

VANISH

JUNE 2018

EDITION 47



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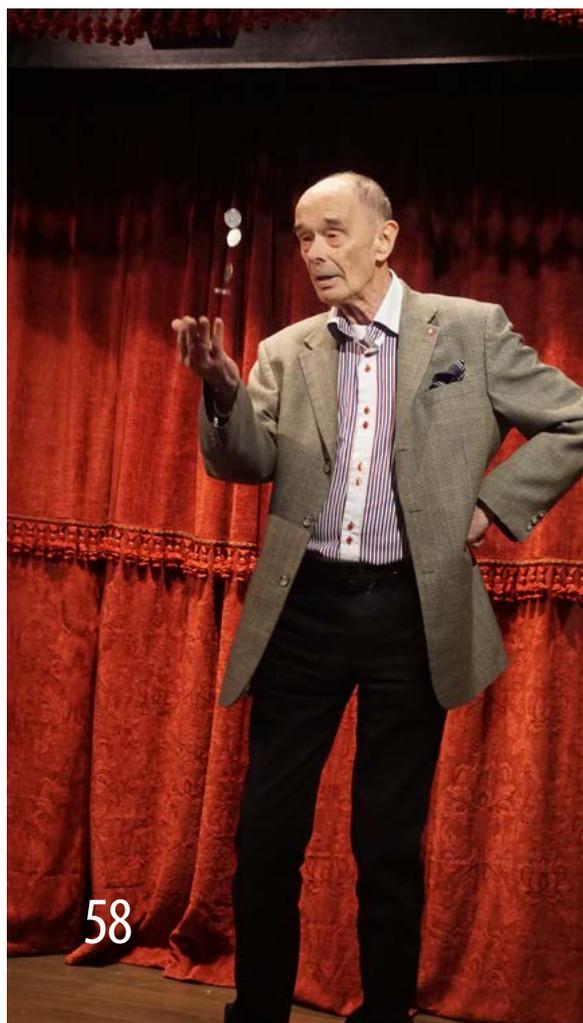


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FROM THE EDITOR

LIFE CHANGING

When I look at this months edition of VANISH and peruse the stories and names, two words come to mind - LIFE CHANGING.

I attended a recent workshop put on by a local magic club featuring the incredible Bob Fitch. I met Bob about 12 years ago but have known about him for much longer. As you will read in the feature story Bob has helped many magicians and is THE guy to go to if you want to take your act to a new level. Any magician who is serious about our craft, no matter how long you've been in this business, needs to do a session with Bob. He will tell you things nobody else will and brings a lifetime of skills to his workshops.

I have been doing my act for almost 30 years now, and Bob was able to get me out of my stagnant feeling. He literally helped me bring my show back to life. The interesting point he made was that "it is never too late." While I wish I had Bob look over my act 20 years ago it was great to be able to do it now. As we mature our view of the world changes, and our act should evolve too. Even though I believe my particular act is timeless I have changed inside and therefore what I'm bringing to my show is very different than what I presented twenty years ago. Bob really makes you think and when your light bulb switches on you come away feeling revitalized with an approach that makes a world of difference.

This month has seen the start of Britain's and America's Got Talent auditions. It is very interesting to see how magic has gone from corny to the 'coolest kid on the block' since the show started. It's also fascinating to see how life-changing it has been for many magicians. Currently on AGT Shin Lim has just blown the show apart by performing an incredible set and in the UK magic was very well represented with Maddox Dixon (VANISH cover 46), Matthew Johnson and others. It appears magic is no longer the laughing stock it once was on the show and in particular close-up magic has become the norm. Congratulations to those performers who made our craft look so good and get the respect it deserves. What is upsetting though is how the UK tabloids tend to expose the magic secrets the very next day as headlines. We can only hope people really don't care how something is done, and yes, there are far more important news headlines than knowing how a magic trick works.

I have been working on a very special project related to VANISH, it's been about six years in the making. The first of these projects will be available in a few months and will be a very limited edition run. Without saying too much I know these will go quickly, however, I hope to give readers the chance to be the first to know ... more details as they come in.

Paul Romhany

SHIN LIM

BEST AGT PERFORMANCE

VANISH MAGIC MAGAZINE was proud to be the first magazine to feature the incredible Shin Lim, who has yet again proven he is in a league all by himself when it comes to bringing art to magic and creating the impossible. He has taken card magic to a level that nobody has even done before. His woven story as a card changes, vanishes and changes places is something to behold.

Magician Shin Lim appears during the America's Got Talent season premiere — which showcases one of his incredible tricks.

Seen below in the video, Lim does close-up magic with host Tyra Banks. After having her sign a card, he proceeds to have the card disappear and reappear in different places. Tyra and the four AGT judges were shocked and the audience continuously gasped as he controlled the stage with his act.

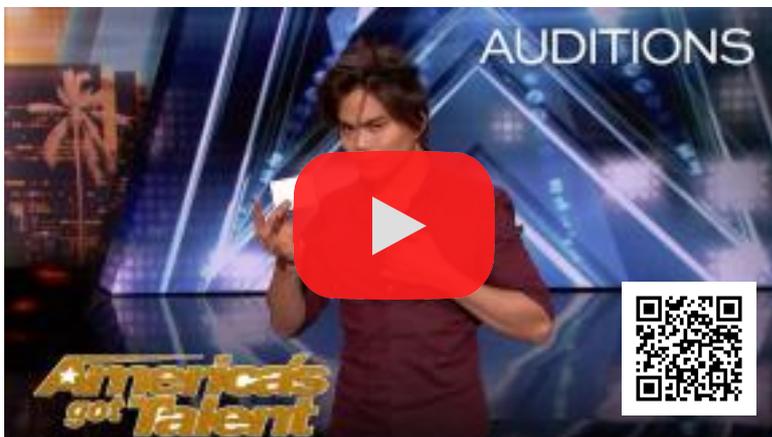
The last time we spoke to him, a few months ago for VANISH he mentioned he was looking at appearing on this years AGT, however what he didn't tell us was just how incredible his new routine was.

How Lim got into doing card tricks as actually a good advertisement for YouTube. He explained that he used to spend a lot of time self-learning how to do tricks by watching the videos. His brother gets some of the credit after showing Lim a trick back in the day, before telling him to figure out how it worked by watching YouTube videos.

Lim actually calls himself a "Sleight of Hand Artist" and prefers not to be labeled as a magician. His website calls what he does "the art of illusion".

While what Lim does on stage may appear to be magic, he explains it as carefully choreographed routines. No matter what it's called, Lim has become very good at what he does on the stage and The Huffington Post call him the number one magician in the world. After seeing this performance on AGT we have to agree with them.

Be sure to check back to our SHIN LIM edition with our exclusive world first interview that we did.



MARTY PUTZ

SHOWING THE UK HIS FUNNY BONES

In this business there are a very small handful of people who are what I call 'funny bones.' David Williamson is one and Marty Putz is another. On the recent Britain's Got Talent Marty was able to show UK audiences just why he is one of the most original and creative comedy performers in the world.

Readers of VANISH MAGIC MAGAZINE will of course know of Marty as he was on a cover last year and we also reviewed a variety show he was in with him stealing the show.

If you have the opportunity to see Marty live then run don't walk to his show. You'll be glad you did.



Congratulations to Matt Johnson who did incredibly well with his two escapes on the latest BGT. Matthew is one of the few performers I've seen who actually make escapes look real and breathtaking. I know we will be hearing a lot more about him and his amazing journey. He has an incredible story to tell and VANISH looks forward to sharing it with you. It's an inspirational journey and proves that you shouldn't give up on your dreams and hard work does pay off.

