs to see the marking on the force card and start with that one. He outjogs it slightly, and calls it number one as he starts counting. By going around and around in a circle, counting to whatever number was named each time, the force card will eventually be the last one left. The cards with a cross drawn on them are not discarded, and are included in all the counting. If preferred, instead of drawing a cross on them, you can turn the cards over as they are selected. This means you can use

the cards again without writing out another set of lucky charms. Sometimes, I arrange seven people in a circle, and give each of them a lucky charm card to hold. This turns it into a parlour effect, rather than close up.

## CREDITS

Jules Lenier gave me the idea of having the same prediction written in all twelve envelopes. The counting force using seven cards was originated by George Sands. I vividly remember him showing me this clever force at one of the Weerd Weekends many years ago.



# AMPLIFY YOUR SHOW WITH THESE SHOW-MUSIC ESSENTIALS

Author: MATHEW FALLON

Plenty of essays and instructions exist on the subject of using music in our shows. That is, finding or creating music that fits you, your character, your magic style and more.

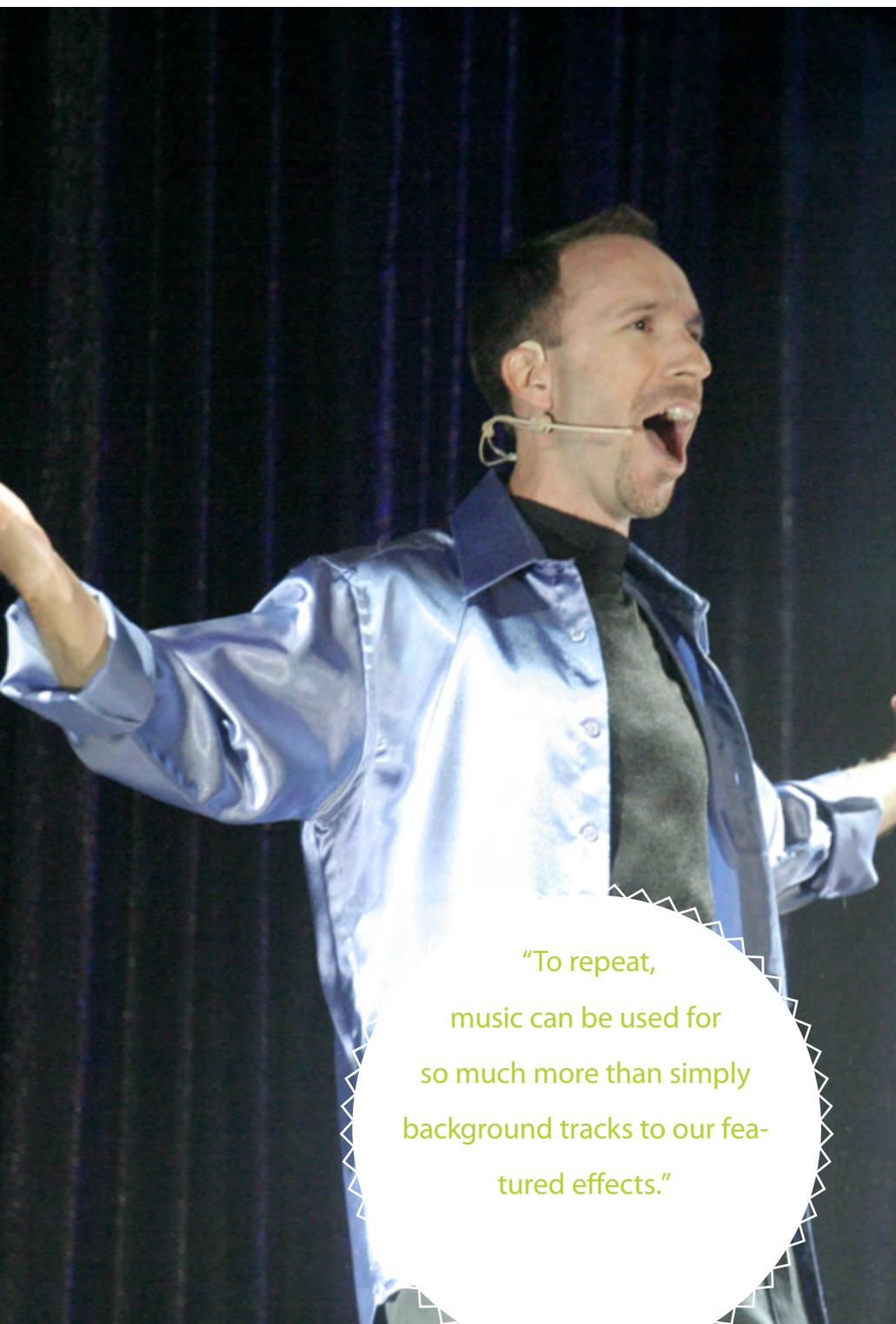
However, it's rare that we find instruction on how to use music in our shows, how to use it for the tool that it is and all that it can do to boost the production quality of our shows. Such is the aim of this article.

Music can be used for so much more than simply background tracks to our featured effects. Music can be used effectively to punctuate an effect, introduce an effect, for transitions, for misdirection, to create a relaxed / calm moment, to create a moment of tension / suspense and more.

I have always put great weight on the importance of music in my shows. I am aware of the transcending affect music

"Once audience members look a their watch, we've lost the connection we had with them, like and on-again, off-again cell phone signal."





“To repeat,  
music can be used for  
so much more than simply  
background tracks to our fea-  
tured effects.”



has upon an audience; think of a film score. Pair the right music, at the right time, with an engaging effect, moment, or line delivered and real magic occurs. The magic, illusion and aerial arts show my wife and I presented for ten years for the cruise lines was fifty-two minutes long. There were no less than twenty-nine audio cues in that show.

This was in addition to the pre-show music I hand-selected to pre-condition my audience for our show. From the audiences' view, our show flowed with ease. Oftentimes, within a compliment after our show, I was told by audience members they couldn't believe the show was over already. They'd say they were so wrapped up in the show that they didn't even think about the time. I know for a fact this positive effect was due, majorly, to the continuity we had created with the music in our show in perfect conjunction with the routing of the show itself.

We all know as entertainers that once an audience member glances at their watch, we've lost the connection we had with them, like an on-again, off-again cell phone signal. We've got to work extra hard to repair the connection with them; not impossible, but difficult and can break our flow if we put too much weight on it.

Back to the music. In theater, unless intentional, we never want the seemingly never-ending moment in which something is apparently supposed to happen. To the audience, this is that awkward moment in which they know they're watching a live event that has just experienced a hiccup; they are engaged by it but for the wrong reasons. Too many shows have moments like this that are not by accident. If a moment(s) like this exists in your show, you can easily use music as a transition, bridging gaps that are otherwise empty. Another specific example that can create the wrong kind of tension in an audience is when the entertainer goes into the audience. Sometimes the audience is thinking, “..no, not me, don't pick me..,” as they avert their gaze. Ease the potential tension,



or eliminate it entirely, with music. The moment you turn to go into the audience, a particularly perfect track plays that elevates the energy of the room versus silence that ominously blankets it with "don't pick me" tension. Play that track while entering into the audiences' space, while choosing your volunteer(s), encouraging a "big welcome as he/she/they join you onstage" and while bringing them back up onto the stage. Play this track loud and full, maintaining the high energy in the room you have built up, instructing your audio tech to ride the volume as you speak. The idea is to create an intangible yet very powerful flow. I have a very fun, upbeat track that plays as I go into the audience, looking for a volunteer for the head chopper illusion. What's really great is to see the many audience members clapping, snapping, bobbing and tapping to the beat during this necessary moment rather than sitting in tension. Help your audience to look forward to the forthcoming moments in your show.

Think through your show, moment by moment. Like a screenplay or stage play, your show outline should include all such moments and directions, i.e.,  
 "Close-up Aces" (camera, in house)  
 Music: 'track 1' fades as.....  
 I introduce myself... then... "now that you know how I play cards...I'll be in the casino at midnight..!"  
 Right into music: 'track 2'

"Prediction"  
 ...interacting with audience...  
 Revelation music: 'track 2 climax' at reading of 3rd prediction...

Note, this is not your Show Running Order or your Sound Cues for the audio tech, but your personal show notes/outline. This is the one document that details every moment you want to stage in your show. You do outline your show, don't you? If not, do it today. It is much easier than you think and pays back in big dividends, giving you a very objective view of your show.

Once outlined, you have a foundation. Even for the apparent improvisational comedy entertainer, the show is outlined. They build an outline within which they create the magical off-the-cuff moments.

With regards to your Sound Cues for your sound tech, detail the Cues to the exact moment you desire so as to create your moments, perfectly, every time.

*This:*  
 Trk 10 START\* Matthew says, "To get your ring back\*, you get to come with me!"

FADE OUT MATTHEW & LADYVOLUNTEER REACH CENTER STAGE

*Versus this:*  
 Trk 10 START Matthew says, "To get your ring back, you get to come with me!"

FADE OUT MATTHEW & LADYVOLUNTEER ARRIVE ONSTAGE

In the first version, note the use of the asterisk. The SoundTech is instructed to start the track on the moment I say the word, "back." The music comes in mid-statement, bringing an upbeat energy to the command for her to join me onstage. It's very effective. Then, the SoundTech carries the music with me and the volunteer until we reach our mark, center stage, rather than fading out too early, leaving me and the volunteer walking in silence to center stage.

To repeat, music can be used for so much more than simply background tracks to our featured effects. Music can be used effectively to punctuate an effect, introduce an effect, for transitions, for misdirection, to create a relaxed / calm moment, to create a moment of tension / suspense and more. As you dissect your show in your outline, where can you introduce music or an audio track to further polish your show, amplify its effectivity and production quality?

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(And hey, if we missed you...let us know! You'll be in the next ad!)

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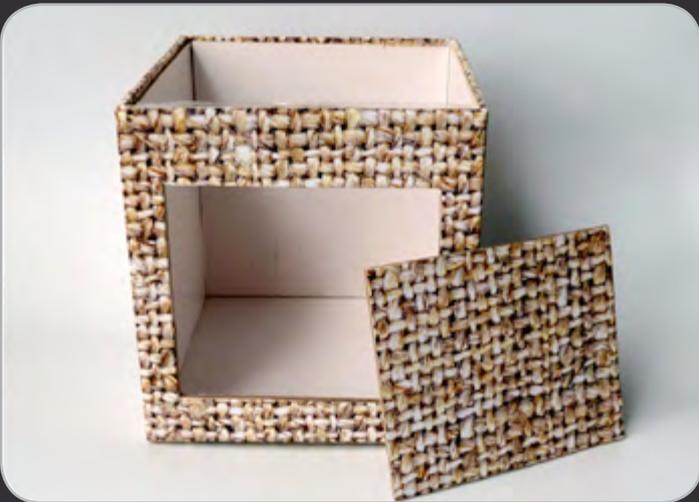




**1** OPEN THE BOX  
Inside you can show four different colored poker chips.



**2** THE SECRET IS IN THE BOX  
The Peek Box allows you to know instantly what was chosen.



**3** TO MAKE THE BOX  
Use a craft knife and cut a hole in one side.



**4** ATTACH TO A FALSE SIDE  
The cut out portion is attached to a false side which you hinge at the top.

# THE PEEK BOX BY WAYNE ROGERS

An great tool by Wayne Rogers that is an easy and effective way of getting information from an audience member.

 first made of these little boxes about 30 years ago. Back then I had to construct the whole box from scratch. Now you can run down to your local Dollar Store and pick up the basics for a couple of bucks. In fact you can buy a whole nest of boxes for the cost of a McDonald's Meal.

I used the PEEK Box in a Mental Epic routine. There will be many more applications if you think about it.

### **EFFECT**

Open a small box and show it contains 4 different coloured poker chips. PHOTO 1 Look away as a spectator removes one chip and hides it behind their back. Place the lid back on the box and give the box a shake. You name the colour.

### **THE SECRET**

If you have not looked at the photos PHOTO 2 and worked this out by now you are not a magician.

My box is 100mm cube (about 4 inches) Use a craft knife and cut a neat hole in one side. PHOTO 3 Leave a 1cm lip at the bottom. You will be attaching the cut out portion to a false side which you hinge at the top. PHOTO 4 Use a stiff, thin card for this, and line the rest of the box with the same card. Close the false side and stick the piece you cut out onto this side. My box has a woven pattern covering and when the false back closed, you can hardly notice it. PHOTO 5

Note. The hinged false side needs to finish about 0.5cm clear of the bottom of the box, or the poker chips could prevent it from opening. The small piece you cut off is glued back at the bottom of that side.

### **SHOWTIME**

This is covered under EFFECT. When offering the box for the spectator to select a chip, I usually mask the gimmicked side with the lid of the box. PHOTO 6 After you have peeked into the box PHOTO 7 and know the colour that has been removed, the rest is up to your acting skills. I like to drop the gimmicked box into another slightly larger box. PHOTO 8 I get the peek while nesting the boxes. Once nested there is nothing to see that will give away your secret.

You may find it easier to give the spectator up to 6 chips and have them choose one to place into the box. Divine the colour and give them a reading based on that chosen colour. You can find the meanings of colours from many sources. A particularly good resource is the one by Richard Webster that is included in Richard Osterlind's Whispering Die Expansion pack 1 called SPECTRUM.

Inspiration for the PEEK BOX came from Corinda's 13 Steps to Mentalism. Corinda's "Money Box" used coins and simple electronics





PETER MENNIE

# SOUND ADVICE

## MUSIC PLAYBACK

What to use, what to use. I really think there is no alternative for the working, solo performer than the iPod/iTouch/iPhone/iPad.

There I've said it. When I first wrote this booklet way back in the before time, I was against them, opting for a CD instead, but in the years since, I have changed my mind. I love them!

Here's why.

- They are small, portable and can either be battery or AC powered.
- They are PC and Mac friendly
- Editing your shows can be done on your computer, laptop or right in the iPod
- Each show can be stored as a separate "Playlist".

- You can easily create a show playlist "On The Go" when you get to the venue.
- Every soundman and/or theatre technician can patch an iPod into the house system.
- Operating them is universally understood.
- There are apps available that make running your show a lot easier and stress-free!

NOTE: Do NOT Get An iPod Nano 6th Generation or iPod Shuffl. The iPod Shuffle plays songs in random order and the 6th Gen Nano has an audible 'beep' that can't be turned off when you adjust the volume.

### SETTING UP YOUR SHOW MUSIC

I'm going to assume you a somewhat familiar with the workings of iTunes (the 'parent' program of an iPod). If not, spend a day playing around with its workings. I'm also going to assume that all of the music you want to put in your show is already uploaded on to your computer. Again, if not, start there.

Setting up your music in iTunes is a breeze. If you have imported your music (via CD) through iTunes then the

program will automatically add your songs under the 'Music' heading in your 'Library'. Click on 'Music' and you should see them all there. If your music is already on your computer (not imported through iTunes) then open the folder with your songs and simply drag and drop them into the 'Music' section of iTunes. Once you have all the music you want in iTunes, you need to create a 'Playlist'.

Here's how you do it:

1. In iTunes, create a new Playlist for each show you wish to do (Ctrl-N). Make sure to name each Playlist appropriate to the name of your show (Birthday, Stage, Charity, etc.)
2. Drag and drop the songs you want from the 'Library' to your new Playlist and arrange them in the order you need.
3. Sync your iPod and you are done.

## TRICKS WITH THE IPOD

Now that you have your music ready to go on your iPod, there are a few things you should do to set-up your iPod for optimal playback.

- Hook your iPod up to a charger. This sounds obvious but I have used my iPod on battery only and it has died part way through my show. Also, you will need a constant source of power when you do the next item.
- Set the Backlight to 'Always On' (Settings>Backlight>Always On). This will leave the display on throughout the show.
- Use the Headphone Jack of the iPod to connect directly to your mixer. Don't use an adapter that splits the 30 pin iPod plug.
- Keep the Track Name (song name), simple. One or two short words only. Any longer and they won't show up on the iPod display.
- Make a 'Cover Art' for each song in your Playlist/ Show. This will allow you to see the display from a good distance away.

### Making An 'Album Art' For Each Song

Open a graphics editing program and create a graphic that easily depicts what song is. Save the graphic as a square 'jpeg' at 2 inches by 2 inches. In iTunes, select the track and right click. Click 'Get Info' and add your new graphic as a new 'Artwork'. Save. iPods automatically display the Album Art of each song as it plays. Your new graphic is now the Album Cover for that song and can be seen from 20 feet away or more. This graphic here is for my Introduction Music and Voice-Over.

## REMOTE CONTROLS

I really think that the underlying reason for purchasing my own sound system was my desire to fully manage the music I played during my show. I knew I could get the mic and speakers I needed by putting them in my rider but to request a Sound Technician be hired, to train him/her on my music cues and then expecting them to be perfect right off the top was too stressful – and asking too much. Music and sound effects are like co-stars in my shows and I wanted to have complete control of them.

For remote iPod control there are a few options available, some of which are great, others not so great. It is important that you get an 'RF' or 'radio frequency' controller rather than an 'IR' or 'infra-red' controller. 'IR' controllers require that you point the remote directly at the iPod (like your TV remote). If you don't have a 'line-of-sight', it won't work. 'RF' controllers will work from anywhere (within 100').