VITALY BECKMAN OFF-BROADWAY SEASON



Hailed as one of the most unique and innovative illusionists in the world, Vitaly Beckman recently stumped Penn & Teller on their hit TV show Fool Us with one of his diabolically clever creations. Blending art and illusion with his captivating style, Vitaly Beckman's one-of-a-kind theatrical experience retraces his journey from a boy with a dream to a man with a vision. During this journey, the audience rediscovers along with Vitaly the importance of finding beauty and wonder in everyday life and in all living things.

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If you find yourself in New York then I highly recommend you go see VITALY - AN EVENING OF WONDERS. There is a reason many magicians who see him say it is the very best magic show they have ever seen. When ever anybody asks me who my all

time faovirte magician is I tell them Vitaly. Faces that disappear from drivers' licenses. Paintbrushes that paint on their own. Photographs that literally come to life right before your eyes. Brace yourself for a whole new take on magic and step into Vitaly's world.

BUSKERS GO CASHLESS IN LONDON

all the capital's boroughs over the coming months.

Using card readers for online payments is becoming increasingly popular among small traders and charities who cannot afford the infrastructure traditionally used for credit card payments.

This is major news for anybody who busks. As society moves towards a much more cashless society buskers have found that their income on the streets has become less and less. A lot of this has to do with the fact people just don't carry cash any more. this new trial in London is a step in the right direction and will help a lot of buskers whose income has been threatened by the card society.

London has introduced a contactless payment scheme for buskers in what the organisers claim is a world first.

In addition to tossing loose change into a box, passers-by can use card readers to make contactless payments.

It has been launched in partnership with Swedish tech firm iZettle, bought this month by US payments giant PayPal.

"Now, more Londoners will be able to show their support to the capital's brilliant, talented street performers," said London mayor Sadiq Khan.

He announced on Sunday that the scheme will be rolled out across the city after successful trials.

Charlotte Campbell, a full-time busker,

was part of the trial and says that after two weeks it "had a significant impact on contributions".

The card readers, which plug into smartphones and other devices, allow tap-to-donate payments. "More people than ever tap-to-donate whilst I sing, and often, when one person does, another follows," Ms Campbell said.

The organisation Busk in London, which is working with iZettle on the scheme, said it would be made available to buskers in

Founded in Stockholm in 2010, iZettle started out selling credit and debit card readers, but has more recently expanded with an e-commerce platform which tracks items such as sales and inventory for its customers.



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- Paul Romhany, *Vanish Magazine* September 2017

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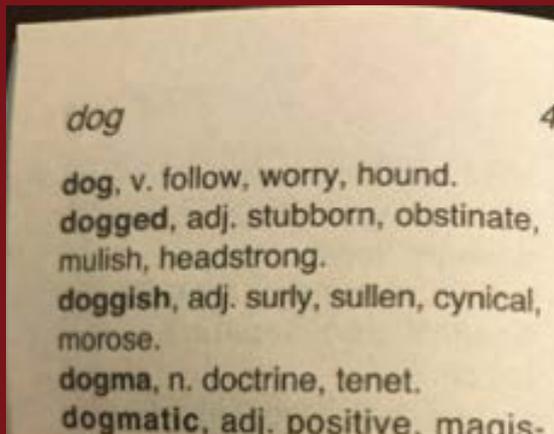
EFFECT:

You riffle the edge of a book and someone from the audience says "stop" whenever they want. They remember the first word on the page. You read their mind and tell them the word they are thinking of. For a kicker, you show the book only has one page, and all of the other pages have their middles cut out!

NEEDED:

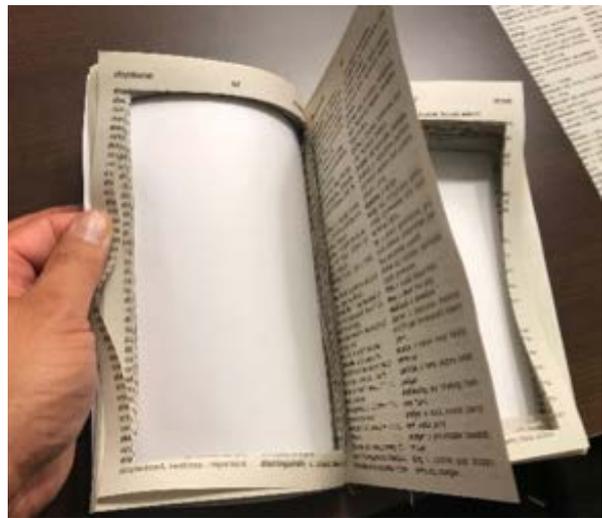
You will need to get a book to use. In theory it could be any paperbacked book, the one I use has large print, making it easier for them to read the first word on the page that they stopped at.

You will need to pick a page to force, I use a page that's about a quarter of the way into the book. For example, the page I force is page 46 out of 194 pages. Also, when choosing your force word, I choose an easy to read and remember word, in my book it's the word "dog".



To make the book cut a rectangle out of all the pages except the force page and the front and back covers. I simply took a utility knife and cut them out.

WARNING: You are cutting the pages at your own risk, so be careful!



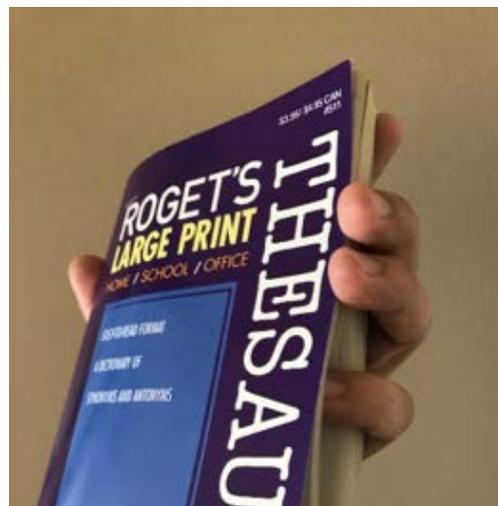
ROUTINE:

"I'm not supposed to do this, but I'll tell you how this trick is done, after I do the trick. I need someone to help me onstage..."

Bring someone from the audience onstage.

"I'm going to flip through the pages of this book and I want you to say stop whenever you want. When you say stop I want you to remember the first word on the page."

You will now force the only page in the book. You do this by holding the book face up in your left hand and get pinkie break underneath the force page. Riffle the outer corner of the book and ask them to say stop whenever they like.



When the say stop, you will simply open the book at the pinkie break. This is basically the Riffle Force with cards, but done with a book.

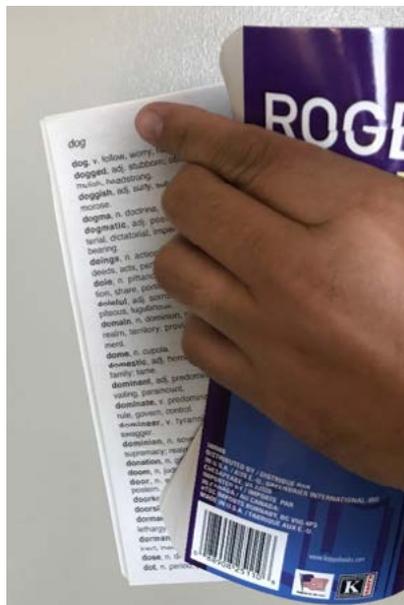
You will open the book by squeezing it with your left hand and bowing the half of the book towards the spectator. Opening the book this way hides all of the pages that have the middles cut out. When I do this I also extend my index finger to point towards the first word on the page.

"Remember the first word on the page."

Close the book and hold it spine towards the audience, so you don't accidentally flash the pages with the middles cut out.

"Think of your word...it's something physical you can touch...it's something alive...it's a pet...you are thinking of a dog!"

"I know that was amazing and I promised I'd tell you how I did it. There are two possible ways this trick can work. Number one, is that I memorized the first word on each page of the whole book along with the corresponding page number, then when they picked a page I guessed about how many pages into the book it was and hoped I was right...or number two it's a trick book."



Ask the person helping what they think. Here's a place that you as a performer can play with their answer.

"If you think I memorized the whole book you are wrong. It's a trick book. You can only pick one page...because that's the only page in the book that I didn't cut out!"

Flip thought the book showing there is only one page in the book!

"The amazing thing is that you said stop exactly at page 46, if you said any other page this wouldn't have worked!"

Notes: This trick was inspired by seeing Doc Hilford do his version of the Pegasus Page trick called Wizard's Manual at a lecture many years ago. The Pegasus Page plot where a selected page from a book disappears and reappears elsewhere is credited to Arthur Emerson and has been released by several other magicians and mentalists over the years.



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CROSS CUT production

Chiam Yu Sheng

Effect: The magician asks the spectator to cut half the deck and place it at the side. The magician takes the other half of the deck and marks the area where the spectator cuts to. The magician lifts off the marked portion of the deck and instantly produces the four aces!

Background: The Cross Cut Force is one of my favourite force because it is so simple and the spectator never catches it. I have been using this force for years and I started developing routines utilizing this force. I figured it would be nice if I can incorporate the Cross Cut Force into a four ace production.

Setup: Place two aces face down on the bottom of the deck. Place one ace face up in the second position from the top of the deck and another ace face down at the top of the deck.

Method: To begin, place the deck on the table and execute the Cross Cut Force by asking the spectator to cut the deck in half. After the spectator cut the deck in half, instruct them to put the top half of the deck next to the bottom half of the deck. Explain

to the spectator that you will be marking the cut. When you are explaining, take the bottom half and place it on top of the top half, but rotated 90 degrees (Fig. 1).



FIG. 1

Ask the spectator whether they know which card they cut to and in most cases, they will say no. Make sure you pause for a moment so that the spectator will forget which pile was which. Lift off the bottom half of the deck and hold it in the Biddle grip. You are now going to execute a series of moves

simultaneously to produce the four aces at the same time.

Your right hand that is holding the bottom half of the deck in Biddle grip is going to turn the pile face up in a manner similar to Stuart Gordon's Double Turnover. The right hand is going to rotate the wrist to turn the pile face up and table it immediately (Fig. 2 and 3). As the right hand drops the pile on the table, the right thumb peels off the first face card which is an ace to the right immediately. This will reveal the two aces that are placed at the bottom of the deck. All of these actions must be quick so that the audience will not catch what you are doing.



FIG. 2



Fig. 3

While your right hand executes the actions stated above, your left hand needs to perform a quick action too. After the right hand lifts off the bottom half of the deck and execute the moves, your left hand is going to turn the top card face up from the top half of the packet and place it at the left side of the packet (Fig. 4 and 5). By doing so, you will be revealing the face up ace that was in the second position from the top of the deck as well as the ace that was on top of the deck.



FIG. 4



FIG. 5

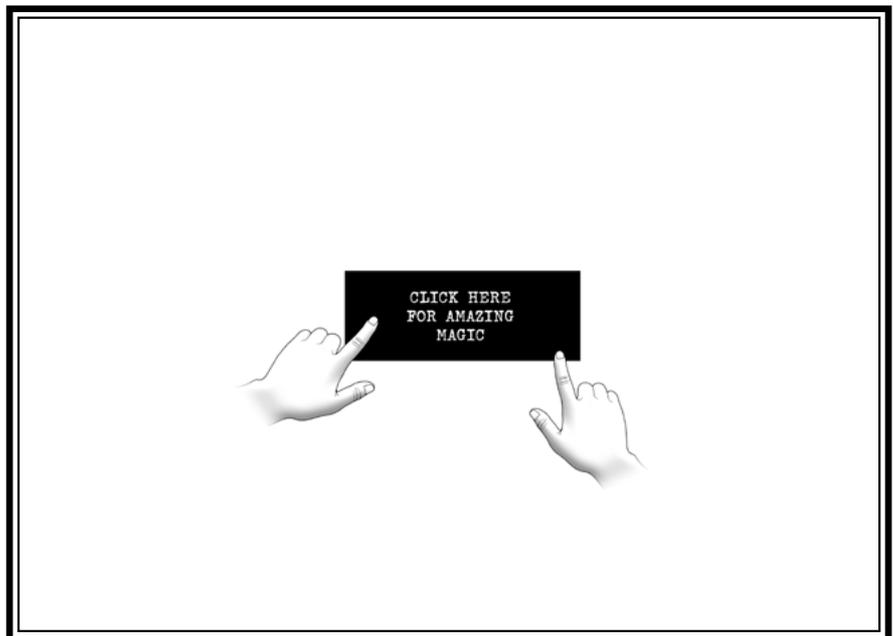
All of these actions must be performed simultaneously so that it will look like the four aces are produced from nowhere. After the aces are produced, you can proceed on with your favorite trick using the four aces.

TIPS:

- I would advise performing this routine on a close up mat so that it will be easier to pick up the aces that were being tabled.
- Make sure you practice this routine enough to ensure that you are able to execute the moves simultaneously so that the ace production looks smooth.

Credits:

- Cross Cut Force (or Criss Cross Force) is published in Edward Bagshawe's *Magical Monthly*, Volume 2, Number 10 (July 1925). This force is described by Max Holden in a trick titled "The New Knife and Selected Cards"
- The Stuart Gordon Turnover was first published in Ken Simmon's *Riffling The Pasteboards* (1986) in a trick called "Ace-Bitiously Yours". However, Stuart Gordon was not credited for the move. Subsequently, this move was published under Stuart Gordon's name as a part of *Slow-Motion Larry* in Larry Jennings's *The Cardwright* (Pg 112, 1988). However, in David Ben's *Zarrow: A Lifetime of Magic* (Pg 341, 2008), it stated that Herb Zarrow was using this technique a decade or more before Mr. Gordon.





NO BAND OTL

BY PAUL ROMHANY

When I was eight years old I saw a magician perform the most amazing trick with a stack of business cards. On the front was a design of a little boy climbing a rope. I initialed the card and he placed it on my hand. When it was turned over the boy was gone and in his place, on the card was a sign that said "OUT TO LUNCH." For almost forty years I have been fascinated with the Out To Lunch trick and principle. So much so that I wrote a book about it and produced a DVD.

Last year I filmed an At The Table Lecture for Murphy's Magic and my opening routine was my one card, no band OTL in which I fooled host Gregory Wilson with. I am very proud of the latest development because it is the ultimate version of the OTL effect.

I discovered there is no need to have an elastic band wrapped around the card, also you can just show ONE card and not a stack. The effect is the same. You show the back of your business card which has some design on it. The spectator signs it and you turn it over, or they take it from you, and when you make the magic pass over the card it has changed leaving a different design with their signature still on it.

What I discovered is has to do with the design on the card. If you have a picture that has a design that has shadow then you can cut around it. You can see in the photo I have a pocket watch. I'm not going to explain my full routine here because it is available at any magic shop under my At The Table Lecture by Murphy's Magic.

Another thing I like to do is use some Repositioning Glue which keeps the half card in place. If you wanted you can actually throw the card, with the half card attached, in the air as a little flourish and it won't fall apart. I often do this and it's a really nice touch.