A quick search on Amazon returns well over a dozen different remotes available for the iPod and each have their own pros and cons. Ultimately the choice is yours however I have found two that I have used and have never had issues with either one.

The first is the iJet iNAV Wireless Remote and as of January 2013 it is \$28 US from BuyiJet.com. The second is the Scosche ControlFREQ IPNRFCS - Wireless Car RF Remote and as of January 2013 it is \$50 US from the [www.scosche.com](http://www.scosche.com).



My preference is for the Scosche ControlFREQ. I have used this unit for over five years without any transmission issues and it is so small can palm it easily.

What I Use: Apple iTouch 4th Generation

Scosche ControlFREQ IPNRFCS

Made for any iPod with dock connector

(Note: Does not work with the iPhone 5 or iTouch 5)

- Over 100 feet wireless control
- Control track, volume, play/pause, playlist

Hint: Buy two. They can be programmed to the same frequency

Full disclosure: I am a beta-tester for the ShowCues Sound Control App. By Carl Andrews but even if I wasn't I would still use it and endorse it 100%.

I read about this amazing app in the pages of VANISH a while back and I won't ever do a show without it. You can get it through iTunes and it is only \$89.99 US

## PERIPHERALS

In addition to the sound system itself, I recommend you get a few peripherals to make life on the road a little easier.

DIRECT BOX - A direct box is a unit that musicians use to input their instrument into the mixing board at a show. Any time you will be working with a professional sound mixing company, this is what they will use to patch you in. What it does is convert a 1/4 inch 'line out' to an XLR mic cable. This also works to patch your system into a house system via a mic jack without going directly into the mixer/amp. I have used this in community centers and meeting rooms. Buy a short 'shielded' 1/4 to 1/4 cable at the same time.



WINDSCREEN - Get one for each mic you have (including headset mics). These reduce the 'pop' sounds and breath sounds in your mic. They are available in different colors.



GIM-CRACK MIC HOLDER - Do a search online and find this neat little gadget. It's an ultra-portable, mic holder that fits around your neck. Comfortable and lightweight, easily adjustable length, fits all neck sizes (men, women, teens and children), adjustable holder fits all sizes of hand-held microphones, holds the microphone securely, the black color compliments all costumes and wardrobes and the compact size fits easily into a jacket pocket. It's one of those 'just-in-case' items.



### Behringer SHARK DSP110 FEEDBACK ELIMINATOR

One of the ongoing problems with self-controlled sound systems is feedback. Feedback is that high-pitched squeal that comes through the system when they are too loud or the mic is too close to the speakers.



If you are working with a sound technician, he/she can eliminate it as it happens but if you are working alone erasing feedback as it happens is time consuming and it ruins the flow of the performance. And feedback is a problem especially

if you are using an omnidirectional mic like the Countryman E6. Luckily there is a gadget available that will eliminate feedback in 'real-time, on its own.

### BLUETOOTH RECEIVER

This is a really cool piece of technology that eliminates the use of wires from your iPhone to the sound system. If you would rather not use a remote control (or want to keep your phone in your case and not have any wires connecting your iPhone to the sound system, this little unit uses bluetooth to transmit your music to your sound system. It is the Bluetooth® Music Receiver F8Z-492ttP and available from [www.belkin.com](http://www.belkin.com) for \$39.99US.



## FINAL THOUGHTS

Thank you all for reading this series on Sound Advice. As I said in my opening article, my goal in writing the series was to help you create and maintain the best sound possible for you as a solo performer and with today's technology, that goal is well within your reach. Go for it!

If you have any questions or you would like a printed copy of this series (\$10), you can email me at: [petermennie@gmail.com](mailto:petermennie@gmail.com).

Now get out there and make some magic!



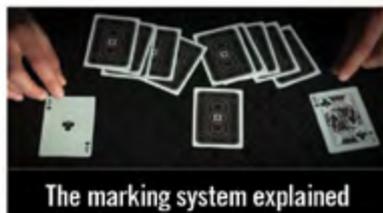


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# THE MAGIC ASSISTANT

BY  
GWYN AUGER

Gwyn continues this series  
with an interview with Mistie  
Knight.

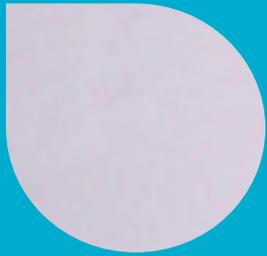
## IN DEPTH INTERVIEW WITH MISTIE KNIGHT

**M**istie Knight was a Southern Belle, born and raised in Mississippi, who became transplanted into the big city of Las Vegas ten years ago after meeting magician Tyler Kyle Knight. The two of them formed a dynamic duo onstage and off and have since been inseparable, traveling the world performing together. No stranger to the stage herself, Mistie had experience competing in the Miss America Organization and represented the “Entertainment Capital of the World” as Miss Las Vegas 2006 and winning overall talent competition with her classical piano performance.

Mistie has become a true partner in Knight Magic,

involved creatively and technically in every aspect of the show, and the chemistry that this husband and wife duo have onstage is undeniable. Together they make their home in Las Vegas, and have traveled all over the world headlining on cruise ships and performing their own unique style of illusions in theatres and shows.

\*\* Something else you might mention is that I think have the perfect name for a magician’s assistant – Mistie Knight! People are always surprised to find out that it’s not just a stage name.



“MISTIE HAS BEEN PERFORMING  
MAGIC FOR OVER 10 YEARS”





### *How did you meet your husband?*

We met briefly ten years ago when I was on vacation, but our relationship really developed over the phone over the next 7 months. I was living in Mississippi finishing college and he was performing, and when the semester was over I came to visit him in Las Vegas and I essentially canceled my return flight home! People thought I was crazy, but we knew we had something special, and I'm thankful that I had the courage to follow my heart because here we are 10 years later!

### *I hear your husband's real name is Tyler so do you call him Tyler or Kyle?*

My husband's full name is Tyler Kyle Knight, and about 8 years ago we discovered that there was an adult film star named "Tyler Knight". He was all over the internet, so for the sake of the show it was a good decision to distance ourselves from that name. My husband has been going by his middle name ever since, and when we're performing everyone knows him as Kyle. His family and oldest friends still know him as Tyler, but honestly, I think he likes the situation, because it's like he has an alter ego!

### *Do the two of you have pets?*

No pets at this time. I wish we could, but we travel too much. I do love animals though and we like to puppy sit for our friends when we're home.

### *Do you find it hard to leave home (Vegas) for long periods of time?*

We just bought a new house, so it is getting harder to leave home, but I think that's the nature of the business. Whether it's an overseas gig or a cruise ship, time away from home is a sacrifice that all entertainers make.

### *If you have children, do you think they will be involved with magic and the show?*

If we had children and they wanted to be a part of the show we would definitely let them, but we would never pressure them to.

### *Were you always interested in magic and/or performing?*

My first memory of magic was watching a David Copperfield special on TV when I was a kid. I had never seen a live magic show before I met Kyle, but I did I have stage experience. I played the keyboard in a touring

rhythm and vocal ensemble at my college in Mississippi, and I've always had a love for performing.

***I can understand that, and you were Miss Las Vegas with Miss America. What was it like being in a pageant?***

I had a great experience competing in the Miss America Organization. I met so many smart, talented, and motivated girls, and some of them have become lifelong friends. I also found that most of the stereotypes associated with pageants aren't very accurate. In Miss America the scoring is based 70% on interview and talent, and as a pianist it was a chance to set some personal goals in that area. Different pageants have different scoring and incentives, and Miss America was a good fit for me since I'm quite petite, not the tall model type that some pageants go for. As Miss Las Vegas I got the chance to work with lots of local charities, and the scholarship money that I received paid for all of my college tuition, so from my experience I have nothing but positive things to say.

***Do you think your pageant experience has helped you on stage?***

Definitely. My experience helped me to be comfortable onstage, but the public speaking skills that I learned from competing are something that have proven to be very beneficial, on and offstage.

***Do you have a dance background?***

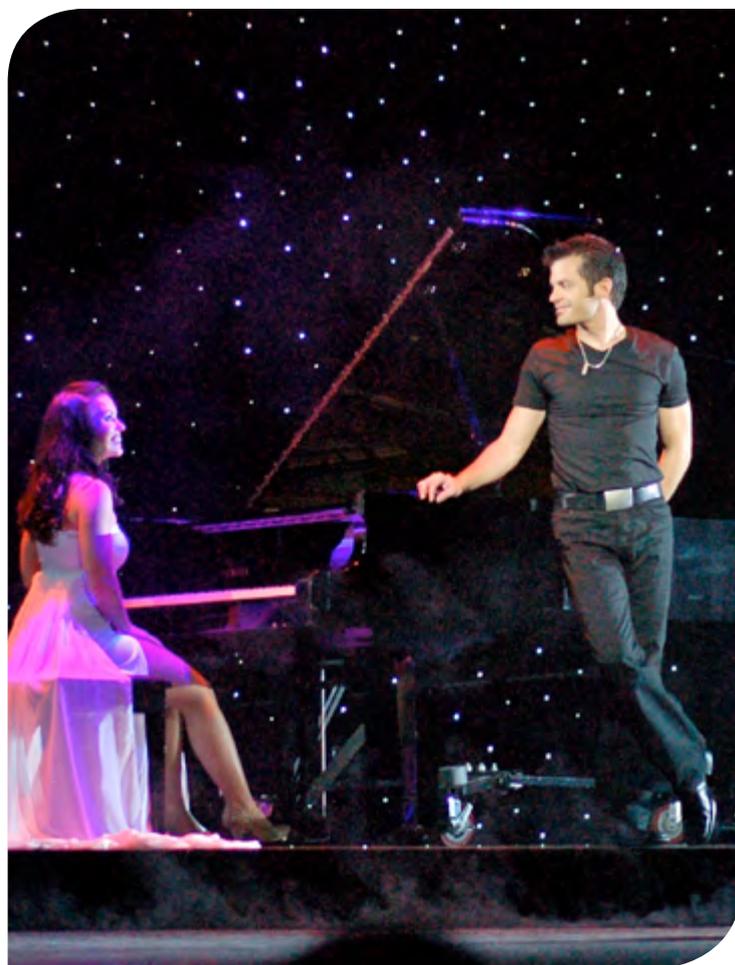
I didn't have a background in dance, although I did start taking classes after moving to Las Vegas. However, our show isn't really based around choreography, so the most important thing for me was being comfortable and natural onstage.

***Did you learn piano for the show? Or was that a talent you already had that you were able to incorporate into the show?***

I've actually been playing the piano since I was a kid, I started taking lessons in elementary school. A few years ago we added our "Duet of Magic & Music" where Kyle performs magic and I accompany him on the piano, and it's been a nice addition to the show, especially when we're performing for multilingual audiences.

***What's it like performing on a cruise ship for such long periods of time? Do you ever get sick of each other, or miss the land?***

We've never booked ourselves away for a full year at a time and we like to schedule breaks every couple months or so, but we do get homesick and we miss our family and friends back home when we're away. This year we have a great situation where we'll be headlining



in the Walt Disney Theatre on the new Disney Fantasy and flying back to Vegas every other week, so it will be really nice to be consistently booked, while still having more time at home.

It's funny what things you miss the most when performing on ships though; it's usually free wifi, cell phone service and your favorite restaurants! Kyle & I have been together 24/7 for the past 10 years, and surprisingly we don't really get sick of each other. We have so much fun and we work really well together, so we consider ourselves very fortunate. Of course we do miss home, but waking up in France one day, in Spain the next, and Italy the next makes it easier! We've had the chance to be tourists and visit 70 different countries and loved every minute of it.

***Do you have to stay in the staff cabins, or do you get to explore the ships?***

Although the situation differs depending on the act and the cruise line, in our experience for the past several years we've only taken contracts where we have full guest status. We're treated just as the guests are, having access to all of the same amenities and restaurants that they do. Our rooms are the same rooms that the guests have, sometimes even with a balcony, and our only responsibility is to do our shows. They treat us really well and we're thankful to have such a great venue to perform in.

*As you perform back in Vegas on your time off the ships, you have two sets of equipment...Do you find there is any risk in leaving your equipment on the ships?*

We do have two sets of illusions, one that we book on the ships and one that we keep in Las Vegas for other shows. However, there wouldn't be any more risk in leaving your equipment on a ship, than there would be in leaving it at a theatre in any other venue. The theatres onboard modern ships are massive with full technical teams, and quite often they are better equipped than some theatres we see in Vegas.

*On the "Women In Boxes" DVD Dove of Goldfinger and Dove mentioned that they were once doing the assistant's revenge on a ship and it was swaying so much she was sliding all over the stage, anything like that ever happen?*

We rarely feel the ship's movement at all, but during hurricane season and on certain itineraries you can feel some waves. I remember during a transatlantic crossing I was sitting at the grand piano during rehearsal, and it rolled about 5 feet away from me, but fortunately we haven't had too much trouble during the shows. The modern megaships have much better stabilizers than some of the cruise ships in the past.

*Do you have a favorite moment in the show?*

My favorite moment is during a routine that we call "Nothing's Impossible". It gives me the chance to speak to the audience about who Kyle and I really are, and how we came to be together, with an inspirational message about pursuing your dreams. I feel that having an emotional connection with the audience is important, and it makes me happy that this piece is a real. It's not a story just made up to get an emotional pull, and everything I'm saying is true and comes from the heart.

*What is your favorite illusion to watch or perform?*

Our version of the sawing in half is definitely my favorite illusion to perform. We try to give it a unique approach with an ir-





reverent attitude, exposing an old version of the sawing and even pulling out a pair of fake legs saying that we “won’t even use these tonight”. The energy that Kyle is able to get from the audience during this effect is amazing, and it’s always been a crowd favorite. My favorite illusion to watch, however, is actually a close up routine that Kyle does with coins, projected on video screens into the theatre. I always watch it from the wings during the show and even though I know the methods, it’s still impressive to me.

***What’s the funniest thing that’s happened to you on stage?***

There have been a lot of funny moments over the last 10 years – realizing during the show that I have costume on backwards, getting my fishnets caught on a prop and dragging it downstage with me... And once we vanished a lady’s ring, and it was to reappear in a locked box on the other side of the stage. When the time came for her to open the box and reveal it, she broke the key off in the padlock and we had to send this poor lady back to her seat without her ring. The techs backstage had to saw the padlock off to get the ring out, and we eventually got it back to her. We look back and laugh now, but we weren’t laughing too much that night!

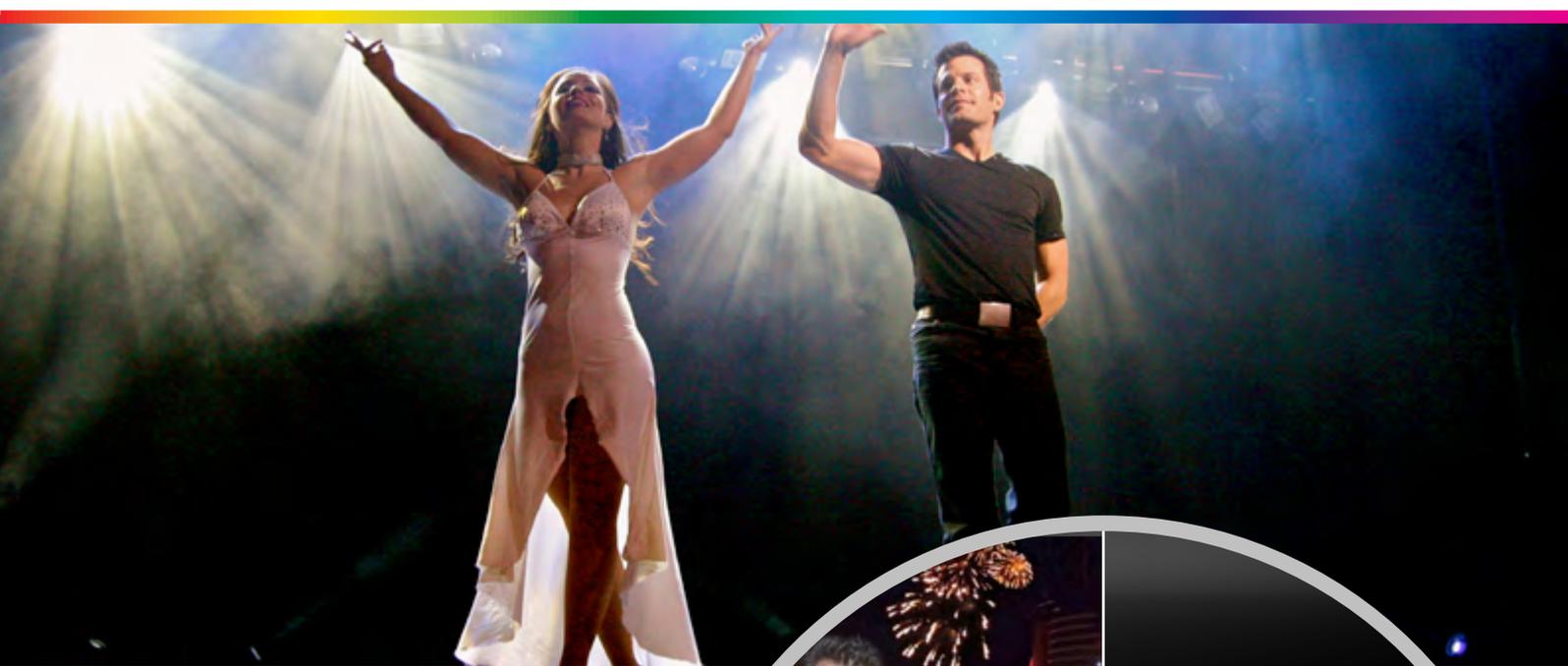
***You two just got back from a trip to Dubai where you were performing, how was performing in Dubai? Did you have to “cover up”?***

Dubai was awesome! We performed our illusions along with a cast of 6 other variety acts in “V The Ultimate Variety Show” for thousands of people at the World Trade Centre. We even had the royal families of Dubai and Abu Dhabi in our audience! It was a cool experience seeing that part of the world, and the local people were very friendly and welcoming. The Middle East does have some specific customs about the way women should dress, but performers are exempt from the rules that otherwise apply outside of the stage. I didn’t have to cover up during our shows and I wore the same costumes that I usually wear, but outside of the theatre, I kept my shoulders and knees covered out of respect for their culture.