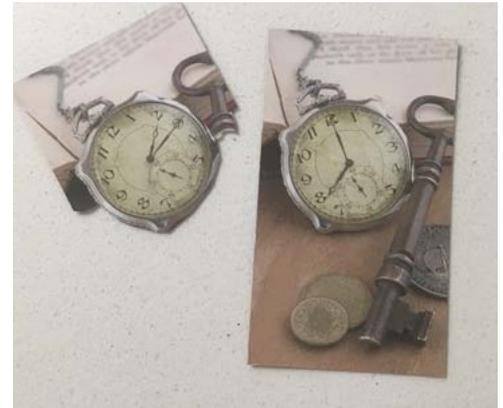
In performance you have the lower half of the picture signed and you now have several options of how to ditch that last card. My preferred method is to hand the card to

the spectator but holding back the half card in my hand, as you can see in the photo. If this bold move makes you uncomfortable then keep it in your hand holding back the half card under guise of putting the card face down on the table. If you have a stack of cards close by you can pick those up and just put them in your pocket along with the half card and you are all clean.

The main thing when doing this method is to have a photo with shadows on it. This covers the 'cut' in the card. It has taken many years to get to this point for the OTL principle and I truly believe it doesn't get any cleaner or better than this. Hopefully I can now rest my fascination with this and put my efforts in to something else that has intrigued me for over forty years.



The design of pocket watch (this card has gimmick on it)



Half card on left and regular card on right. Notice shadows in photo where I cut around.



The glue stick I use that works perfectly. Another method is to use Magicians' Wax.



Exposed view (underneath) of my hand holding back the half card and handing regular card to spectator.

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Jeffrey Marks



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The 48th FFF

Article by Thomas Barthes



F Convention

- Photos by Mike Maione

Left to Right
Fay Presto, Rocco, Albert Chen, Julian Chen, Pit Hartlin



Marc DeSouza



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Shawn Farquhar with Lodewijk de Widt



Willie Monroe

Fechter's Finger Flicking Frolic (4F) is the foremost annual gatherings of close-up magicians in the world. The 2018 convention took place April 25-28. Over the course of four days, 250 of the world's best magicians performed in galas, traded secrets, ate doughnuts and drank beer at the invitation-only convention in Batavia, New York.

The convention opened with the Wednesday night "Taiwanese" gala, hosted by Horret Wu and Anson Lee who provided splendid performances, Horret as a UV-specialist doctor and Anson with world-class card manipulation. Alec Tsai's magic stickers routine was especially noteworthy, but the entire kick off program presaged a great convention. After a quick meeting reserved for first-timers, Day One ended with the nightly routine of refreshments and the informal sharing of thoughts on effects, routines, and moves.

For those who managed to wake before noon on Thursday, the day started with a lecture by award-winning French magician Edouard Boulanger. The program featured Edouard's work on the topit, working with fire, coins, and the chop cup.

The Thursday afternoon shows featured several outstanding performances. Miguel Ajo changed the color of the backs of cards at will. Lodewijk de Widt performed the beautiful torn & restored card routine he will perform in competition at FISM later this year. Jason Ladanye showed his perfected card mechanic's skills. Steven Brundage baffled audience members with his super clean, super-fast Rubik's Cube solves. Comedy magic by Chris Stevenson, David Schwartz and Fay Presto and her assistant had everyone laughing.



Joan Ceasar



Hayashi



OVER THE COURSE OF FOUR DAYS, 250 OF THE WORLD'S BEST MAGICIANS PERFORMED IN GALAS, TRADED SECRETS, ATE DOUGHNUTS AND DRANK BEER AT THE INVITATION-ONLY CONVENTION IN BATAVIA, NEW YORK."



Steve Friedberg with backstage crew members Lee Eyler and Max Eyler

Pit Hartling was the convention honoree. His lecture on Thursday night included many of his signature effects including 'Back to the Future' where a card is found before it is even chosen and his stunning work on poker formulas enabling him to give any poker hand to any player around the table. He received a well-deserved standing ovation from the crowd.

The theme of the annual Friday morning 'Pat Page Workshop' this year was 'Non-memorized Stacked Decks.' Among the many clever presentations was a funny piece by Geoff Williams who found the chosen card by finding everything but the chosen card, a unique 'Triumph' by Mark Zacharia and Steve Duperré's smart card change which also required a gaff.

Last year's magic TED talks presented by Christian and Katarina Painter which earned the duo the convention's MVP Award was such a hit that they hosted another session this year. The Painter's humorous presentation on the dark side of mentalism accented more serious talks by Thomas Blacke about lock-picking, Marc DeSouza on the incredible life and career of Fred Kaps, Harrison Carroll on performance fees and Eric DeCamps about clarity in routines and magic effects.



Eric Olson

The late afternoon show hosted by the witty Steve Beam featured several first, second and third-time 4F attendees from all around the world with many unique presentations and expertly delivered classic routines.

Charming Choi hosted the evening South Korean Gala. It featured performances by some of the most award decorated magicians from South Korea. Several times the audience was brought to its feet by unique presentations by Ji Woo Han, Alt, In Ae, BH, Jun Pyo Kim, Min Kyu-Jeong, Zee, Benson Jun, Chan, Jun Hyung Lee, and the Magic Brothers and their baffling and brilliant tandem cups and balls routine.

Saturday morning attendees were treated to a lecture by Keith Fields. The lecture was as entertaining as it was enlightening. Fields provided the 'work' on practical effects with cards, a very commercial book test and a diabolical signed bill in lemon.

Dan Garrett and Michael Dardant hosted the afternoon shows 'Mini World Show' and 'Fechter's Fabulous Frolics.' The shows were comprised of performers working on their 4F Bachelors, Masters, and Ph.D. awards which are presented to attendees who perform at 4F their first, second and third time respectively. The audience enjoyed a variety of beautiful routines with Rubik's Cubes, cards, rope, currency and even a Smash'n'Stab routine including wine glasses, a hammer, and a goldfish. The goldfish survived and is now in a happy home in Batavia.

The Closing Gala featured solid acts by Juliana Chen, Michael Vincent, William Watt, Shawn Farquhar, Ed Kwon, Rocco Silano, Will Fern, Denis Behr, Matt le Mottée, Pit Hartling, and Hayashi. Each received a standing ovation. The show ended as usual, with a hilarious chronicling of the convention, wisecracks and a skit by Steve Bargatze and Rick Merrill. The show was followed by the last late-night magic session bringing the 48th 4F convention to a close.

The first 4F convention took place in Buffalo, at Eddie Fechter's Fork hotel with thirty-five close-up magicians. The conference was held at the Forks Hotel for 21 years until the hotel closed and the convention was moved first to a brewery near in



Aaron Hsing



Kengo Nakashima with Shawn Farquhar



Micky Wong



Francis Menotti



Harold Cataquet

First-timers must perform, which can be daunting with past and the current honorees sitting in reserved seats in the front row.

The convention became an invitation-only event in 1981, and since then every first-timer must be sponsored by two regular attendees. First-timers must perform, which can be daunting with past and the current honorees sitting in reserved seats in the front row. Obie and his Board of Directors travel all over the world to magic conventions and championships to find new and unique talent to bring every year in Batavia.

Buffalo and finally to the hotel in Batavia where it is now held.

Each convention has been dedicated to a single Guest of Honor for his contribution to close-up magic. The first honoree was Jim Ryan. The list of former Guests of Honor is a who's who of close-up magic including greats like Steve Duscheck, Tom Mullica, Harry Lorayne, Johnny Thompson and Bill Malone to name just a few.

The convention continues to this day thanks to Obie O'Brien who runs the convention with the help of Joan Cesar and the 4F Board of Directors: Glenn Brown, Jimmy Cieslinski, Dan Garrett, Mike Joseph and Meir Yedid and many volunteers.



Chong Haung

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RABBIT TO PURPLE COW

DOUG BENNETT SHARES SOME OUT OF THE BOX THINKING FROM BUSINESS GURU SETH GODIN THAT COULD CHANGE THE WAY YOU THINK.

Words: Doug Bennett

During a recent Mastermind retreat for business marketers at the posh Montage Resort in Park City, Utah, I had the good fortune to attend the keynote address delivered by none other than Seth Godin. Known to millions around the world as a successful entrepreneur and business-marketing guru, Seth Godin is an out of the box thinker. But to me, sitting in that banquet room, Seth Godin was a magician. A magician who, with two magic words, transformed that three-day Mastermind retreat into a magic convention. The best magic convention I have ever attended.

What are those two magic words, you ask?
Purple Cow.

One of Seth Godin's seventeen best-selling books on business marketing, *Purple Cow* is based on a simple premise, a premise that applies to businesses and magicians: In order to be successful in today's increasingly crowded and competitive arena you need to be exciting and worth talking about. You need to blow people away. In a boring herd of brown cows, you need to be a **Purple Cow**.

Naturally, when I heard Godin posit his Purple Cow premise I chuckled a bit, along with everyone else in the room. And then it hit me:

Houdini was a Purple Cow---The legend and legacy of Houdini---one of the great-

est showmen of all time---has endured for nearly a century, and will continue to live on for generations to come.

Doug Henning was a Purple Cow---Doug's whimsical, "Hippie Magician" persona shattered traditional magic stereotypes forever. One of Doug's greatest tricks was making top hats and white rabbits disappear almost overnight.

Siegfried and Roy were Purple Cows---These master illusionists teamed up to bring big budget magic spectacles (and tigers) to Las Vegas showrooms and living rooms for the first time ever.

Harry Anderson was a Purple Cow---I had the good fortune to meet and hang out with Harry Anderson back when he was doing the comedy club circuit in the early 1980s. And all I can say is that Harry was a Purple Cow magician, and a genuinely nice person. The magic world will miss you Harry.

Penn & Teller are Purple Cows---As a magic duo, and as individual performers, P&T have disrupted magic to the delight of millions of fans around the world.

Chris Angel is a Purple Cow---With his own unique style Chris has carved out a long and lucrative magic career while creating a large and loyal following.

David Copperfield is a Purple Cow---From his first TV appearance over forty years ago, Copperfield continues to deliver a level of skill, sophistication and theatricality to live magic that is unsurpassed.

David Blaine is a Purple Cow---Face it. David Blaine is the Houdini of our day.

Of course the above performers aren't the only Purple Cows in magic. Every working magician who has found a unique way to stand out from the herd in his or her field (no pun intended) is a **Purple Cow**.

For the rest of us brown cows, here are some of Seth Godin's tips on how businesses and magicians can attain Purple Cow status.

Purple Cow is Inherent---You can't use clever marketing ploys to make your act or show appear to be a Purple Cow. The qualities that can make you and your magic stand out from the herd must be built-in from the beginning. To paraphrase Seth Godin, "*Magic shows that are worth talking about get talked about.*"

Proper Packaging is Imperative---Several years ago, the folks at Dutch Boy paint had an epiphany that Seth Godin describes as follows: "Paint cans are heavy, hard to carry, hard to close, hard to open, hard to pour from, and no fun." Duh...right? And the



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COW

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Seth Godin bestselling author of Tribes and The Dip

The Must-Read C...
now with a bon...

crazy part is that for years, every company that made paint sold it in the same clunky cans.

Recognizing that the painting process would be much easier if the paint came in a properly designed container, Dutch Boy introduced a user-friendly jug that solved all of the “can” problems. The result? Dutch Boy’s new packaging turned its already great paint into a Purple Cow that flew off more shelves than ever, and at a higher retail price.

The takeaway here is that your show could already be Purple Cow great. But unless it’s packaged in a substantive way (this isn’t about hype) that sets it apart from the competition, it still won’t stand out from the herd.

Playing it Safe is Risky---If you’ve read “The Secret Life of Houdini”---a fascinating and meticulously researched book by William Kalush and Larry Sloman---you know that one of the secrets that gave Houdini a manacled leg up on the competition was his willingness to take risks. Seth Godin goes by this same philosophy, to the point that, in his view, playing it safe is actually the risky thing to do.

If you could interview every magician who has ever achieved Purple Cow status,



SETH GODIN

chances are not one would say that they got where they did by playing it safe. Instead they swallowed their fears, followed their guts, and took risks, over and over if that’s what it took, until they hit the big time. As Godin explains, big success is often the product of little failures.

In closing I should add that one of the reasons his Purple Cow insights apply so well to magicians is that Seth Godin’s got it goin’ in the magic world too. During a break from signing a stack of books before his keynote presentation, Godin proceeded

to entertain a handful of Mastermind staffers with card tricks. Later, when I learned that I had missed this impromptu close-up show, I asked a lucky staffer if Godin was any good with a deck of cards, to which he replied, “Dude, we were all blown away!”



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LESSON!

HARRISON CARROLL

David Levitan - We first met on the tradeshow floor, but his reach extends far beyond exhibitions. He also is one of the premier entertainment providers in New York City. He not only performs magic but he books just about any kind of program or act his clients may request. And that's what brings me to this story.

David and I were in San Diego, in 1995, enjoying an early dinner after a long day on the show floor. That's when his phone rang. David's periodic responses to the mysterious caller went something like this:

"Uh huh,
I see,
Really?
You've got to be kidding," and so on...

When David hung up, I said to him, "It sounds like someone just canceled a show on you."

"No. Canceling a show would be a relief compared to this. I'm being sued for a million dollars."

"No way," I said. "What the heck happened?"

David went on to explain. About a year ago he had a very large Bat Mitzvah event in New York City. The client wanted more than a magician. In addition, they wanted Stilt Walkers, a Caricature Artist, Costumed Dancers, a Balloon Sculptor, a Clown, a Juggler, a Face Painter, an Emcee, and a Magician. They also wanted a giant video screen and full lighting. In short, it was a big event. Plus, not only would he make a nice payday himself, for working it, but he would get a commission from each of the acts.

As he was finalizing the contract, the mother of the young man being bat mitzvahed mentioned that she had purchased a bunch of bean bag toys (in some circles known as Footbags). They also had Frisbees and Beach Balls. She asked if David and his staff wouldn't mind passing them out to any of the kids who may want one. Initially, David liked the idea. Just like on the tradeshow floor, it's always fun to be in charge of any giveaways. But he also saw the potential for problems.

Because of his vast experience, David informed the client that he saw a high probability that these items



would eventually be used by the young boys looking to take their fun to another level. He cautioned the client that things like Frisbees, Beach Balls, and Footbags, are the types of things that young males would very likely begin to throw at each other. Bad things can happen when things are thrown, especially when things meant to be thrown outside are being thrown inside. So, he told the client that neither he nor any member of his staff would be comfortable passing out the giveaways. But, other than that, he was prepared to meet all of the client's needs.

The client was unmoved by David's recommendation and insisted that since she had already ordered the items, she would proceed with giving them away. Since David declined to assist, she would give them out herself.

When the date arrived, it wasn't long before David's prediction became realized. Just as he had warned, the young boys began throwing the articles at each other. They started playing a form of "bean bag dodgeball" with the Footbags. Using their arms as a sort of baseball bat, they started slamming the beach balls across the room.

It was inevitable that sooner or later something bad would happen. And sure enough, it did. An errantly propelled beach ball hit one of the chandeliers. It caused one of the glass elements to become dislodged from the light fixture. The piece,

along with its attached hanger wire, and with the aid of what scientists call gravity, had plunged downward.

The unlucky recipient of this object was not the floor. Rather, it was a female guest. The hanger wire caught her on the side of the head, just above the temple. The wire dug into her skin causing a minor laceration.