***What do you like to do in your spare time? Or is it all devoted to magic, and new routines?***

We haven’t really had much free time at all lately, but working on ideas for new concepts or scripts has always been a priority. Any free time outside of that is spent at the gym. Fitness has always been really important to me, and my time alone working out is my release and helps me recharge. I also really enjoy photography, and I never get tired of looking through all of my old photos from our travels.

***I love seeing all your photos too it seems like you guys are always so busy with all your magic and travelling but if you were not doing magic... what do you think***



## It would be awesome to headline our own theatre here in Las Vegas

### *you'd be doing instead?*

I can't imagine not being a performer in some aspect, but if I were to do something other than magic, I would probably be a personal trainer. I know that would be something I'd enjoy and it would keep me motivated.

### *You two have travelled all over the place but where would you say has been your favorite place to perform?*

I think we had the most fun performing at "Word Stars of Magic" at the Gold Coast in Vegas last fall. Sharing the stage with the other performers and getting to know them offstage was great, and the audience was full of friends and fellow magicians. And of course it was nice to be performing in Las Vegas, especially since we were able to hop in our car after the show and drive right home!

### *What would be your dream place to perform?*

It would be awesome to headline our own theatre here in Las Vegas, but for now, we're just enjoying this ride. Performing in these beautiful theatres year round and getting paid to travel the world has been amazing, and we're happy that we can make a good living doing what we love, together.

### *I know when I was starting out and even still I was always looking for any tips on becoming a better assistant. Do you have any advice to anyone wanting to become a magic assistant?*

The most important thing that I've learned is that above everything else, the magic comes first. The choreography, the costumes, even your own comfort at times - nothing else takes priority over the integrity



"The most important thing that I've learned is that above everything else, the magic comes first."

## Mistie and Tyler in Dubai

of the magic. That's something that you always have to keep in the back of your mind during the show to be able to react quickly to any situation, and I believe understanding that helps us put on the best show possible.

### *And of course I have to ask what is your favorite type of cupcake?*

Red Velvet! But no one has ever been able to top my grandma's recipe.



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# MAGIC REVIEWS

## PAUL ROMHANY & FRIENDS

Based upon top selling products from magic retailers and wholesalers, as well as consulting with over a dozen professional magicians, Paul Romhany reviews tricks, DVDs, books and Apps.

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# 1 INSTANT RADIO V2

## By Magigadgets



Touch, squeeze or press anything and it becomes a Radio.... yes, real FM Radio sounds from ANYTHING. Your hands are always totally empty, yet the Radio sounds really do seem to come from the object you're holding. It's so easy to do, and you've got NOTHING to palm, hide or get rid of.

### SO EASY TO USE

Your hands are always empty. Nothing to palm, hide or ditch - you are totally clean. Always ready to go and you can perform this at a moments notice and totally impromptu.

A unique easy to perform effect - whether you are a novice or seasoned professional in magic - INSTANT RADIO is so easy, reliable and practical to perform that you can concentrate 100% on your presentation without worrying about complex handling.

### FASTER - ACTIVATES INSTANTLY

You'll be using this within 15 minutes and once set-up INSTANT RADIO will be ready at a moments notice. The easy to use, reliable and universal intuitive switching system is a pleasure use - a dream to activate - and has been widely praised by magicians worldwide..... and it's not an uncomfortable irritating 'Toe Switch'.

Activates instantly without any apparent movement and the revolutionary scanning feature ensures you get real FM Radio sounds in a heartbeat.

### PRODUCT DESCRIPTION.

Instant Radio Version2 - a lot of technology and wizardry packed into a tiny little package!

Your hands are always totally empty, yet the Radio sounds really do seem to come from the object you're holding. It's so easy to do, and you've got nothing to

palm, hide or get rid of. The illusion is perfect, and you'll instantly be getting incredible audience reactions with Instant Radio Ver2!

### MY THOUGHTS:

Think of this product as a modern day 'squeaker' where anything you touch makes a noise; in this case it's a local FM radio station. I can't remember when I last had this much fun testing out a product for review. I hooked myself up very quickly and spent the day touching objects and 'tuning' in to radio stations. The illusion is perfect and the gimmick works 100% of the time. For any walk-about performer this is a MUST HAVE!

The quality of gimmick is built to last, the packaging also acts as a storage case for transport. Set up is easy, and once it's in place on your body you can leave it there all day without it getting in the way. What makes this such a winner is the 'switch' is ingenious. It rests in place and you can activate it at anytime without fear of it going off when it shouldn't. There is nothing to sew in place, everything is well designed so you can quickly set it up and have it ready to go.

The speaker in V.2 really produces a loud sound, which can be used for outdoors. There is a volume control should you want to turn it up or down for the performing conditions. The speaker itself is small enough to hide in your sleeve, and you have over 2 feet of wire to hide it anywhere on your body depending on where you want the sound to come from. You can use a twist tie to keep the wire out of the way if you don't need that much. Everything is supplied so you can easily put the speaker anywhere.

It uses 3 AAA batteries, and the instructions suggest getting top quality ones which will last longer. The instructions themselves are easy to follow and well written so you can have this all set up in less than 10 minutes.

In regards to presentation, there are loads of ideas in the instructions including a drawing of a radio, which is supplied, on a business card. You are only limited by your imagination and this is something every working professional would want to have on them to create one of those really special moments. Imagine at anytime during your sponge ball routine you make a radio sound come out of it, or touching a straw and 'tuning' in to a radio station. The possibilities are endless and this is definitely going with me everywhere I go!

### INSTANT RADIO v2

**Cost:** US\$56.00 / €43.00 (Euros) / GBP £35.00 (plus shipping).

**Available direct from:** [www.magigadgets.com](http://www.magigadgets.com)

**Also available from your favorite Magic Dealer.**

**Dealers contact:** [www.magigadgets.com](http://www.magigadgets.com)

**or email:** [info@magigadgets.com](mailto:info@magigadgets.com) (for Wholesale orders)

# 2 ELECTRO-MAGIC SQUEEKER!

## By Magigadgets



Introducing Electro-Magic Squeaker, a purpose built electronic unit which will enable you to SQUEAK anytime, any place and anywhere. Totally hidden, takes less than a minute to set-up, you're always ready to Squeak all day.

Now you can perform the classic Squeaker gag with your hands totally empty!  
Imagine being able to make anything you touch, press or squeeze - SQUEAK!!!

So don't just sit there - SQUEAK ANYTHING, ANYWHERE ANYTIME & ANY PLACE!

You're just gonna love the NEW ELECTRO-MAGIC SQUEAKER - it's going to open up a whole new world of magical possibilities for you. Whether you're a beginner or an experienced professional - you'll have more fun with Electro-Magic Squeaker than you could ever imagine!

"Reputation maker, worth 10 times it's price". A small investment for a quality custom-made piece of electronic wizardry. The best comedy prop/ magic gadget you'll ever own!

Here's the NEW ELECTRO-MAGIC SQUEEKER at last. This terrific little electronic gadget will allow you to literally Squeek anything, any time, any place.

We've taken the old classic Toy Squeaker gag and given it a 21st century Electronic make-over. With this little piece of electro-wizardry discreetly tucked away you'll be able to Squeek impromptu and without any fiddling or set-up. And, here's the best bit.... YOUR HANDS ARE ALWAYS TOTALLY EMPTY... guaranteed! Nothing to palm, hide or get rid of.

The Electro-Magic Squeaker is exclusively & purpose-made for this effect. Does not employ any of the old traditional

methods (a hidden pillow/toy Squeaker etc). Digitally recorded chip replicates the Toy Squeaker sound LOUD, CLEAR and PERFECTLY.

### MY THOUGHTS:

I have loved the original squeaker gag ever since I saw Dan Garrett perform it over 20 years ago. I always take one with me on cruise ships just to amuse myself in the elevator with passengers. This electronic version takes the original gag to James Bond type levels. The set up is exactly the same as the last review of Instant Radio V.2, the only difference is this version makes a squeek sound that is loud and can be heard across the room. Also supplied are two plastic squeekers that resemble the same sound from the electronic version. This version is actually much easier to use than the old plastic squeaker because there is nothing to palm or hide. The sound is completely under your control and once you are set up you can wear this all day without fear of it going off accidentally.

A lot of thought has gone in to producing the ultimate version of an old gag, and for anybody who wants to have instant access to a squeaker you can't go past this. It's very practical and I guarantee you'll have so much fun, like I have, with this device.

There is a volume control so you can have it as loud or quiet as you like. The illusion of the sound coming from something you touch plays much better with this version than the original plastic version. The squeek is also a double squeek which makes enhances the overall effect.

This isn't a bulky product and is designed to easily fit inside your jacket. There are options for set-up so you don't have to wear a jacket.

The routines are endless with this amazing device ranging from a 'three shell type game' to having fun using sponge balls or any other object in your act. My only warning with this product, and Instant Radio is that you'll want to make everything squeek or sound like a radio. I must have spent the first few hours annoying my wife and friends by making everything I touched make a sound. In performances I learnt to use it very sparingly to gain maximum impact. You could easily design a full routine around this squeaker or use just as a gag at work, school or with friends.

If you are looking for something that is different and will allow you to create some amazing audio magic from ANY object then you seriously need to invest in either of these two products. They are made by professionals and designed for professionals from magicians to clowns.

**Cost:** US\$47.00 / €36.00 (Euros) / GBP £29.00 (plus shipping).

**Available direct from:** [www.magigadgets.com](http://www.magigadgets.com)  
Also available from your favorite Magic Dealer.

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or email: [info@magigadgets.com](mailto:info@magigadgets.com) (for Wholesale orders)

# 3 NEST OF WALLETS

## By Nick Einhorn & Alan Wong



### DESCRIPTION

Any small borrowed item such as a coin or ring instantly reappears wrapped in cloth, inside a nest of three leather wallets.

Finest nest of wallets currently available.

Beautifully produced by Alan Wong in top quality black leather.

Includes instructional DVD with handling advice, basic and advanced routines.

Use as a stand alone performance piece or as the perfect addition to any borrowed ring or signed coin routine you currently perform.

Re-set the prop in front of the spectators.

### MY THOUGHTS

The nest of wallets is a classic magic trick, and there are versions for close-up and stage. This version has been in Nick Einhorn's working repertoire for over a decade, and after watching him perform this on the DVD you can see how easy he makes it look. This is a super slick routine that could easily be performed by itself, or as Nick does a finale to an effect using a borrowed ring.

If you are looking for a prop that you can carry with you all the time and be ready to blow minds then you can't get better than this. This has all the elements that make this a real worker.

### QUALITY OF PROPS

Alan Wong has produced leather wallets that will last a lifetime of performances. They are made from leather and designed to be performed over and over without fear of the props not working. There is no 'gimmick' to speak of, just three well designed wallets and a routine that works.

The DVD supplied goes in to detail with several ideas and routines by Nick. You can vanish a signed coin or a borrowed ring and make it appear inside a cloth which is inside three leather wallets. My only comment is the leather is a little tough when you first open the package and start to work on this. Like any brand new wallet it will need a little working to get it flowing and working smoothly. Nick does tackle this point on the DVD by suggesting using a little talcum powder inside the wallets and this really makes a difference.

### DIFFICULTY

This trick should appeal to all levels of magicians, from beginners to professionals. It's one of those effects where somebody new to magic could learn it and would keep it in their repertoire forever. As a professional I can easily see this being the ultimate ring to impossible place type effect. As a finale to a ring on string routine you can't beat this effect. The reset is instant and you can openly show your hands clean prior to opening the wallets.

The loading of the object inside the wallet couldn't be any easier. The wallet is inside your pocket and as you pull it out you can load the object in without any hassle. If you can vanish a ring or coin you can perform this. If you can't vanish either then Nick will teach it to you on the DVD. His handling and techniques are world class.

Unlike a lot of Ring Flight effects where you worry about dropping the ring, this takes the worry away and still delivers an effect with a strong impact.

If you don't like the cloth that comes with the effect you can purchase your own - personally the cloth works fine and shouldn't need to be changed.

**COST:** \$55.00 Retail

**AVAILABLE:** All good magic shops world wide

**WHOLESALE:** Murphys Magic Supplies

**WATCH DEMO:**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gs1Eh9Mh6xc>



# 4 LOTTO SQUARE

## By Leo Smetsers & Alakazam Magic



### DESCRIPTION

From the creative mind of Leo Smetsers comes Lotto Square.

A deviously simple close-up magic/lucky square routine, that you will carry with you everywhere!

Leo has been performing his Lotto Square routine for years and we are pleased he has finally decided to bring this top the magic community.

As well as receiving a set of beautifully printed custom Lotto scratch cards, you also get an instructional DVD packed full of routines and ideas from Leo Smetsers, Peter Nardi and Marc Spelmann.

Perform this as a close up "impromptu" miracle or even as part of stage act.

Do not underestimate the power that this type of effect has on your spectators. The fact that the spectator scratches the card themselves adds so much to the effect. They also get to keep the card as a souvenir!

This is easy to do  
Has multiple handlings explained  
It repeatable with different outcomes  
Comes complete with 60 special Lotto Square scratch cards and an Instructional DVD!

### WHAT YOU RECEIVE:

You will receive an instructional DVD and 60 Special Lotto tickets.

### MY THOUGHTS:

The Magic Square could possibly be the strongest 'mental-

ism' type effect on any audience. This Lotto presentation is pure genius and gives the Magic Square a presentation that makes sense. It also means you can leave the audience with a special lotto card souvenir that they will keep and talk about forever!

You are given four different outcome cards, so you can easily rotate or even perform it again with a different lotto number! That to me is what makes this so strong.

I have performed this constantly since receiving it, and it always gets a strong reaction. It is ideal for close-up and even stand up as I've even presented it on stage at a corporate function.

The cards are cleverly gimmicked so you can easily identify which of the four numbers you will be using. What makes this such a strong effect is that the spectator scratches the cards themselves and can keep them.

### QUALITY OF INSTRUCTION:

The DVD instructions are first rate with live performances and instructions by Peter Nardi and Leo Smetsers. There are lots of great routines on this DVD, each one using a different way to force a number. My two favorites are Bev Bergeron's force using a watch, and the calculator force using a calculator on a borrowed phone.

### DIFFICULTY:

Very easy to do - well within the capability of any performer.

### FINAL THOUGHTS:

This has become one of my favorite routines in my repertoire. Taking the Magic Square and making it play super strong in a walk-about or close-up environment is very clever. The quality of the cards look exactly like the scratch and win type lotto cards you buy in a shop. I love effects that have an organic feel about them, in other words they don't scream magic prop. You can get refills from any magic shop that sells this effect. I suggest when ordering you order extra cards because you are going to use them. This really has all the qualities of a very strong and entertaining piece of magic, with the added impact of something the spectator gets to take part in.

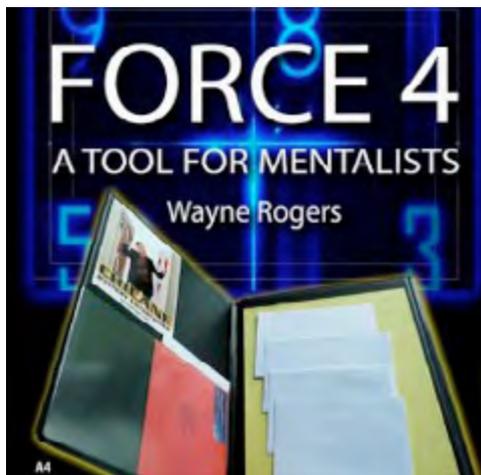
If you have never performed the Magic Square then you are missing out on possibly one of the strongest pieces of mentalism - and by combining it with the lotto routine it not only makes the Magic Square easy to do, but leaves your spectator with a mind blowing routine.

**COST: \$46.66**

**AVAILABLE: All good magic shops**

**WHOLESALE: [www.murphysmagic.com](http://www.murphysmagic.com)**

# 5 FORCE FOUR By Wayne Rogers



## DESCRIPTION

The Mentalist opens a simple black vinyl folder and shows four envelopes. As he passes along a line of 4 spectators, each one chooses an envelope. The spectators have an absolutely FREE choice of any envelope

EVERY choice is under the performer's control . . . Imagine the possibilities!

FORCE 4 does exactly what the name suggests . . . it allows you to force 4 envelopes or folded papers in a very fair manner.

Originally designed for Wayne's own chair test "Signs of Chaos". FORCE 4 can be used in many types of routines. Serious Mentalists and magicians in general will find a use for FORCE 4 in their act. As a special bonus for family entertainers, included are two fun and fully scripted routines from Jim Kleefeld.

Full contents include:

Simple Chair Test  
The Name Test  
Color Test  
Mystery Bag and Bank Night Bonus  
Body Language with Force 4  
Signs of Chaos – Wayne Rogers  
Character Eye's – For School Shows by Jim Kleefeld  
Foreward – For Library Shows by Jim Kleefeld  
FORCE 4 can be used as a regular writing pad if desired. It is designed to use either A4 or Letter size paper.

A website has been set up for updates and additional routines. Purchases of FORCE 4 will be able to access the

site and, with the password supplied with the product, download additional content as it is produced.

## MY THOUGHTS:

I received one of the very first samples of this prior to it's release. I also saw Wayne Rogers perform this live for magicians and totally fool every single one of them. Wayne has spent a long time developing his ultimate chair test routine, and from this has created one of the most amazing tools for a mentalist.

Imagine offering four spectator's a FREE choice of envelope - they actually pick up the envelope from the folder, yet each one is FORCED. For a mentalist or magician the possibilities are endless. This could make a perfect bank night type effect, or a great way to do a chair test routine.

Jim Kleefeld has two excellent routines which are also included for the family entertainer, proving that it IS possible to do mentalism for family type audiences

The folder itself is professionally made in New Zealand and works 100% of the time. There is no fumbling as every move is natural and there is no heat on the folder at all. After receiving this you can have it working almost straight away it's that easy to use. Wayne does have a few tips and suggestions regards the handling, as well as making the prop part of the show so when it comes time to use it nobody suspects anything. Other performers have added their own routines and ideas which are in the instructions.

## ADDITIONS:

One feature is a dedicated website for those who purchase it to share ideas, routines and get updates and ideas from Wayne Rogers. Because Wayne uses this in his professional act, he is constantly thinking of ways to incorporate this in to his work. The website is a great way for him to get other routines out there.

Perhaps the strongest aspect of this is how natural it looks. Knowing the method I still can't detect it when I see Wayne perform, This is designed by working professional for working professionals. The quality is excellent and should last a lifetime. These are an exclusive item to Stevens Magic and limited in numbers.

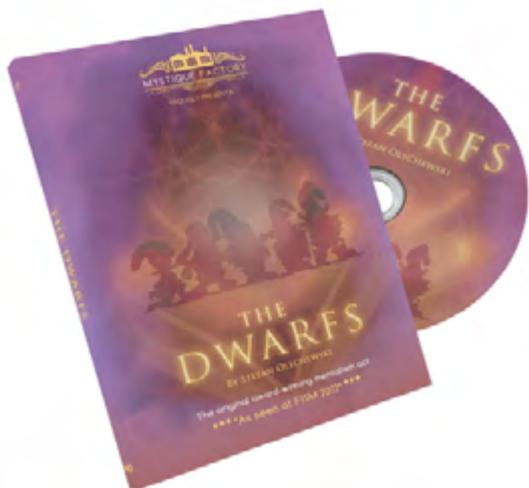
**WATCH VIDEO:** <http://vimeo.com/64118976>

**COST:** \$160.00

**AVAILABLE:** Stevens Magic Emporium or Wayne Rogers  
<http://www.stevensmagic.com/shop/9823/>  
or <http://www.nzmagic.com/magicshop.html>

# DVD REVIEWS

## THE DWARFS By Stefan Olschewski



*Review by Wayne Rogers*

The Dwarfs by Stefan Olschewski

- Four randomly selected spectators . . .
- Three fair choices . . .
- One amazing Killer prediction . . .

This is the full performance and explanation of Stefan Olschewski's FISM act seen at Blackpool in 2012. Apart from the full routine itself, there is a lot going on in this video that is well worth studying.

I am a big fan of Chair Routines. In every one, there is always weak point in the handling of props or in this case envelopes, that needs to be glossed over. I am not sure if Stefan gets away with it entirely in this routine, although he does cover it to some extent with his humorous approach. In fact it is his light hearted manner throughout, starting with the opening gag with the mirror, that carries The Dwarfs along at a fast pace.

Stefan's mirror is also used in the final climax, and I would have preferred that he had kept the mirror in full view throughout, rather than placing it out of play on a table for most of the routine. This would have meant a slightly different end handling, but it could have been worth considering to make the final surprise even stronger.

The idea of using the "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" music and hats was a nice touch. This is the type of dressing that makes Mentalism more visual and interesting. Olschewski is good at this.

Paper balls used to select spectators, while hiding a message for a later reveal (Credit: Cody Fisher's "Killer Prediction") was nicely woven into the routine, and provided a strong finish. The method of the laying out of the chairs Stephan credits to David Berglas and is another valuable lesson you will learn from this DVD.

Stephan explains the "Cassandra device", a great utility device that allows a large prediction to be cleanly handled by the spectator. This was invented by the German mentalist Perkeo. So often the multiple compartment props we Mentalists use to remove predictions from necessitate the actual prediction paper being quite small. Not so with the ingenious Cassandra Device. The prediction paper is a full A4 or Letter size sheet. I was aware of the basic principle, but it flew right by me on first viewing. This, as they say, is worth the price of admission.

The Dwarfs could easily be a standalone act, or a fun interlude within a full act. There are "multiple moments of amazement" which is the hallmark of good modern Mentalism.

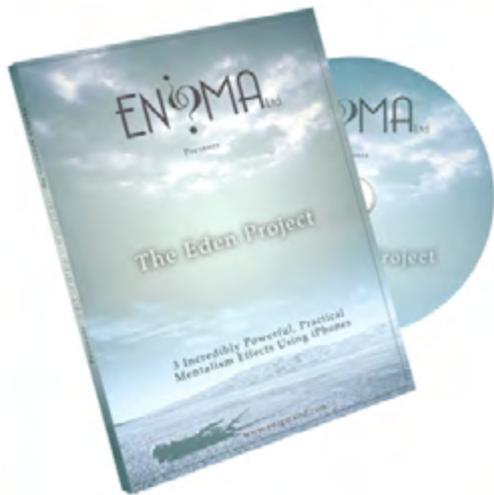
From the opening gag, followed by the selection of spectators, the genuine random choice of a card, the dressing up in hats, and the "Who's been sitting in my chair?" moment right through to the final prediction, including revealing the spectator's name, The Dwarfs kept on surprising.

The Dwarfs by Stefan Olschewski is well presented and explained in great detail and should be in the collection of everyone who performs audience participation mentalism. Recommended.

Available from Mystique Factory.  
<http://www.mystiquefactory.com/>  
**COST:** \$35.00

# THE EDEN PROJECT

By G. Clarke.



"I love, love, love this effect" - Jonathan Bayme

## MY THOUGHTS:

There are three KILLER effects on this DVD using an iPhone. Non-Toxic was inspired by similar effects, however this version is the easiest and requires no Apps to download and the calculator can be used to add numbers without disturbing the secret, which makes this version stronger than any of the others. The routine supplied is incredibly strong and everything is performed openly using your iPhone's calculator. The phone is held at finger tips, all numbers called out can be random and the moment the 'dirty' work happens all the heat is off your phone. The method really is ingenious because once you set this up, which takes about 5 seconds, you are set to do this routine over and over without having to do anything else. At all times your phone will be ready to do an 'add-a-number' type routine.

The routine on the DVD is powerful because the added number ends up being your phone number, and it doesn't become obvious until YOUR phone rings! Having performed this now I can tell you it really gets a strong reaction.

This is now my favorite Add-A-Number using my iPhone and Non-Toxic is my favorite effect on the DVD.

FATE 2.0 - This is where you can predict random songs on a borrowed iPhone. I love the organic feel of this effect which allows you to use anybody's iPhone or iPod touch as long as they have music on it. Again it's the simplicity of this that makes this incredibly strong. It's easy to do and you'll have this down within minutes. The dirty work happens before the effect begins which means all the heat is off you.

PASSCODE: If you perform the other two previous routines you will end up being able to perform Passcode. This is as real as mind reading can get - where you are able to read a person's mind and tell them their pincode of their phone. Again, nothing to download, a little more practice required with this, but once you start working on the method it's something that will come naturally and quickly. At no time does the spectator tell you, or write down their pincode prior to you revealing it to them.

By learning these three effects you will have some incredibly powerful routines that you can perform anywhere with an iPhone. There is nothing to download, everything you need is already on your iPhone and you can be ready at anytime. Filmed in HD with live performances this is a highly recommended DVD.

**COST:** \$25.00

**AVAILABLE:** All good magic shops

**WHOLESALE:** [www.murphysmagic.com](http://www.murphysmagic.com)

**DEMO**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CU-ulmPkkaE>

The Eden Project is a collection of 3 Powerful pieces of Modern Mentalism.

## PASSCODE:

The spectator is asked if they have a passcode or lock set on their iPhone, and the performer reveals that thought of number without ever asking the spectator to write anything down. It's simple, direct and easy to perform.

## NON-TOXIC:

A diabolical new method for an add a number routine. Imagine inviting multiple spectators to type in a number of their choice into the iPhone calculator, and multiply all their results together. The outcome is ALWAYS a number you've predicted ahead of time, and can even be your telephone number. This revolutionary revamp to the popular TOXIC method means that the spectators can make as many mistakes as they like, change their mind, choose to add, subtract or divide their numbers, and it will ALWAYS end up as YOUR number. No TOXIC set-up or memory recall!

## FATE 2.0:

After releasing the first version of this effect in November 2011, it soon became Theory11's best selling wire effect. Originally it was a method to divine the Shuffled order of songs on their iPhone music library. However this has just been redeveloped into a STRONGER, MORE POWERFUL effect by making it a pure mind-reading demonstration. Multiple spectators are asked to think of a random song from a Borrowed iPhone, and with the iPhone locked and hidden away in someones pocket, you can instantly reveal each spectators selection. It's that good.

"Fate is how real mind reading should look ..." - Justin Miller

# CHAOTIC

## By Kieron Johnson



### MY THOUGHTS:

Over two and a half hours of high impact, commercial magic that you will and can perform.

This DVD has nine high impact routines from Kieron's working repertoire. Once you watch the DVD you will understand the title, Chaotic. His performance style seems quite crazy at times, but this allows him enough time to do some of the work necessary to perform the dirty work. Don't be put off by this because the material can easily work for any style of performer. One of the things I enjoyed about watching the live performances was how he interacts with the audience, and as any working pro will tell you, this can be just as important as the actual effect. While you don't want to copy his style you should watch how he handles the spectators and makes them feel at ease. It is also a great lesson in timed misdirection. This all comes from working routines over and over, something he has obviously done to get them to the point where he can create miracles.

Another aspect I enjoyed was that many of the effects can play just as well for close-up as they can for stage, and in some cases you'll see both styles in the performance section.

The actual production of the DVD is of the high quality we have come to expect from a Russ Stevens product, and includes several camera views, clear explanations and my favorite part where Kieron sits down with a group of magicians and tries to explain his sponge ball routine. I was laughing so much during this part that I cried. I'm glad Russ kept it in and didn't edit. Below are just a few of my favorite routines from the DVD.

### THE ROUTINES:

**CIO** - A card in orange based on something from Tarbell but with added touches. This can be performed close-up or stage and the added touch of having the spectator tear off the corner card is a great idea. There is no need for special

gimmicks to prepare the card as Kieron explains how to do this with a regular card. Some very nice touches that make this a strong and commercial routine.

**Lollipop** - The production of a lollipop from flash paper. This can be performed as a full routine using cards with words on them, or as a quick visual opener. The misdirection is well worked out so they don't see what is coming. This would be a great routine for the close-up magician in a restaurant.

**Stop Kicking Me** - This is a really novel effect using a video on your cell phone and a FREELY chosen card prediction. There is quite a bit of preparation involved but it's well worth the effort due to the impact this has on spectators. Once you have set this up you will have it forever on your phone and no doubt want to perform it. This is an ideal walk around effect because reset is instant.

**Borrowed Phone in Balloon and Wallet** - A great finale to the original idea by Dan White and Daniel Garcia where a borrowed phone ends up inside a balloon. Kieron has taken this a step further and restores the balloon, vanishes the phone which ends up inside a wallet. Because of the nature of this routine you might have some trouble with the balloons and not working 100% of the time, however it is worth pursuing and practicing because anytime you can do something impossible with a borrowed object the magic is that much stronger. This is certainly a reputation maker. The moves and timing are worked out so everything is natural and the loading of the phone itself will fly right past the spectators. This is ideal at a bar or walk-about type situation.

**Chaotic FKS** - Because of Kieron's rather crazy performance style he can get away with a lot more than others who are less 'chaotic'. This fork bending routine uses some classic techniques, but takes things to the next level in a crazed bending routine. Even if you already do a bending fork routine you will get some great tips and a few moves that you can add to your own routine. He has come up with some natural moves and moments to do the actual bend.

**Transcend** - This is my favorite routine on the DVD. It's a card rise that is seemingly impossible using a signed card. The method is super easy and you can have this on you ready to go at anytime and use a borrowed deck if necessary. You start and end clean and uses a gimmick most everybody has in their magic drawer. I LOVE this card rise as it's practical and again can be done close-up or stage.

**Bigger** - A fast paced sponge ball routine that is perfect for cabaret or parlor shows. There is a lot happening in this routine which really involves a lot of the audience. I particularly like the way he moves amongst the crowd giving this a more personable feel to the routine.

**COST:** \$31.00

**AVAILABLE:** All good magic shops

**WHOLESALE:** [www.murphysmagic.com](http://www.murphysmagic.com)

# LENNART GREEN & DANI DAORTIZ

## By L. Green & D. Dortiz



### DESCRIPTION:

In this brand-new two volume set, we are transported to Dani Daortiz's Spanish studio, where he and card legend Lennart Green alternate with astounding tricks. If there is a loose theme to this collection, it is strong card magic that will play to both small and parlor audiences. Very few ever get to sit at a table with Lennart Green or Dani Daortiz. Now, we have that chance!

Dani Daortiz wows us, as usual, with his unique brand of card magic. In "Back at the Time" he allows a card freely dealt at to be torn up, destroyed, and vanished...only to reappear at the exact position in the deck it was removed from!

Dani's "Poker Hand" is a miracle of the simplest, strongest order: a spectator removes any cards from a shuffled deck, and they are revealed to be the four Aces.

Lennart shares all new and rare material, ranging from his intelligent new take on the Numbers Square to his astounding Red-Black deal, where he changes the color of cards AS they are dealt.

The explanations are handled like an informal session, with Dani and Lennart sharing methods with each other...and us. The explanations and filming are clear, simple, and fun to follow along with. Enjoy the nearly three hours of magic these two legends share with us!!!

### MY THOUGHTS:

This is serious magic folks. Two of the best card technicians EVER on one DVD openly sharing material that has made them both living legends. This DVD is for those who love card magic, either watching it or practicing you will appreciate everything that this has to offer.

This is certainly not for the beginner, but for those who have some handling skills with cards as some of the secrets require a certain amount of practice and skill.

Part of Lennart Green's skill comes from his seemingly to make a mess with the cards, then will spread them or catch aces in the air and totally blow your mind. What is great is to see Lennart perform moves that I originally read in various books, so it's a wonderful opportunity to see him perform in front of a live audience.

Perhaps the real magic of the DVD is having Lennart and Dani together explaining various moves - and what move they are!! If you want to learn some amazing false counts, great shuffles then this is definitely something you don't want to pass up.

Some of the effects on here do require you to be seated but if you work in such a condition that allows you to sit down and perform you can create miracles with cards.

There is such a wealth of material on here it's hard to choose a favorite. I love Lennart Green's Separating Colors - the most visual FACE-UP color separating routine I've ever seen. His False Count Of Cards is a great tool that can be adapted for many other effects as well as the routine he performs.

My favorite routine by Dani is called Back At The Time, a torn and restored card that has a novel ending where the card ends up back in the deck at a chosen position.

The quality of filming is excellent with different camera angles, and I particularly liked the way they had Dani and Lennart together sitting down explaining the effects. It really gives you the feeling you have a front row seat and able to learn from these two masters.

I call this DVD Hard Core Card Magic for the serious performer. Card magic just doesn't get any better than this. Be prepared to put in the work, if you do you'll be performing material that many others won't be doing.

### WATCH DEMO:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ni3k-FggX6I>

**DURATION:** 2h05 min approx.

**COST:** \$40.00

**AVAILABLE:** All good magic shops

**WHOLESALE:** [www.murphysmagic.com](http://www.murphysmagic.com)

# LINKEY

## By Alan Rorrison



### DESCRIPTION

At any time you will be able to take your house key and visually link it to a rubber band. Both can be inspected before and after the magic happens. You can even take this super simple gimmick and link it to a borrowed necklace without losing any of the visual impact!