After applying pressure with a napkin the minimal bleeding quickly stopped. The damage appeared inconsequential and the guest appeared very unconcerned and remained at the party. By the time she left, the wound was barely visible and the incident seemed to be forgotten.

But not so - Approximately a year later the woman filed a lawsuit against everybody and anybody connected to the event. She sued the hosts. She sued the facility that housed the event, as well as its manager. And of course, she sued David.

David was being sued for One Million Dollars. Part of her argument was that David, being part of the event, was also liable for her injury. She claimed to be damaged emotionally as well as physically. She maintained that because she was so emotionally distressed over the incident, she was forced to see a plastic surgeon. In addition, her husband sued everyone. His suit against David was for one hundred thousand dollars for "loss of services" due to his wife's injury.

David was really glad that he didn't



other costs that he didn't even dare to guess might arise.

Three months later I saw David at a show in New Orleans. He informed me that the case was still pending. I ran into him twice more in the months that followed. It wasn't until a year had passed, while we were working together in Atlanta that he advised me his name had been removed from the lawsuit. He said that paying for a more expensive insurance policy was a blessing because they supplied the attorneys and fought the lawsuit vigorously. Needless to say, he was happy to no longer be part of the suit.

It still cost him a lot in terms of time, and stress. But he was officially free from the burden of being sued. Although no one could have predicted that booking that show would have led to a lawsuit, David's experience taught me to remove any spectator interaction that could put me in jeopardy. Effects like Ring Flight, Watch Steals, tricks with fire, or even unnecessarily touching an audience member, would not go into my own show. We can all learn from what David went through.

Then there was the time, back in the 1970's, that a local magician poked a child while doing Needle Through Balloon. He wasn't as fortunate as David. But that's another story for another day.



let the client talk him into dispensing the giveaways. That would have put him in a far more precarious spot than he already was. The argument could have easily been made that by giving the items out he was an instrument responsible for the misfortune that had occurred.

As a side-note, several companies offer magicians Liability Insurance. Most full-time working professions have these policies. They are reasonably priced at a few hundred dollars per year, and many cover the performer up to a million dollars. However, there are more holes in them (to the insurer's benefit) than a slice of Swiss cheese. These policies are good to have from a sales perspective, but if you need to file a claim, you will find that they are not as protective as they appear on the surface.

David was fortunate. He did not succumb to one of the cheaper policies. He had a bona fide policy that was costing him over \$2000 a year. But with it came the assurance that the Insurance Company would be there, if and when, they were

needed.

Anyway, let's get back to my dinner with David. He was obviously shaken by the news that he was being sued.

David couldn't believe this lawsuit. He did nothing to contribute, in any way, to the injury and reiterated to me how he was really glad that he did not let the client talk him into distributing the giveaways. That would have put him, as I just stated, in a tougher spot than he already was.

As I also mentioned, the injured woman expressed how lucky she was that it didn't hit her eye, or cause more serious damage. Throughout the afternoon, she downplayed the incident, and by the time she left the event, the injury was barely noticeable. Still, she ended up suing.

But that was of little consequence now. David was concerned that he could lose his house, incur outlandish attorney fees, and deal with an array of

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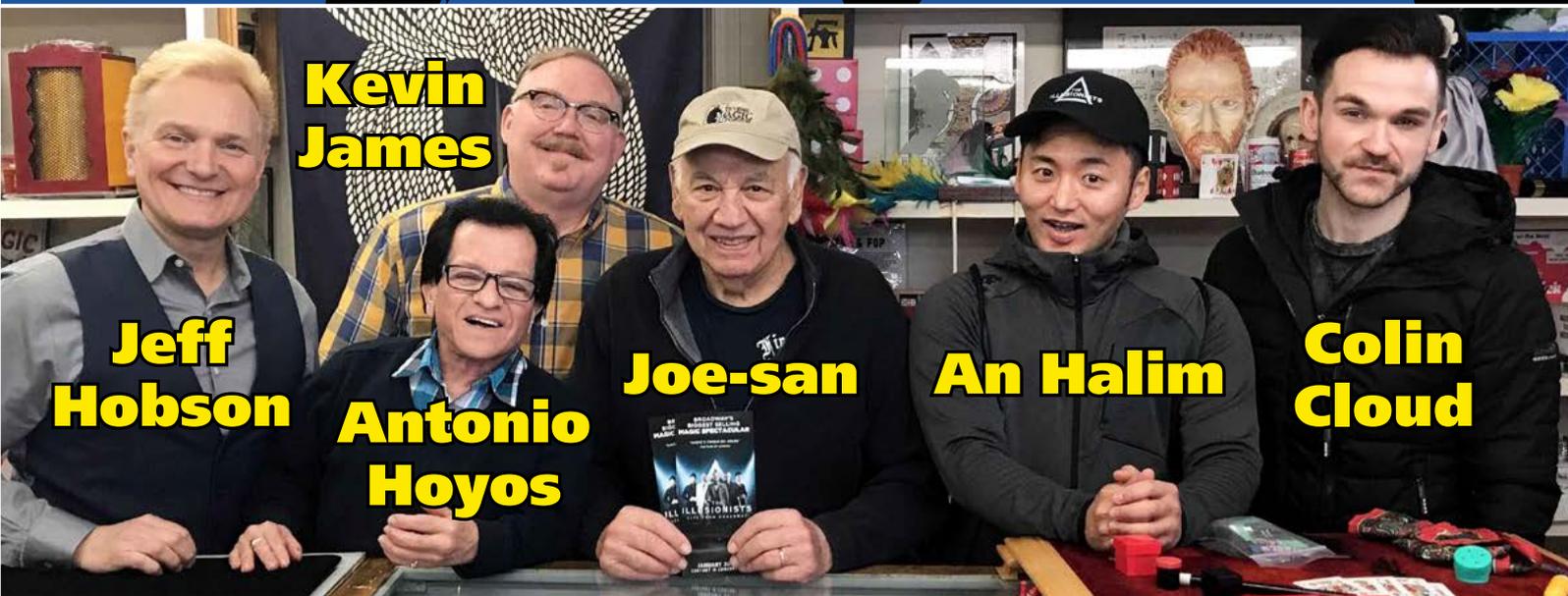
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WHAT TO DO WHEN WHAT YOU DO TURNS TO DO DO

BY STEVE VALENTINE

Steve is founder of MAGICONTHEGO.COM, the worldwide Magic Online database, learning center and global online community.

It's happened to us all, in the middle of a great show and disaster strikes. The number of things that can go wrong in a magic routine are terrifying. So what do you do when it happens? I've compiled a list of 20 fixes, examples and ideas to get you ready for the inevitable. Culled from lessons on the very subject on my Magic On The Go site.

13 TIPS FOR WHEN YOU MESS UP (PART 2)

- | | |
|----------|--|
| 1 | CHALLENGES
Life will present you with a challenge you could not expect. Your confidence will increase exponentially! You will feel bullet proof, don't get cocky or life will hand you an unexpected twist

A FAILURE CAN BE A BLESSING IN DISGUISE THAT TURNS BACK INTO A FAILURE. Table collapse on stage, looked like a bit! Go for the idea that people will say - was that part of the show? Victor Borge stool bit, never worked.. expected it, not asking for tea asking for a laugh. |
| 2 | WATER
Always have water, show care for spectators coming and going, audiences are more damn sensitive these days than ever before, perhaps following a war, the battle humor and insult humor was a wake up, what people needed to feel alive again after the shock of their experience. Not anymore |
| 3 | ANIMALS
Animals die... you're on your own on that - always use fake animals, coolant use a real... |

4

DRUNKS

Be ready to end the show. Maybe find a 30 second closer - Shaxon did hydrostatic glass.