We also teach you how to make a bonus gimmick that will allow you to borrow a set of keys, remove a single key from the set and visually link it back on and INSTANTLY hand it back to your spectator for examination.

Comes with a DVD, a precision made gimmick and rubber bands.

### MY THOUGHTS

This is the most visual linking key routine I've ever seen. It comes with two keys; a blank key and a gimmick key that has been cut in a very special way. What makes this so appealing is that there are no moving parts to worry about breaking during performance. The key is machined and made to last a lifetime if looked after, and certainly durable enough to withstand years of performances.

The gimmick is simple and very versatile. Once this is set up you can keep it on your keychain so always prepared to perform some organic magic.

Alan has great justification for using your own key so it takes the heat off the fact you are using your own key for this routine. The set-up allows you to start and end clean so everything can be examined before and after the effect. This is what makes this such

a strong piece of magic.

### INSTRUCTIONS

Alan's handling makes this incredibly easy to perform. There are no suspicious moves as everything happens at fingertips and out in the open. Every move is justified and takes any heat of the gimmick key enabling you to end clean.

### Alternative Handling:

This uses a woman's necklace where the key visually links on to her necklace. Alan does talk about which necklaces to use and which ones to stay away from. You don't want to get in to any trouble with an expensive necklace. Using a necklace makes this a great talking point, especially for walkabout magic performances.

### BONUS HANDLING

There is an alternative handling that requires a little more set-up that costs less than \$2.00 to make, but uses a non-gimmick link on to your keychain. I personally wouldn't bother with this version because it's a little bit messier and the original is incredibly visual. For those that want to do this bonus handling Alan explains everything in detail.

### QUALITY OF GIMMICK

Made to last and made for wear and tear, however with anything that you carry around with you on a daily basis you should be aware not to get it snagged in clothing or hooked up and broken.

### FINAL THOUGHTS:

Alan has created the type of magic effect that I love; organic, visual and instant reset. The gimmick is incredibly clever and will allow you to perform some very powerful magic. There is nothing better than being able to start and end clean, and have the spectator check it all prior and after the routine.

### WATCH DEMO

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qpw8cqMllks>

**COST:** \$29.00

**AVAILABLE:** All good magic shops

**WHOLESALE:** [www.murphymagic.com](http://www.murphymagic.com)



# OSCAR MUNOZ LIVE by KozmoMagic



## DESCRIPTION:

Oscar Munoz gives you everything you need to entertain an audience! On this two DVD set, watch as Oscar performs his workers in his 50 minute show. The billiard balls, the rings, his 2 rope routine and more, plus a revealing conversation with Kozmo about developing comedy in magic.

You'll be amazed at what's inside!

2 Rope Trick

3 Rope Trick

Linking Rings

Learn this elegant version of the Linking Rings from

Billiard Balls

Balloon Swallow

One of the most popular parlor routines EVER is

Mouse in Bag

And MORE!

## MY THOUGHTS:

I'm going to start off by telling you Oscar is one of my all time favorite magicians. I have toured with him and been in awe of his skills both technically as a magician, and his sense of timing and understanding of theatre. He understands what it takes to entertain an audience and take them on a journey with his magic. One thing you'll get from watching this DVD, other than his fantastic tricks, is how he takes the strongest point of each trick and weaves it in to a full routine and create something that is truly magical. From his comedy rope routine to his uplifting Linking Ring routine these effects are designed to leave a lasting impression on every audience member.

In all of his routines, as you'll see on this two set DVD, he has taken each effect and really worked it until the timing is perfect, the moves are strong and he gets maximum impact from the props.

Here are a few of my favorites:

**Chinese Linking Rings** - This is one of the most elegant three-ring routines I've seen, and includes Oscar's completely scripted routine. This would be perfect for both family or adult type shows. The routine is very visual, to the point and entertaining. This is a great example of Oscar using theatrical elements to create something very special and includes a few of his moves that make this visually striking.

**Balloon Swallow** - This has now become a classic, and Oscar shares some of the finer points that will really help sell this illusion.

**Billiard Balls** - This is a multi-phase routine where the balls change color from yellow to green to white, vanish and multiply. Every move is worked out so the timing and misdirection will go right past any audience. While Oscar performs this for his family shows, you could easily add this to your stage or manipulation act. If you wanted to learn a commercial and practical multi-phase multiplying ball routine, this should be the one. The production of a dove at the end is a real surprise and kicker.

**Rope Routines** - This is Oscar's take on the original George Sands Rope routine and he KILLS with this. I've seen him perform this live in a large theatre and this alone is worth the price of the DVD. His comedic timing and structure of the routine is what makes this such a strong piece of magic. This is a lesson in how to craft a routine and take an audience on a journey. Watch the live performance part to see the reaction Oscar can get from a piece of rope.

**LIVE PERFORMANCE** - This is PURE GOLD. I could watch this over and over and never get bored. Oscar performs for a family audience and you'll see that everything plays just as strong for kids and it does for adults. This really is a lesson from somebody who understands character, theatre and magic. It is the combination of music, effects, facial expressions and little nuances that make this so highly entertaining.

**INTERVIEW** - Oscar openly talks about his stage character, his views on handling audiences, how he structures routines and most importantly what makes a routine strong and entertaining. Pure Gold from a pro.

**BONUS EFFECTS:** There are several bonus routines including Mouse in Paper Bag. A routine that Oscar has made his own and gets huge reactions from the children with. Once you watch this you'll want to add it to your own show.

**OVERALL** - This DVD is for EVERY style of performer, from the street magician to the birthday party and stage magician. There is such a wealth of solid material and every single one is from Oscar's professional repertoire. If you want to learn HOW to entertain an audience and learn some incredibly strong stand-up magic routines THIS is the DVD to buy. You can build a career from this DVD set.

**COST:** \$50

**AVAILABLE:** Any good magic shop

**WHOLESALE:** [www.murphysmagic.com](http://www.murphysmagic.com)

# THE CHANGES by Brandon Williams & Michael Muldoon



## DESCRIPTION:

The Changes are two unique and highly visual color changes that you can perform with ANY deck of cards. Shot in HD, you get an in depth look at both of the changes and their applications. Michael Six Muldoon and Brandon Williams walk you through every thing you need and share thoughts and ideas with each of the moves, plus multiple routines.

In a world of one trick DVDs this 90 minute DVD gives you true value with 2 color changes and 8 routines.

## MY THOUGHTS:

For a DVD that explains just two card moves, this is jam packed with solid, commercial and visually stunning card magic. You will learn two amazing color changes that will enable you to really fry your audience. I am sure they are both destined to become regular moves in card workers repertoire, and combined with some of the strong effects presented on here they will become effects workers will want to perform at paying gigs. These moves aren't just for those who want to show off some new skill with a deck of cards, these are tools that anybody who performs card magic would want to include. You can perform the routines on the DVD, which are all fantastic, or use them in your own current routines.

## TEAR CHANGE:

This is based on Ed Marlo's Snap Change with tweaks that take it to a new level and leaves the spectator with a souvenir. As you tear a card in half it VISIBLY changes to another card. This opens up endless possibilities for performing some incredibly strong magic. I like to think of this as the Snap Change on steroids. The filming and teaching on here makes it very easy to learn with various camera angles and slow motion shots. For those who are already familiar with the Snap Change the new addition shouldn't take long to learn at all. This is aimed at the

moderate card worker to advanced performer.

By learning this one move you will be able to perform some powerful and highly visual card magic. It is well worth putting in the time to master this as the routines are very strong including a transposition of cards, a card prediction amongst others. The clean up is well thought out and covered with natural moves.

## SHAKE N'BAKE

This is a fun color change with all the mechanics hidden underneath the pack. It appears that you simply shake a card and it changes. The handling is repetitively easier to master and with a little practice you'll have a spectacular color change. My favorite routine on here using this color change is the All Backs routine. It is perfect for the walk about performer and will leave you with a deck to continue your routines making this the perfect opener.

Shocked 2.0 is an ambitious type card routine with a kicker ending. By using the Shake n'bake move you get some incredibly visual changes and a diabolical ending. Again perfect for walk-about and close-up magicians.

This DVD is filled with great routines that can be done with these two moves - a few of them include:-

Two Ton Triumph Two: Michael's triumph off "6 by Six" combined with Shake N' Bake, plus some added touches make this one killer effect! If you loved Two Ton Triumph, wait to you see this one!

The Reversal: From a borrowed shuffled deck, cause cards to turn over magically right before their eyes and then YOU can cause the ENTIRE deck reverse itself!

The Tear Routine: This is a KILLER routine. A selected card is torn in half, then restored HALF WAY, then FULLY RESTORED! The card can even be handed out during each of the phases and kept at the end!

The Torn Transpo: Watch this on the trailer! Cause a card AND THE TEAR to change places! It almost looks like you can see the cards transpose as if they shot across. Visual magic at its best!

The Torn Prediction: Turn a mistake into a miracle. After writing a prediction on the back of the card, which turns out to wrong. The card is torn in half and tossed onto the table. With a little magic, the text corrects itself, and so does the selection!

**COST:** \$29.95

**AVAILABLE:** all great magic shops

**WHOLESALE:** [www.murphsymagic.com](http://www.murphsymagic.com)

**WATCH:**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G2OZLTE8QfU>

# HUG

## by Nefesch



### DESCRIPTION:

HUG is the new "Thumbs up, Go like this" opener taken to a whole new level of visual madness.

"HUG is a DVD with a collection of 6 effects. 5 of these effects are new, fresh and astonishing body illusions that you can perform anytime anywhere. In February 2008 I decided to perform HUG for some reporters of a National Newspaper of my native country (El Salvador) The Journalists were very impressed and made a nice article about me; and as a result of my HUG performance they gave me a "title", a title I had never expected to get, this "title" was something that I had never claimed to be, but they gave me that title because that was what they thought of me after seeing my performance; they called me: "An Expert in Contortion". Nowadays, I use HUG as the opener for my Show. The DVD also includes a mentalism routine with the ploy "Hugging a person" This mentalism Routine is the one I use as a link between my opener and the rest of my mentalism show."

- Nefesch

The 5 Body illusions are totally impromptu, easy to do and they will look as if you can penetrate parts of your body through others parts of your body in a very visual way. The mentalism routine requires a fast and easy set up and it plays huge.

Effects included:

- 1) Arms Through Body
- 2) Hands Through Neck
- 3) Sleeveless Arm Twist
- 4) Arms Through leg (3 Variations Included)
- 5) A Jacket Levitation
- 6) A bonus Mentalism HUG Routine

### MY THOUGHTS:

Hug is so far out there that it completely caught me

by surprise. Nefesch has created something I can see every performer wanting to learn. It require no props or gimmicks just your arms and hands. The illusion created is so good that it is impossible to pick up.

The first routine taught is the main effect, and the others are variations of the same method. The effect is where you place your crossed arms behind your back and they penetrate your body. The visual aspect of this illusion is perfect and really fools the eye. You would swear the arms visually penetrate the body. I particularly like the way he has the audience follow a long and do everything he does. This is an important part of the performance as it gets a reaction when they can't do it. At the point where Nefesch's arms pass through his body you can hear the gasp from the crowd. Magic doesn't get any organic than this.

The method is very simple and very easy and the moment the dirty work happens the heat is off the performer. There are different techniques to learn depending on the type of body you have. Nefesch is on the slim side, however those who have a wider body shape can learn how to do this as well.

This works well for both stage and close-up although you don't want people watching you from behind. You can't do this completely surrounded but Nefesch does talk about how to do with if you are worried about angles.

Timing on this is essential so you will need to put in some practice. The actual technique is easy to learn but to get the correct illusion I would suggest practicing in front of a mirror or video yourself. It shouldn't take long to get the hang of this and once you learn it you'll be able to do it anywhere at anytime.

All the variations taught are just as visual and again, with a little practice you'll be able to perform them. The sleeveless arm twist illusion is a great illusion that would be perfect as an addition to any arm twisting illusion. Each variation uses a similar principle so once you have mastered and understood the first one you should have no problem mastering the others.

The BONUS on here is a mentalism routine which ties in nicely to the overall theme. It's direct, easy to do and involves an audience member. This would play well in both intimate and large groups.

If you are looking for something that is completely different, something you can do anytime, anywhere without any props this is definitely worth checking out.

### DEMO :

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_20c7Xds\\_Q](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_20c7Xds_Q)

**COST:** \$45

**AVAILABLE:** All good magic shops

**WHOLESALE:** [www.murphysmagic.com](http://www.murphysmagic.com)

# E-BOOK REVIEW

## THE PRODIGAL By Atlas Brookings

### DESCRIPTION:

Most of us have seen those shows on television where someone takes something to a flea market or rummage sale only to have an expert in possession of a trained eye come along and see through all the age, dust and patina that comes with neglect to discover a hidden gem, a priceless and coveted item.

All too often in Mentalism, a method is not what we expected or wanted it to be. As a result of our perceptions, we walk away and leave it behind. Over time, it is forgotten and gathers dust until one day, some expert comes along and shows us just how amazing this little item truly could be if it was polished and lovingly repaired rather than cast aside, scorned and esteemed as naught. Only then is our true appreciation won.

The Prodigal was written with the sole intention of demonstrating the value of one misunderstood and much maligned method, and offers glimpses of masterworks that can be built with it.

It offers a true demonstration of pure mental powers - void of pencils, scraps of paper, envelopes, gimmicks, or any of the accompanying apparatus that walk hand-in-hand with other effects and immediately serve to trigger skeptical reactions in our audiences - suspicious that they are being deceived, just unsure as to how.

The Prodigal examines the method by which you can create pure, direct mind reading - miracles that can be performed whilst in a straight jacket, with no props at all if you so choose.

As others are fond of stating - "You can perform this naked."

The Prodigal offers you strong, convincing Mentalism in its purest form.

90 pages long, this book offers up a number of strong

close-up and stage-worthy mind reads, bolsters performance material based on psychological forces, offers methods of performing impressive ungaffed book tests, and outlines a means by which actions taken in radio studios or corporate headquarters hundreds of miles away can be accurately revealed. Better than all this - it establishes a creative platform upon which you can expand and create your own distinctive feats!"

### MY THOUGHTS:

This book, in my opinion is the best work ever written on the use of progressive anagrams. I've seen people use this technique and perform it badly, however, with the right approach this can really be a miracle.

Atlas has fine tuned this method and given it a lot of thought, all of which appears inside this 90 page book. He has worked it out in such a way that the method does not become obvious to the spectator at all, and is hidden in the questions he asks. This has completely changed my perception of this method and now I use Atlas's techniques and advice in my own routines.

The details in this book are extremely well written, and even somebody new to mentalism will get a good grasp of how it works and be able to use it in their own act. For those professional mentalists who already use some kind of branching anagram, you will also gain valuable information and chances are this will really open your eyes to how you can improve on what you are already doing.

Included are some incredibly strong routines that you can perform, in particular one idea using a newspaper advertisement. Imagine handing out newspapers to ten different people and asking them to turn to the classified advertisement section, circle one ad, then rip out the page and fold it up. You then take ten envelopes, and seal their folded ad into each one. The envelopes are subsequently freely mixed by the audience while your back is turned. One audience member then selects an envelope, opens it, and selects any word in the advertisement and you are able to tell them the very word!!

Atlas has included a large number of anagrams already so you don't have to do any work, just put them in to a routine. There is also a section on how to create your own anagrams.

Anybody who has an interest in mentalism should download and read this amazing piece of work. Destined to become a classic!

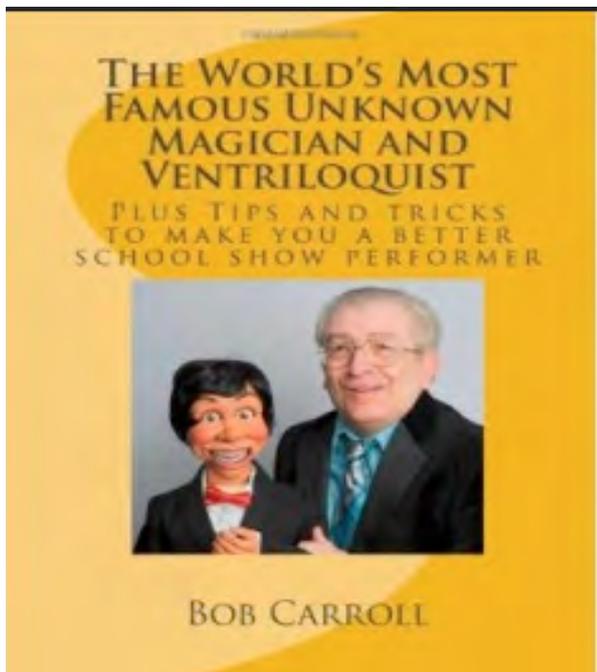
**COST:** \$40.00

**INSTANT DOWNLOAD**

**[www.atlasmentalism.com/AtlasProductsCatalog.html](http://www.atlasmentalism.com/AtlasProductsCatalog.html)**

# BOOK REVIEW

## THE WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS UNKNOWN MAGICIAN AND VENTRILOQUIST By Bob Carroll



### DESCRIPTION:

This is a story for all those entertainers who refuse to give up but never get to be famous! There are thousands of acts right now touring the country that are talented and hard working. This is just one story about the unknown career of Bob Carroll. If you are a clown, ventriloquist, juggler or magician, there are tips to make your school shows more fun! Valuable tips and secrets that you can use to help your shows.

Bob also shares several comedy magic routines for magicians who do birthday parties, school shows or family events.

Find out why Long John Silver's restaurant scares Bob to this day!

Journey on the tour called "Bob's Not So Excellent Adventure" and learn magic routines that can make you think about the way you do school shows.

Read about his Guinness Book of World Record Joke Telling event.

Find out how Bob started out in amusement parks, strip clubs and eventually toured doing school shows for over 25 years.

There is also a tribute to some of the performers that Bob has worked with over the course of his career.

### MY THOUGHTS:

Bob Carroll is a name I've known for many years both as a ventriloquist and magician. This is a great book that contains a wealth of information he has gathered from over 40 years doing amusement parks and school shows around the USA.

What I really LOVE about this book is that it has a wide appeal to everybody who isn't a magic 'star' or 'celebrity'. It is about a book from a performer who has done it all and has plenty of stories to share. I am sure many readers will relate to some of the performing stories in this book.

This is a treasure trove of not just road stories but really great advice. Something I am sure many can relate to is how, as a performer who travels, you miss special family events. Bob offers wisdom that all young readers, and even those of us who aren't so young, should listen to. It will save a lot of time and headaches. If you want to get in to school shows you will find great tips from keeping a travel log to secrets of getting booked year after year.

This book also includes some tricks Bob has used, and includes props most performers will own. These are routines he has performed in thousands of shows. What makes this different than other books is there are stories combined with each effect and this gives a real insight in to the routines and how children react.

There is not only advice for those wanting to get in to school shows but some great advice if you want to do state fairs or festivals. Bob has worked every possible gig as a ventriloquist and magician. He isn't a house hold name, but he is like 99.9% of us magicians out there who do this full time. He has worked hard to do what he loves and made a living from it. After forty years he is entitled to share his road stories and we should all read it.

**COST:** \$14.99

**AVAILABLE:** Select magic shops, Ebay and Amazon

# APP REVIEWS

## MAGIC SPIDER By Ian Pidgeon



If you liked Jim Pace's The Web, you'll love My Pet Boris. Do you know anyone who is afraid of spiders? Everyone right? Then this is the perfect magic trick/prank for you.

Watch trailer video at <http://www.mypetboris.com/trailer.htm>

The Magic Spider effect combines Augmented Reality and the power of suggestion, along with the natural curiosity people have for new iPhone apps to create the scariest magic trick for the iPhone.

You take a photo of the spectator's hand (secretly loading a plastic spider on the back of their hand) and place the phone on their palm to hold.

Your Pet Boris - an Australian Red back spider (black widow) creeps onto the screen and they can feel the vibrations as it walks. You can tap the screen and even slide your finger into the animation to scratch the spider's back. Boris walks off the screen.

You tell them that the iPhone has special sensors that when you wave your hand over the screen it makes the spider come back. He does. You get them to wave their hand over the phone.

It is just then that they glimpse a realistic spider clinging to the back of their hand and they FREAK OUT!!

Bound to get BIG reactions. Finger tone and size can be set to suit your own. Startup screen can be customised to suit your performance style. Camera capture, solid white or any image from your library can be used as a background.

NOTE: Requires a plastic spider or cockroach and adhesive or double sided tape.

BONUS EFFECT: Now also comes with a cockroach animation for those who think they are scarier.

IN-APP PURCHASE: Now also available is a butterfly version of the effect for those who prefer a less scary presentation.

The Butterfly Effect:

The magician simulates a grand illusion in the palm of the spectator's hand. A tiny foil egg is placed in the palm of the spectator's hand and then photographed. The phone is placed on their hand. The egg transforms into a Chrysalis and then into a butterfly. The magician's finger is seen to tickle the virtual butterfly on screen then it flies away.

Using a magical gesture the magician brings the butterfly back briefly before it flies off again. When the spectator tries they find a matching paper butterfly (in an impossible location) on the back of their hand. The original foil egg has vanished.

**MY THOUGHTS:**

This could very well be the best \$2.99 you could EVER spend! Every single magician I have showed this to instantly purchased this App.

If you are looking for something that really gets a reaction from a spectator then this is it. My only warning is to BE CAREFUL who you perform this on. If they are scared of spiders or then DON'T PERFORM THIS on them. However, you could perform the butterfly effect and have a butterfly on the back of their hand - this is just as strong but without them hitting you.

I got the Pro-Package which included the spiders and cockroaches and they look exactly like the ones in the App. There is a really nice touch where your finger comes in to view and it looks like it taps the spider enhancing the overall illusion. If you don't want the hassle of looking for the perfect plastic spider or cockroach then get the Pro-Package from Ian - it's worth it and will save you the time of having to look for them. The butterfly I got here in Canada from craft store. This is so easy to perform and gets a huge reaction.

The handling on this is super easy. At no time do the spectators suspect you have a spider and the iPhone acts the perfect cover to hide it. You start clean and end

clean making this great for walk around performers.

The quality of instructions are some of the best I've seen for any App and the entire package is very professional.

For me, the strongest part of this effect is that you really do take a photo of the spectator's hand. So when the spider crawls on the hand, it IS the hand you just took a photo of. Even without the production of the plastic spider at the end this is a very strong App that gets gasps.

iTunes - \$2.99 or [www.mypetboris.com](http://www.mypetboris.com)

Requirements: Compatible with iPhone 3GS, iPhone 4, iPhone 4S, iPhone 5, iPod touch (3rd generation), iPod touch (4th generation), iPod touch (5th generation) and iPad. Requires iOS 4.3 or later. This app is optimized for iPhone 5.

NOTE: I see on the website they say it will be available for Android soon - so be sure to check out the website for more details.



## AUDIO STACKED DECK By Steven Skindell



This App allows the professional mentalist or magician to learn or keep up with a memorized deck of playing cards. The common stacks can be selected from a menu or you can enter your own stack order. Professional male and female voice overs prompt you with the card or the number. You can select male/male, male/female, female/male or female/female voice overs.

This program is different from visual learning aids in that the question and answer prompting is done via audio. You can use this App listening to the questions and answers while driving. It works with the latest iPod/iPad and iPhone devices.

A video of how to operate the App will appear at the support site. It is very easy to use and will help you keep up with your stack!

### MY THOUGHTS:

This is one of the handiest Apps I've ever come across, and certainly the best for learning a card stack. I have this set up when I drive and connect my iPhone to bluetooth of the stereo system in the car. I can have the audio going in the background and learn my stacked deck. This is A MUST for anybody doing a stacked deck.

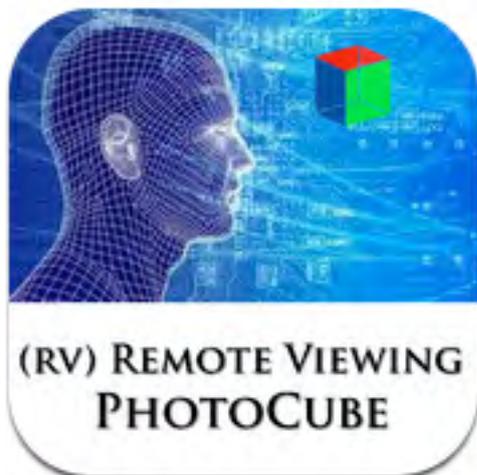
The best way to use this is to set it up so it gives you a number and you answer it back with the card, then it will give you the card to see if you are correct. Not only is this a great tool for learning a stacked deck but if you want to help refresh your memory then this is perfect. It doesn't hurt to keep up with your stacked deck so you never lose what you learnt.

**AVAILABLE:** iTunes - \$1.99

Requirements: Compatible with iPhone 3GS, iPhone 4, iPhone 4S, iPhone 5, iPod touch (3rd generation), iPod touch (4th generation), iPod touch (5th generation) and iPad. Requires iOS 5.0 or later. This App is optimized for iPhone 5.

# RV PHOTO CUBE

## By Steven Skindell



The Remote Viewing PhotoCube will absolutely astound your audience. The mentalist or magician shows a PhotoCube with different images on each side. While the mentalist or magician's back is turned the spectator places the photocube in a box or puts a napkin over the cube making it impossible for anyone to see which side of the photocube is upward. The spectator then concentrates on the selected image and the mentalist or magician uses his remote viewing skills to sense the image.

There is no need for the mentalist or magician to touch or look at the photocube and can keep his/her back turned and tell the spectator about the image they are looking at -- this can be done in the next room. Whatever image is facing upward is shown on the iPhone 4s, iPhone 5, iPod 5th generation, iPad Mini or iPad 3rd or 4th generation .. \*\* IMPORTANT NOTE: the device MUST have low energy Bluetooth 4.0 \*\*.

The effect can be repeated as often as desired and the performer is NEVER WRONG.

There are 4 built-in image sets of 6 pictures for each set and a 5th image set that allows you to pick images from your camera roll or taken from the camera within the App.

The Remote Viewing PhotoCube is limited only by your imagination.

NOTE: Hardware is required to use this App ... The hardware can be purchased from <http://www.skindellmagic.com/rvphotohelp2012.htm>

### MY THOUGHTS:

How much do I love this - well THIS is the reason I bought myself an iPhone.

This is without a doubt my favorite effect using my iPhone. Don't ask me how the technology works, but it does work. I have used this for over a month now and have blown the minds of everybody I've performed this on - it's THAT GOOD.

I have added a few extra touches to make this work for me, such as hiding my iPhone in a folio. I can open the folio and have my iPhone there as well as a pad of paper. This way nobody suspects, nor would you want them to, you have an iPhone. I use the folio throughout the show to write predictions and other things down, then when I need to do the RV effect I open the folder and can get instant access to my phone.

I also found the perfect cardboard box to put the RV Cube in - so the spectator can have any side face up and then 'hide it' inside the other box. This other box also makes a great travel box.

The distance of the RV cube and iPhone is excellent - I've used it on stage no problem, and actually went for a walk up my street once to check the distance before it cut out - so the reception is amazing.

There are endless possibilities for using the RV cube. One of the great things is you can use any picture you like on the cube and by taking photos on your iPhone you have your own design. I've also performed this in close-up situations where I have casually sat down and placed my iPhone on the table. Nobody every looks at it and I'm able to see what side of the cube the spectator has facing up.

In the past I've used cubes that give out vibrations, but you have to wait until it finishes before you can tell them. With the RV PhotoCube you get the image instantly and you never have to think - the photo on your iPhone matches the side of the cube that is face up.

What I love about this is that it can be a stand alone effect or you can use it in many other routines such as Mental Epic or a one ahead type routine. The cube is small enough to fit in your pocket yet large enough for the spectator to clearly see the pictures.

**PRICE:** \$64.99 for the APP (from iTunes)  
Hardware from Steven Skindell is \$64.99  
<http://www.skindellmagic.com/rvphotohelp2012.htm>



# SHOW CUES v2.3

## By Carl Andrews



One of the great things about doing reviews in VANISH is that I can do follow up reviews. This is important when it comes to Apps, especially when the developer keeps adding more improvements. Carl has constantly been working on this App taking suggestions from the many performers who are now using this in their shows. I would easily say this is the most popular music App out there now for magicians in regards to running your show.

Sound Control System Designed By Professionals For Professionals

Show Cues runs your entire show with a device you already carry with you—an iPhone/iPad or iPod Touch!

REQUIRES IOS 6.0 OR HIGHER.

What's the difference between Show Cues and other sound devices? About \$1500! Show Cues doesn't run lights, flash pots or make coffee. But, if you're looking for something super-simple and sure-fire, this App really does the trick. In fact, you can bundle Show Cues with the purchase of a new iPad and it would still cost less than other sound devices on the market.

### FEATURES:

- Loads Any Track or Playlist From Your iDevice
- Play/Pause, Fade-Out And Auto-Pause At Next Track
- Real-Time Clock
- Countdown Timer With Warning
- Indicator Lights Show Playback State
- Large Track Title Display
- Works Manually Or With Remote Control (remote sold separately)
- Plugs Into Any Sound System (cables sold separately)

What's New in Version 2.3

- If music is playing, the back button goes to track start
- Settings screen updated
- About screen updated
- Improved init screen graphic
- Fixed hangup on fresh installs
- Disabled buttons while countdown delay is counting
- Disabled play/delay on track 1 due to init process
- Adjust font to fit also adjusts next track title
- Animated next track title appear
- Faster track time display
- Auto save settings
- Play view sliding animation
- Prevent button press during fade
- Added activity indicator to init view
- Initialization now silent
- Fixed fade duration bug

— programmable remote center button

a) play a selected track at anytime

b) use as fade button

c) use as pause button (useful if using magnetic switch)

### MY THOUGHTS:

If you use music in your act and you want full control this is the APP for you. I know a variety of performers ranging from buskers to birthday party magicians and even cruise ship magicians who have access to an audio person, who are now using this App to run their entire show. I switched over myself on ships because the quality of sound techs on cruise lines has really dropped over the past few years, and I wanted to have control over my own music.

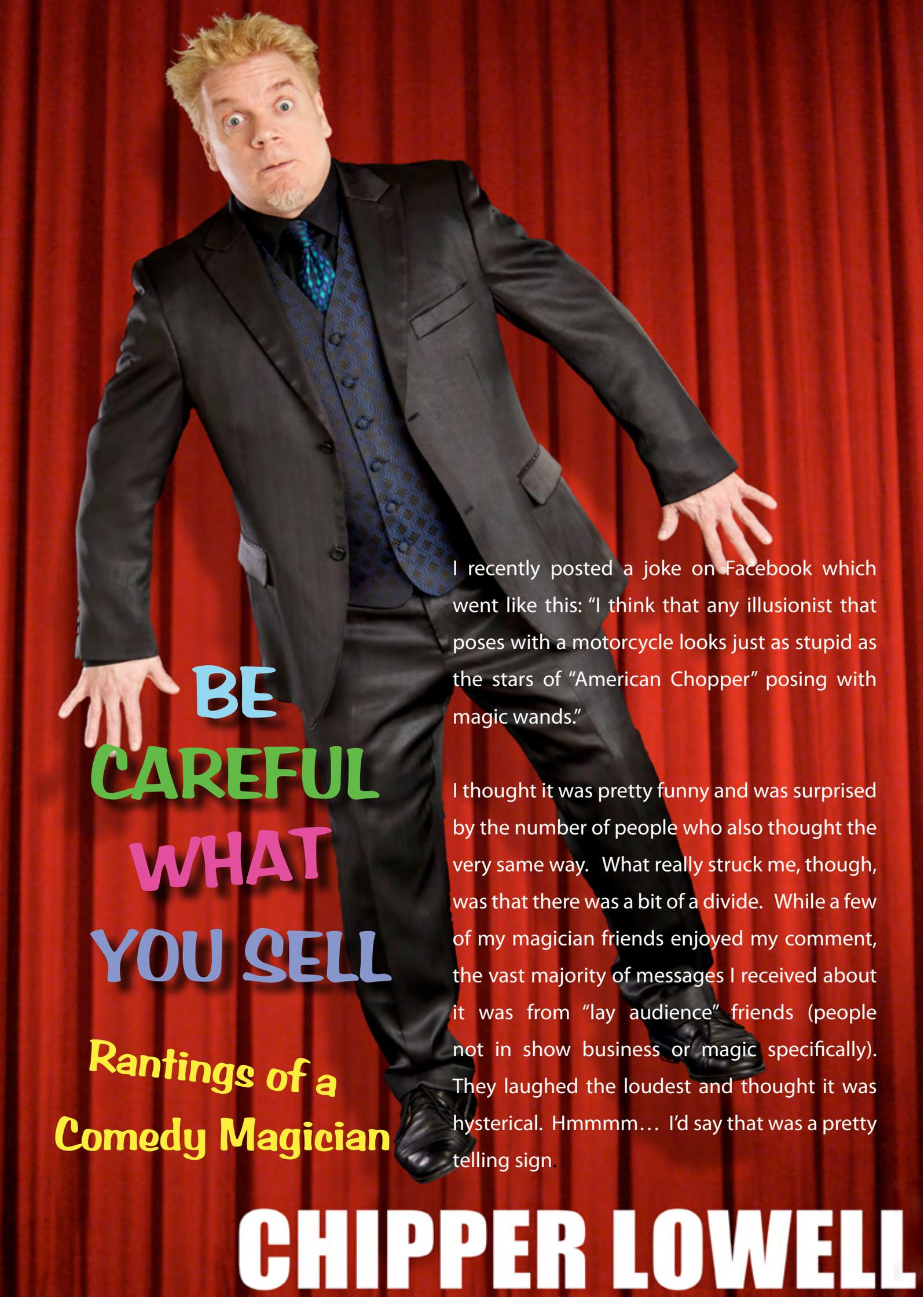
The latest version has some major improvements including the real-time clock, which for me is important during some of my routines. Personally I'd highly recommend getting the remote, which is sold separately.

I'm glad to see the fade in and out option now, which the original didn't have - this makes a huge difference and is much easier on the ear and flow of the show.