Dont pick drunk people - select spectators before the show as much as you can.

Coin tray jammed, improved a version where I made the tray any tray a coin tray

Know script backwards, then forget it

7

ENJOY THE CHALLENGE

When shit hits the fan, get excited, your show just got real. Audiences can sense when you are in the moment and it draws them in. It's real human drama. So you're a car wreck, so what, the audience is now full of looky loos, good for you. You may even come out of it with even better material. So enjoy the challenge.

Wanted to add a hand cut, everyone said too dark, but I actually cut myself on a prop mid show, it can happen, was not prepared, now I have a towel and bandaids. Do invisible deck while fixing hand... we shall continue because I'm a pro! I will suffer for you, just as you suffer from see...

Spectator forgets, first make sure you pressurize them to remember - second force as much as you can, show others, I could say anything and you'd have to go with it, cause you don't know! Carry reading glasses,

9

SCREWING UP

This brings us to a question I get all the time, what happens when you screw up, do you screw up? We all have bad days at the office right? Go into a routine there - maybe T&R tissue, its a bit off beat but they'll think it part of the show

10

CARD STAB CAN'T FAIL ---- IT DID

Now I have cards marked s I know he got the force card. Out should have been 5D will find your card - if I cut face cards down to 13, a simple 6 card index can handle all that

5

FEW THINGS

Feel you could do the trick without props an still entertain the crowd.

If they grab your wrists, stick their hands in your pockets, (mousetrap PRICELESS)

I'VE SEEN THIS! You haven't seen me do it, probably some amateur... I do the pro way- tooo cocky. Good for you, AWESOME NO SPOILERS! Shows you're not threatens, using language they understand, and if he says anything he's smiling it for everyone, not just you.

We take risks every day, crossing the street, going on a date, plugging in a toaster

8

FORGETTING WHERE YOU ARE IN THE SHOW

What if you forget where you are in the trick or show? Did you come up with a fix? Here's mine, I have the sequences of all my tricks written succinctly in a large 'SCRIPT' on my table. If I forget the trick or place, I grab the script find the trick and read through the sequence out loud AS FAST AS I CAN. Then finding what I need to know, I continue with the show. I also use the script for some other reasons, but that's not important right now. The crowd will think this is a clever bit, and you will have refreshed your memory. I've used this a grand total of four times in my entire career, I was tired, and had a hangover or something...anyway, totally saved the day. Boom. You're welcome.

11

CHOSEN CARD FIX

Here's something I always do. I have a short card in the deck and when I need a card chosen I ALWAYS force it. Even if the choice can be a free one. Just in case some jerk grabs the deck and shuffles it back in himself. Or worse still, the said jerk doesn't put it back at all and secretly slips it in his pocket. A quick riffle of the deck will tell you all you need to know. Oh and always have a duplicate of the short card stashed in a fun place. It may come in handy.

6

FIRE - DON'T USE IT!

I was very lucky in the past, especially with flash paper - glass rubber band story, and slow burning paper on stage, carpet almost went up. Prefer not to, if I have a matchm, use a glass of water and a flame extinguisher.

12

ENJOY THE CHALLENGE

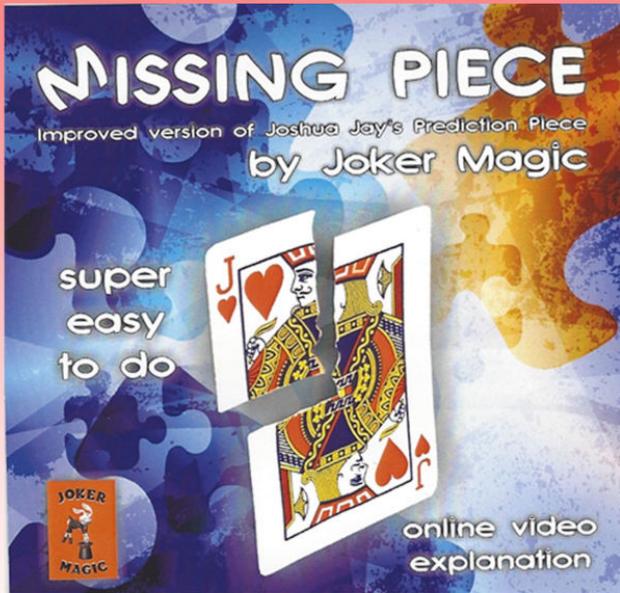
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13

WHAT IF THEY KNOW THE TRICK?: I'm reminded of the famous magician (Dunninger I believe) who pulled out a set of mini linking rings, showed how they worked and said "This is the linking rings you all got in magic sets when you were kids, crude and wouldn't fool anyone. Ladies and Gentlemen, the way I'm about to do it is the REAL WAY, these are the genuine Chinese linking rings" he then pulled out an adult sized set and did the same trick. So it can work to say "that's how they used to do it"... but I have the real fix for this? Do original material... There. That was easy. Oh and another reason to prepare multiple methods.

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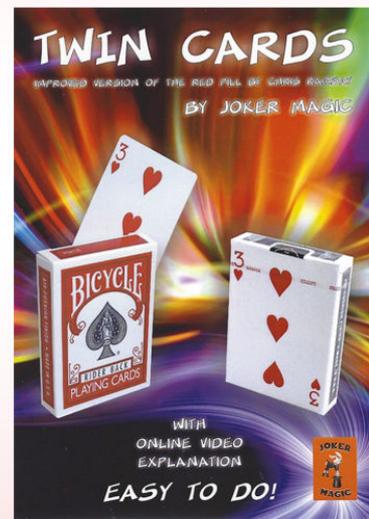


MISSING PIECE

***SAVE YOUR OLD DECKS – RECYCLE THEM FOR THIS TRICK**
The improved version of Joshua Jay's "Prediction Piece", this trick is visual, clean, and extremely easy to handle. Several spectators choose one card each from a deck, and then tear them to four pieces, while the magician hands a prediction in a card case to one of them. They drop the collected pieces onto the table again and again until only one piece remains face-up. This piece completes the prediction card in the case perfectly. No wonder, as the other pieces vanished from the torn card pile and became the predicted card with only one piece missing. The one that remained! In the end everything can be examined, the trick can be performed again with another prediction. Everything supplied for your performance (except for the deck you will use.) No assembly required, the gimmick won't be destroyed during the performance. \$ 29.95

TWIN CARDS

This is viewed as true magic by your audience! It seems absolutely impossible! The magician shows two spectators an opened red deck of cards and a brand-new blue one, which is still sealed with cellophane. They are like twins! Only their colors are different. One spectator selects a card from the red deck. The second spectator holds the new, sealed blue deck in his hands and covers the box so the magician cannot touch it. With a wave of the magician's hand, the selected card's twin (same value, same suit) now appears on the outside of the blue deck, under the still-sealed original cellophane! The miracle happens in the spectator's own hands! \$ 42.00