There are so many features it's hard to mention them all. The instructions are well written so anybody can follow and easily get this going. You can create pop-up cues for each track which is so useful if a sound tech is running the show from your iPhone or iPad. Loading your playlist is easy to do, you can set visual alarms so you know how much time is left, etc. Why pay over \$1000 when this will do everything and MORE for only \$89.99

AVAILABLE from iTunes - \$89.99

: Compatible with iPhone 3GS, iPhone 4, iPhone 4S, iPhone 5, iPod touch (3rd generation), iPod touch (4th generation), iPod touch (5th generation) and iPad. Requires iOS 6.0 or later. This App is optimized for iPhone 5.



**BE  
CAREFUL  
WHAT  
YOU SELL**

**Rantings of a  
Comedy Magician**

I recently posted a joke on Facebook which went like this: "I think that any illusionist that poses with a motorcycle looks just as stupid as the stars of "American Chopper" posing with magic wands."

I thought it was pretty funny and was surprised by the number of people who also thought the very same way. What really struck me, though, was that there was a bit of a divide. While a few of my magician friends enjoyed my comment, the vast majority of messages I received about it was from "lay audience" friends (people not in show business or magic specifically). They laughed the loudest and thought it was hysterical. Hmmmm... I'd say that was a pretty telling sign.

**CHIPPER LOWELL**

The sad and bitter truth is that we magicians often live in our own little bubble and imagine that what we do is totally fine in the eyes of the general public when in fact it's not. Like a nerdy kid oblivious to wearing 'high-water' pants to school, we can't seem to see how others truly see us.

My post on Facebook was referring to all of the many posters and billboards that we've all seen throughout the years, especially in Las Vegas, of "mega illusionists" showing off their beloved motorcycle. Yes, you have a wonderful motorcycle vanish in your stage show, but come on guys. Let's get real. No one is buying a ticket to catch your show because they just can't wait to see a motorcycle up on a stage – the very same thing they can easily see in any parking lot in Any Town, USA.

The twisted logic of "Let's show the public my wheels because I'm cool" is just an alternate version of the old and more honest statement of "I don't really have a personality, so I'll show off my props instead."

Okay, now I've done it. This may ruffle a few more feathers out there, but how many of us still use publicity photos where we are proudly showing off our silks, card flourishes, rabbits, and billiard balls, while we standing behind it all with a forced smile?

What I'm getting at here is that it doesn't matter the size of the show, be it as a close-up magician or a stage illusionist, we shouldn't allow our characters to be hidden away in our publicity photos, as if we're being protected by props or tricks that pretty much anyone could run out and buy at a moment's notice.

Yes, it is sometimes a cool image to show off what our actual stage show will look like to potential ticket buyers, and I'm not wagging my finger at that at all. Instead I'm suggesting we take a hard, close look at our promotional materials to see what we're truly selling. Is our personality first and foremost in the photo? Or are we simply playing the role of a model showing off the props (insert DOVE or MOTORCYCLE here) as if we're part of a bizarre SkyMall catalogue that sells doves and motorcycles??

So why do we think that a photo of a motorcycle is okay? Plain and simple: The amount of money spent on the illusion seems to denote (incorrectly) the importance of the motorcycle. Oh my God! It will actually VANISH into thin air! How cool am I? I really should be straddling that bike in ALL of my advertising!

Wrong.

It makes about as much sense as an ad of a pretty girl with a big smile holding up a tube of toothpaste and we're supposed to think it's about the girl. Warped

logic. We all collectively know and understand that it's not about the girl at all, but about the item she's holding up. Toothpaste. So, to that extent, a guy on a Harley isn't selling magic, nor himself. He's selling a Harley to his public. Talk about a waste of advertising dollars.

Here are two more examples. If you look through the last couple of decades of advertising for David Copperfield, you will find a good 90% of the time the images are only of him. That's it. Sometimes it's even just his eyes. Without question, anyone viewing his ads knows 100% that it's an ad for Copperfield. Not his illusions. Him.

Even more recently, the hit touring show, THE ILLUSIONISTS, has no magic props or illusions displayed in their poster. None. Their main marketing ad is focused entirely on the five to seven magical "characters" who are standing in a "V" formation looking straight ahead, showing the world without question that they are the true stars of the show. Personality first. Everything else, secondary.

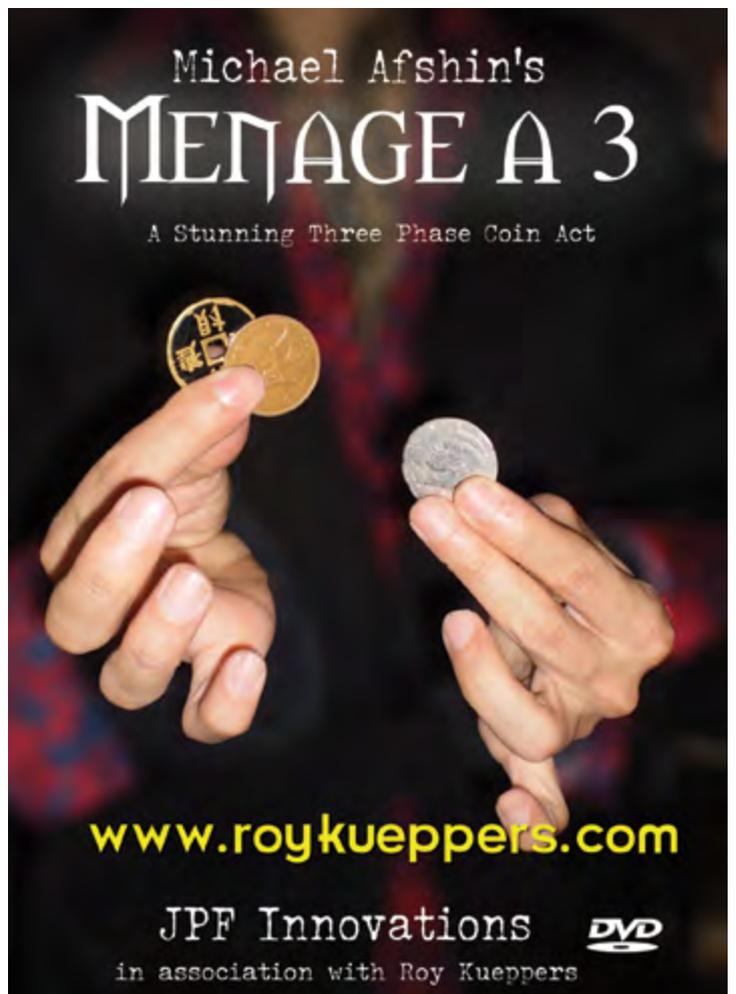
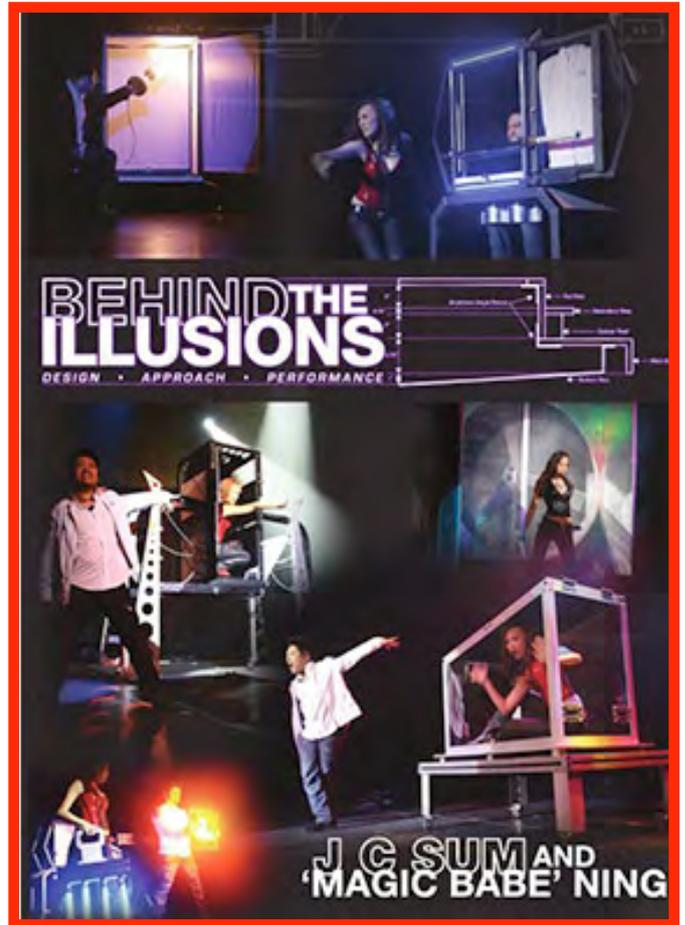
But Chipper, some of you will huff and puff, I've seen tons of illusionists and magicians who DO have props in their photos, and they seem to be doing quite well. Well, to be honest, there ARE ways to take a good photo. And many of the good ones that still want to sneak their Origami into the shot are smart enough to make sure that they, themselves, are the true focus more than the illusion. They very often are posed forward while the illusion is framed behind them. They are smart enough to know that it's their personality first and foremost that should leap out from their promotional materials, and not necessarily the clutter of magic crap that surrounds them. (and I say "magic crap" with true love and affection.)

One of the things that I often do is collect the thoughts and opinions of total strangers regarding my own photos and promotional materials. After all, they will be the ones making the all important decision to buy or not buy a ticket to my show, or to book me for a corporate event. I don't ask fellow magicians, because they can be somewhat biased, and usually have a hard time looking at something from a different perspective.

The strangers I meet can sometimes quickly tell me some amazingly candid things about the shots, images, layout, copy, etc., that I show them, and over the next few days or weeks I'm able to more easily hone it all down into something that will ultimately (and hopefully) appeal to the masses. I find this to really be the best way to work. I can't tell you the countless amount of times when I have designed something I thought was amazing only to have it shot down immediately by several 'normal' people, one after another. Wow! Brutal. And yet, exactly what we're going for. Honesty versus denial and insincere compliments that don't, in the big picture, translate into more gigs and happy audiences.

One more thought. Some of you may ask, "What about kids shows? Don't they need to see my cool and colorful props?" Well, then, you've missed my point completely. I'm not bashing the prop itself but what the focus of the image is. Even if you're a birthday party magician, you should still be the main focus and selling point of your shows. The photo should be engaging, tell a story, and create a good sense of someone looking at it and saying, "Yes! That's exactly what my group will enjoy watching!" An action shot showing off your personality with kids laughing like crazy will always get you more work than one of you smiling next to a warehouse of props.

So, I beg of you to take a look at your photos and decide for yourself if they truly reflect your own personality and image, and are really interesting and engaging enough to make someone buy a ticket or pick up the phone to book you. And remember... Nobody, I mean nobody, has ever said, "Hey, we're in Vegas for a few days and we'd really like to see a magician who likes to sit on motorcycles."



SkindellMagic Presents 2 New Products:

## rvPhotoCube Hardware and App

Intro price of Hardware: \$64.99 and the Software App \$64.99.



The Remote Viewing PhotoCube (rvPhotoCube) is an App and Hardware Sensor that connects to your Bluetooth 4.0 iPhone, iPad, iPad Mini, iPod and outputs in realtime the image, sound and/or vibration of the picture appearing upward on the rvPhotoCube. You can select from the 4 included image sets or customize your own image set from within the app (6 pictures and 6 sounds). Templates to make up the rvPhotoCubes can be downloaded from the dedicated website. To purchase and see a video demo please go to <http://www.rvPhotoCube.com>

## Audio Stacked Deck App

Intro price of App is \$1.99



The Audio Stacked Deck app displays visual and sound cues of the common mem / stacked decks - or you can enter your own customized one. The app helps you refresh your memory of the stack while you are driving (it plays audio in the background). You can purchase the app from the iTunes App Store (Search: Audio Stacked Deck). For more details and a video demo please go to <http://www.AudioStackedDeck.com>

Email: [sskindell@comcast.net](mailto:sskindell@comcast.net)



# HOW TO PRODUCE A TOURING ILLUSION SHOW LEIF DAVID

**W**hen I was getting my start in magic John Kaplan's "Magic School Bus" show was one of the first live magic shows I ever saw. I remember that it was a fundraiser for an elementary school in Penticton, BC. Almost 20 years later and John is still touring Canada with his show, commanding thousands of dollars per show for himself and earning thousands of dollars for his clients.

Since he's obviously on to something I wanted to ask him how he did it. It turns out he's leaving this week to tour a month-long tour in New Zealand and Australia, but he found enough time to do this interview with me. But first, Who is John Kaplan?

John Kaplan's career began, as most magicians' do, when he received a magic kit at age 9.



## Kaplan is the modern day guru in touring illusion shows

Inspired by the life of Houdini and determined to make magic his life's work, after high school John became a sorcerer's apprentice, finding as his mentor Micky Hades – author, publisher, illusion builder and inventor of magic tricks (such as the world-famous "Micky Hades Improved Finger Chopper") – and it was from Micky that John learned the business side of the magic business.

Early contest wins and TV appearances gave John a running start as he pursued his childhood ambition.

Many interesting career high points followed, including promotional shows that saw John escaping from straitjackets, making cars and people disappear, headlining gala shows for major sporting events, performing on cruise ships, in comedy clubs and being Jay Leno's opening act.

**Leif:** *I understand that you and Micky Hades go way back. Can you tell me a little bit about that?*

**John:** Micky was the first magician I ever saw. I was 9 years old, and Micky performed at the annual S.A.I.T. staff family Christmas party, which is where my father worked.

That Christmas I received a "Dante's Magic Set" and I was hooked. When I was 12 I met another Calgary magician, Bill Spragg, who performed at a neighbour's birthday party. Bill could tell I was seriously interested in magic so he befriended me and reintroduced me to Micky by inviting me to attend one of Micky's famous "Magic Fun and Film Festival" weekend conventions. That was when I discovered that not only was Micky a local performing magician, he was also THE magic shop in Calgary.

I worked a little part time at Micky's shop during high school, and upon



"... I received a "Dante's Magic Set" and I was hooked ..."

**John has been touring for 25 years**

graduation took up a 3-year apprenticeship with him. I did this because of the success of another of his protégés, Dale Harney who had become the pre-eminent magician in western Canada with several successful television series, touring several seasons with the Shrine Circus throughout North America. As well, at around 15 I'd met Reveen backstage through Micky and he told me "Stick with Micky, you'll do well" so I figured that my best route would be to learn from Micky. And, of course, I've never regretted it!

**Leif:** *Lots of people know you because of your Fundraising Magic shows. When did you start selling your show as a fundraising show for groups?*

John: 1980 was the first year I performed a fundraising show. A school contacted me about presenting my show as a family night fundraiser for them. Well, by then I was performing a couple of stage illusions, like the Zig Zag and Metamorphosis, and I had about an hour-long show so I said sure, and that's really how it all began. They came to me.

**Leif: What types of groups do you sell your fundraising show to?**

John: In the beginning it was just schools. Not long after I did that first fundraiser, Stan Kramien released his course on fundraising, and I grabbed a copy immediately. Stan had primarily targeted service clubs, so that prompted me to market my fundraising show to groups like the Kinsmen, Lions, Elks in addition to the schools. Over the years, I developed a system that's usable by virtually any community group looking to raise funds, so have expanded my prospect list to include all sorts of organizations. Youth groups, service clubs and schools remain my prime market, but I've also helped associations, hospital foundations, disease-fighting campaigns ... I think you'd be hard-pressed to name a type of community organization that I haven't worked on behalf of!

**Leif: Give people an idea of the scale of your fundraising show. How much equipment do you travel with? How many assistants?**

John: My show is a

lean, small to medium-sized 90-minute illusion show. It's designed to be completely self-contained. In addition to all the props and illusions, we carry lights, sound and backdrops so that we can perform and look good in practically any venue, from school gyms to theatres to arenas. I work with 2 dancer/assistants and a stage tech. The 4 of us travel comfortably in a crew cab pickup, camper on the back, 20-ft equipment trailer behind.

**Leif: School parent groups, and community groups often have their staff change every year. How do you stay in contact with these groups each year, and how do you continually prove yourself to these new people year after year?**

John: Yes, changing membership of volunteer-based organizations does make it a challenge to build a long-term relationship with a single client. On the plus side, the fact that every year or few years there's new people involved means that there's always a constant supply of new prospects in the marketplace, which is a good thing.

I stay in touch with my principal contacts primarily through e-mail and newsletters, plus I have a system that helps ensure that I stay connected to an organization if or when my principal contact is no longer involved.

Due to my many years of service to the fundraising industry, I'm able to sell my program largely based on reputation. Again, I've developed systems for collecting great testimonials and creating vast amounts of social proof to

plify and streamline my approach to reputation-based marketing. It largely boils down to having a show that my clients love, accompanied by a proven fundraising plan that works. There are several other very important elements as well, such as how to manage sponsor communications for example, that all work together to create a seamless and positive experience for both the audiences we perform for as well as the clients that have booked my Fundraising Magic™ program.

**Leif: In this new media world where social media is king, and traditional media advertising is so expensive, what do you think some of the new opportunities are for promoting shows and selling tickets?**

John: I continue to use direct mail as my primary offline marketing tool, and I do provide sponsors of my Fundraising Magic shows tools and content they can use to promote their events through social media. Online, I use e-mail, Google Adwords, Facebook and of course websites to market my program. I'll admit I've got some catching up to do when it comes to maximizing the effectiveness of social media marketing to promote my program, as I see it definitely offering great opportunity and potential. I've had some ideas on how to utilize online resources in selling show tickets, still in the conceptual stages.

**Leif: Are faxes and phone rooms viable?**

I've never wanted to get involved in telemarketing, so have no first-hand experience with phone rooms and their viability. Anecdotally I've heard that they're not producing the results they once

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were. Broadcast fax used to be fairly successful for me, but I've noticed a definite drop in response so no longer use it to the extent I once did.

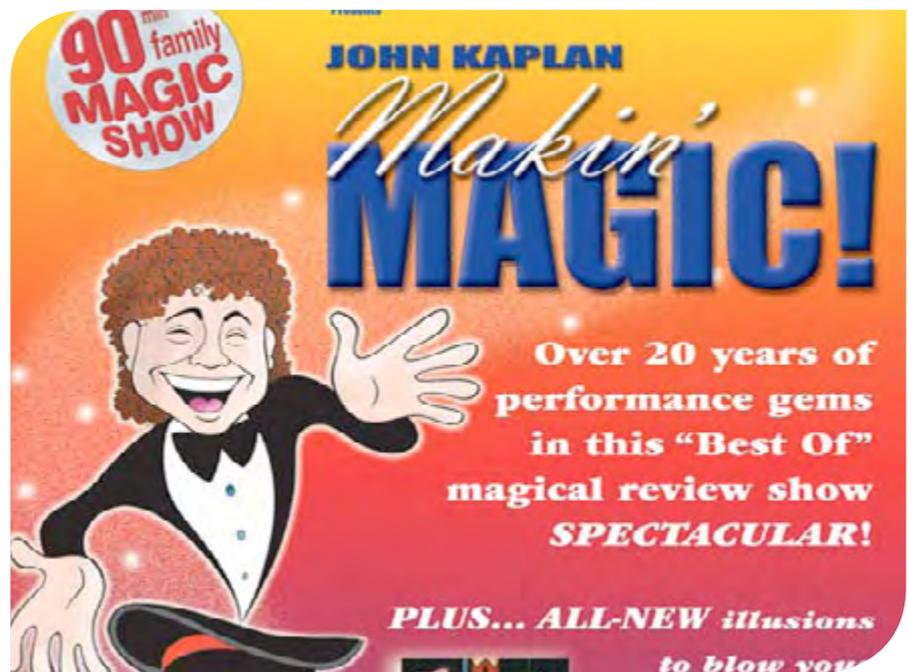
*Leif: What are some of the logistical and scheduling challenges associated with a touring show?*

John: Probably the most challenging aspect is labor. Because I tour my program seasonally, it's not always possible to maintain the same cast and crew from one tour to the next, so that can mean a constant revolving door of finding and training personnel. That said, I have to say that I've been fortunate with knowing who to hire, and keeping them happy enough to the point that I've had loyal show staff who have been there for me when I need them, including many that have done 10 or more consecutive tours.

When it comes to scheduling, in the 80's and 90's I was booking 2-1/2 to 4-month tours from coast-to-coast, Vancouver Island to Newfoundland and back and! However, for the past decade I decided to do shorter tours – around 3 to 6 weeks, closer to home in just the western provinces. In booking my tours, I endeavour to book an average of 5 show days out of 7 ... in other words, a 5-day working week. Of course, the schedule seldom works out in a typical Monday-to-Friday work week fashion; sometimes we'll do 10 days in a row and then there'll be a week off before the next dates or something along those lines. But, as long as I'm averaging 5 working days in 7, that's a sold-out schedule. My aim is to book show dates within no more than 4 hours of each other, and anything over 6 hours I like to put a travel day in between. During the pre-tour booking process, that travel day has a good chance of being filled in with another gig half-way between.

Because of our tour schedule, groups get us when we're available for their area, so obviously that means some dates are lost to groups that have a limited time-frame to do their fundraiser, etc. Because I do both a spring and fall tour, often I'm able to

**“That's harnessing your wagon to somebody else's horse, definitely not a place I want to be.”**



schedule those groups in a different season if date availability doesn't work out for their initial preference. Lately, I've been getting booked by some groups as much as a year-and-a-half or so ahead.

Other logistical challenges are what you might expect ... vehicle problems, venue issues like small stages, awkward load-ins, inadequate power provisions, and so on. The kind of difficulties almost any performer might endure.

*Leif: What are some of the negatives to offering a fundraising show, and what are some of the positives?*

John: Besides the staffing, scheduling and logistical challenges – which are certainly not exclusive to fundraising shows – I think the negative aspects (which I've managed to overcome) are the issues of sponsors properly and effectively hosting the event, and my being properly compensated for the performance.

If, for example, you offer your show as a fundraiser to a group on the basis of a percentage of the ticket sales, this can mean you have to take a much more active role in the promotion and running of the event ... because if you don't, your paycheck is completely reliant on the ability of others to get the job done. That's harnessing your wagon to somebody else's horse, definitely not a place I want to be. (You only have to get burned a few times in your career to figure this one out).

I solved both problems (that of the sponsor running the event properly, and that of my being happy with my paycheck) by creating a step-by-step, fill-in-the-blanks and system for them to follow – one that's been road-tested by hundreds of groups over my many years in the business and proven effective.

Providing this fundraising system to my show sponsors has enabled me to set my rate, and sell my show on the basis of a flat fee. It's been a win-win – but only because of the system I pro-

vide. This is far more than booking the show, and giving the sponsor some posters and flyers. The system literally takes them by the hand and leads them smoothly from their very first committee meeting right through until the day of the show, and offers them a full toolkit to not only promote the event, but to maximize their earnings with it. And that's been the key. It's allowed me to focus more on what I love, which is performing magic.

**Leif: You've become a master at setting up small tours to maximize your energy and profits. How do you get groups to select a date that works for your schedule?**

John: Of course, as I've already mentioned, it's not always possible to match my availability with a group's timeline. In many cases they are provided with a small selection of dates to choose from, or wait until another season. Thankfully, as has been proven time and again, a group's success with my Fundraising Magic™ event is far less dependent upon WHEN it's held than with HOW the event is undertaken. Again, that brings us back to the system provided. And, when groups see the success others have had with the program, they come to realize this and are often happy to bring us in when we're available for their area.

**Leif: Is it possible to sell a fundraising show on a smaller scale, such as with a one man stand-up show?**

John: Absolutely. The system I developed to turn my show into an event fundraiser capable of raising thousands of dollars for a group is just that ... a "system". It's a system for running ANY event fundraiser successfully, because it focuses on the 3 main requirements: Planning, Promotion and Profitability. It doesn't matter WHAT the event is ... a magic & illusion show, a variety night, a carnival, a concert, a play ... there's a right way and a wrong way to run an event. It's simply a matter of adaptation.

For example, a number of years ago I had an opportunity to address this very situation by creating the "Night Magic" program, which is a complete adaptation of my Fundraising Magic™ system to a one-man show, perfect for the performer who can do either/or some strolling magic as well as a 45-minute stand-up banquet style act. And guess what? Right out of the gate, the first "Night Magic" event we booked netted the sponsor around \$10,000!!!

Since then I've had all manner of performers invest in my Fundraising Magic™ program – mentalists, hypnotists, clowns, variety artists, musicians, singers – again, as long as you can put together a show that's capable of being a stand-alone event, you can market it as a fundraising vehicle. And that market is huge...

**Leif: What was your approach to getting into high-end shows? Or more specifically, how did you build up your business to a point where you no longer had to take smaller dates?**

John: I'd have to say it came down to focusing on one niche. Early in my career, as so many performers do, I found myself taking any and every available gig. Along the way I decide what venues and audiences I preferred, and decided to focus on that market which, as we've been discussing, happened to be family-audience fundraising. I think if you take a look at all successful performers, many of them are successful in a specific field or market, be it trade shows, cruise ships, fairs & festivals, corporate, or whatever. Just happened that for me, it was fundraising.

**Leif: You recently released "Santa Appears" DVD and on it you describe multiple ways to make Santa, a CEO, or other celebrity guest of honor appear by magic. When in the booking process do you offer this upsell? How much do you charge for this additional service? If people want to learn more about your DVD where can they do that?**

John: It varies ... sometimes making Santa or whoever appear is already the client's main requirement, and sometimes it's that little "extra" something I'll offer after the show booking has already been made.

The additional cost also varies, depending upon the client and their requirements. I've had situations where I've offered the Santa arrival illusion for another couple hundred bucks ... and I've also had situations like my "Santa-via-Satellite" program where the client came to me seeking "something spectacular" for their annual Santa arrival event and paid me tens of thousands of dollars to create it. You have to be open to a client's needs, and willing and able to address them.

**Leif: If you could go back in time to when you were a teenager/ young adult performing magic, what are some of the things you would have done differently?**

John: That's really tough to answer. You look at who you are, where you've been and where you're at, and you realize that everything that came before has led to now. I certainly have no regrets ... life's been good, I've been blessed with a terrific wife and family, I've had the opportunity to make a living from a childhood ambition, I've had a number of personal and professional accomplishments of which I've been proud. I figured out at an early age what I wanted to do with my life, and I guess the decisions I made along the way made it possible. I was lucky that my parents allowed me to make the choices I made, and I would tell my kids to follow their passions as well.

**Leif: Thanks again for taking the time to do this interview!**





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# THE ILLUSIONISTS SHOW REVIEW

BY RICHARD WEBSTER

## A SELL OUT SEASON

"The biggest selling magic show on earth" just finished a successful season in New Zealand to sell out crowds.

Auckland, New Zealand May 25th

The Illusionists lived up to their claim of being the "biggest selling magic show on earth", with a sell-out twelve day season in Auckland. All the local magicians, plus many from other parts of the country, had been looking forward to it for months, and our expectations were exceeded. "The Illusionists - Witness the Impossible" is a fast-moving, fun-filled, breathtaking magic spectacular that contains something for everyone. Finally, a bit of Vegas in Auckland!

One of the joys of a show featuring seven performers is that each one is completely different, and all the people I've spoken to afterwards named different entertainers as their favorite.

My eleven-year-old grandson was impressed with Andrew Basso, the Escapologist, and found it hard to believe he

could hold his breath for three minutes while escaping from "Houdini's Water Torture Cell". Andrew was handcuffed and padlocked upside down and placed into the cell in full view of the audience. All he had was a bobby pin to help him escape. No wonder he has to phone his mother in Italy after every show! At the start of the show, with the entire cast on stage, Andrew also did a straight-jacket escape while hanging upside down. This is the first time I've ever expressed a desire to see more escapology.

My sixteen-year-old granddaughter loved the modern, alternative, bizarre approach of Dan Sperry, the Anti-Conjuror. He has tattoos, Gothic makeup, and an unusual hairstyle. He "taught" the audience his broken bottle game (Russian roulette), with the help of a "volunteer". I was particularly impressed with his Lifesaver effect, in

which he swallowed a Lifesaver, and then made it reappear by sawing at his throat with dental floss. Dan also performed a delightful, fast-moving dove act. The audience gasped when a dove changed color instantly.

My wife loved the gentle, avuncular approach of Kevin James, and was entranced with his floating paper rose. I've been fortunate enough to see Kevin perform before, and loved seeing his production of a miniature Charlie Chaplin and his hilarious chainsaw sawing in half again. He is a consummate entertainer, and his snowstorm in China that filled the theatre made a wonderful finale to the show.

We all loved the incredible comedy of Jeff Hobson. He started the show by walking around the audience with a paper bag in his hand, asking people how they were and asking them to name their favorite color. No matter what color they said, he produced a pink balloon from the bag, blew it up, and sent it flying into the audience. He finally enticed one volunteer onto the stage and made him a pink balloon dog that could perform tricks. Jeff destroyed the dog, placed the pieces in the paper bag that had previously been shown empty, and restored it. After this he chose a young man from the audience to help him do his famous folded four times chosen card from the mouth. I'll never forget the stunned look on his volunteer's face, as Jeff danced and skipped around him while he was supposed to be shuffling a deck of cards. Jeff appeared frequently during the show, and performed hilarious versions of professor's nightmare and the egg bag. I also loved his cigarette manipulations in his No Smoking routine. Jeff's personality and humor held the show together. It was a privilege and delight to see him perform live.

I'm not usually keen on illusions, but Mark Kalin, the Gentleman, and Jinger Leigh, the Enchantress, have converted me. They were slick, highly entertaining, and fooled me badly with their sawing in half. Two people from



the audience held Jinger in position with straps that prevented her from escaping. Jinger also escaped from a flaming tube that had had spikes pushed through it, and reappeared from the audience. She also levitated. I've decided that I love illusions as long as they're fast moving, with no time wasted.

Philip Escoffey, the Mentalist, performed an interesting three chair effect, in which one person chose an ESP symbol, another a card from a deck of playing cards, and the third a word from a dictionary. He divined all three, and then proved that he knew in advance which ones they would select. At the start of the show, Philip did a voice over saying that he already knew a great deal about the audience. As he did this, a camera panned the audience and displayed them on a giant screen. Each time he gave a statistic, such as "at some time in their lives 12% of men have worn women's underwear", the camera moved in to

a close up of someone's face. On the opening night, the camera unerringly picked out the celebrities in the audience who were most likely to match the statements.

All seven performers are at the very top of their game, and their acts were well honed, entertaining, and polished to perfection. There were no dead moments - as soon as one act finished, the next one was ready to take its place.

The Illusionists were ably assisted by Z, a highly talented band from Los Angeles, who have toured with Nas and Kanye West. Their music, much of it composed especially for this show, was an excellent accompaniment to the magic.

The Illusionists provide a superb evening of quality stage magic. It is family entertainment at its best, and an evening my family and I will never forget.

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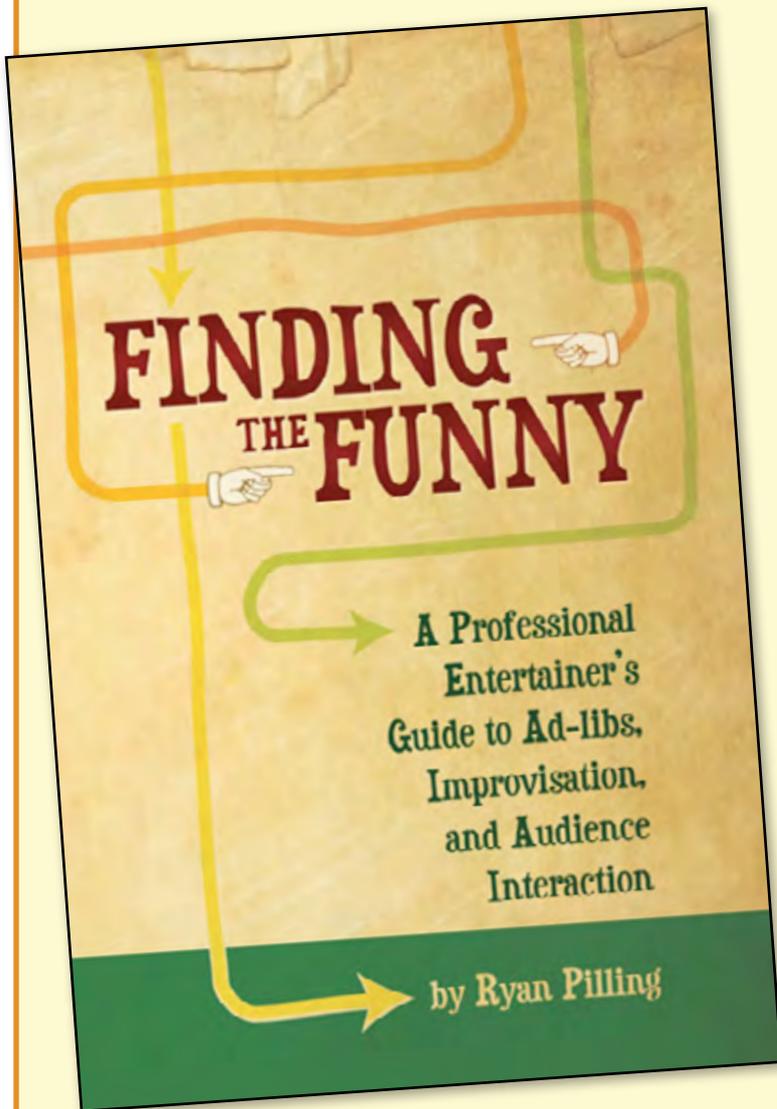
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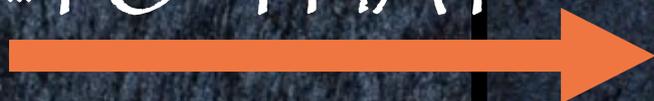
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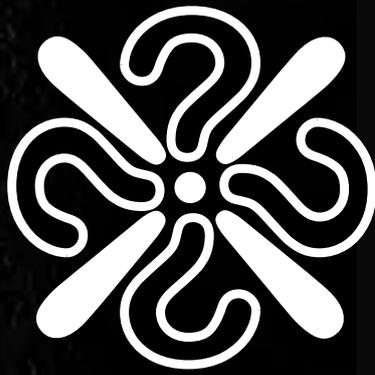


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