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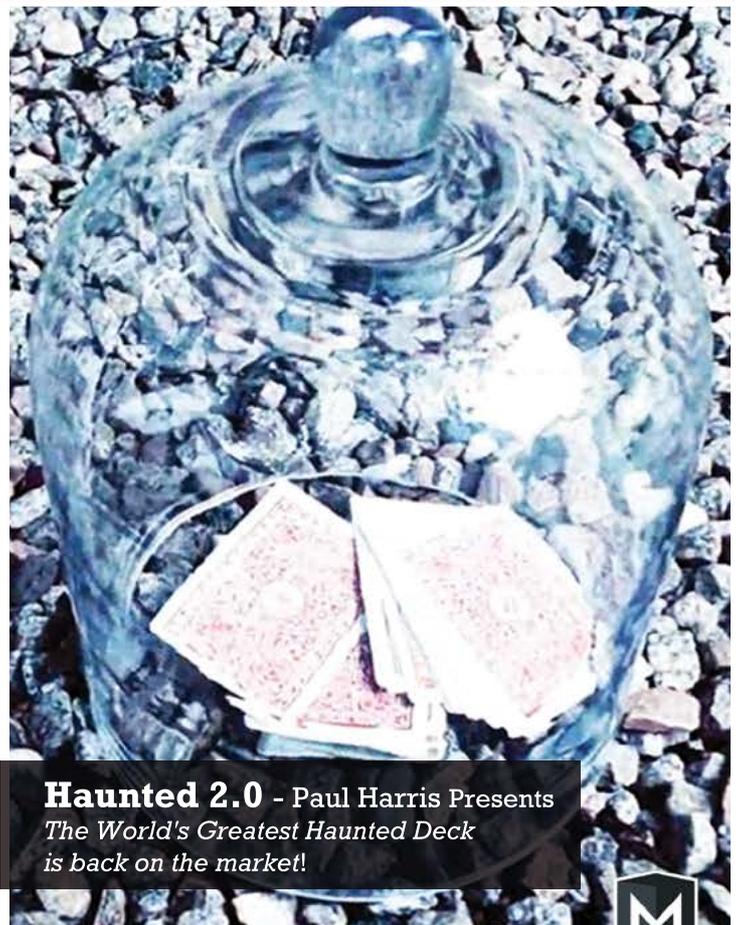
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MAGIC CLUBS

Words: ALEX ZANDER



The Vancouver Magic Circle
October 1945

This month's column WAS going to focus on the role of youth recruitment, membership engagement, and political disagreement within magic clubs in achieving financial success.

However, I'd rather give you the details of your new secret weapon to take your club to the next level, and THEN we can talk about where to focus attention in specific areas as above. Its time to make your club financially independent. Pay attention, this is good stuff.

In order to find out what may work for us and what may not, look to those well-established magic clubs that are successful over the long term to identify what is being done right. A recurring trend among such clubs is their ability to derive primary revenue from non-dues sources. For many, this takes the form of a dual-benefit service like lectures where: a.) the club covers expenses and sometimes gains a small profit for the next upcoming event, and b.) members gain access to a high-caliber performer who would be too expensive for them to fly out on their own personal

expense. Every single respondent to last month's survey included "Dues" among their club's primary income generators, while 83% included Lectures/Workshops as well.

Unfortunately, the reliance on membership dues and lectures is often insurmountably challenging for clubs experiencing a decrease in membership. A club of only 10 people wanting to host a lecture will need to charge at least \$40/person to cover their expenses, creating a costly barrier for most members hoping to attend a few lectures each year. As mentioned last month, it is at this extremely important point of a magic club's (or any social club's) development where the officers opt for financial conservatism and reduce expenses (member services) to avoid an unsustainable dues increase. Although well-intentioned, this "cost savings" can result in further member disengagement and decline contributing to a vicious cycle.

Recall my point from last month: Magic is a specialized niche which inherently provides only a small pool of potential members for

a newly established local club to rely upon... declining membership only threatens the club that relies on its members as the primary income generator. "What does that mean Alex?" I'm glad you asked! It means that your club must provide a service to the public, thereby making the public your customers. Good news: the club-hosted public show is also a dual-benefit event by 1.) providing opportunity for member performances, and 2.) allowing the club to generate income to immediately reinvest into its members. The concept of producing a public show is obviously nothing new in magic, and is regularly undertaken by full-time performers but more rarely among magic clubs. Those clubs that can bring together a small team of magician members to coordinate the event and fill a few 20min performance spots will see growth in finance and community standing alike. All three of the I.B.M. Rings in British Columbia have a successful history of producing public shows including the Vancouver Magic Circle's "Installation Banquet & Show" (dating



When life sets your road on fire... you cruise through it with closed eyes



back to the 1940s!) or their new "MAGIC Series", the Victoria Magic Circle's long running "Mirth and Magic" fundraiser, and more recently the Fraser Valley Magic Circle's "Third Monday Magic" show. Even the S.A.M. Assembly #95 hosts a ticketed dinner & show for the public.

Consider the format of The Magic Castle, home of the Academy of Magical Arts, which operates through the week providing an exquisite dining experience alongside world-class magic in a stunning venue. Not only does this prove profitably, but provides substantial member benefit to those magician members living locally and taking frequent benefit of all the AMA has to offer.

Now clearly, The AMA format is distinct in its complexities and largely impossible to replicate among most clubs due to obvious restraints, so stop worrying. You don't have to open a restaurant. By relying on the strengths of your own members, a public magic show can offer significantly more profit than a members-only lecture.

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Sunday, April 22nd
Show times at | 2:00pm & 7:00pm |

A few months ago, my friend Chris Gowen of the Edmonton Magic Club reached out with a few challenges they were experiencing and we talked about the model used by the Vancouver Magic Circle in their current "MAGIC Series". You can imagine how thrilled I was to see that, less than two months later, the Edmonton Magic Club is now brimming with enthusiasm over their recent success of SOLD OUT shows! Here is some of what Chris had to say: "We were bleeding money, our club was slowly dying... decided to do two 1 hour Family Shows and one Late Night 14+ show in a small theatre that had an audience capacity of 50 people... All of the hard work had paid off! Our club made over a thousand dollars after expenses. Over all it was a lot of work, a lot of stress, and it was a great learning and bonding experience for all of those involved! I imagine the next one will be a little easier as we get into the groove, I can't wait to do it all over again." - Chris Gowen, President, Edmonton Magic Club, AB, Canada.

Chris' experience contains a valuable caution: it is hard. It is hard to produce a high-quality public show. It is complex to promote, challenging to coordinate with acts, and can be expensive when dealing with larger venues. Most things worth doing are hard in the beginning, but Chris correctly notes that it will get easier with replication. The results of this project are immediate and cannot be overstated. If you don't think it will work for your club, try it out yourself and prove me wrong.

Key Components for Success:

1 Venue/Date

Don't waste time organizing production details until you have a confirmed venue (and therefore, a confirmed date). Your venue choice determines your event capacity (50 seats or 200?), calibre (empty classroom or gorgeous theatre with staff) and potential profit. A club that rents a 200-seat theatre has inherently greater profit potential than a 50-seat room, but a much higher risk (cost). I recommend local clubs start by hosting a public show at their existing meeting location if available, or pursue an agreement with a local school or business for the use of their suitable performance space.

Example: You rent a suitable room at the local Rec Centre for \$200 (though likely much cheaper than that...), plus \$100 for advertising.

2 Talent

This may be the highest or lowest production expense depending on the goal of the club and can fundamentally impact the quality and longevity of the production. Clubs can minimize talent expenses and rely on their own members for a solo-performance or spot in a variety-style show via voluntary sign-up or performer honorarium. Four acts of 20min/ea plus intermission will provide a public show over 1.5 hours long.

Example: \$100 honorarium/member performer x 4 performers = \$400

We now have Event Expenses of \$700

3 Ticket Info

This seems self-evident, but I have seen far too many club productions crumble under the weight of poorly-planned ticket prices, so: make sure your event expenses are covered at the 50% capacity mark. If you have a maximum of 50 seats to sell, your event expenses should be covered within 25 tickets. To determine a starting ticket price, divide your event expenses by your 50% capacity mark ($\$700/25 = \28).

You now have a ticket price of \$28 and are guaranteed to break even upon selling 50% of the seats (based on capacity of 50). If you think \$28 is too expensive for a ticket in your area, find a way to increase your capacity so you can reduce the ticket price.

Every ticket sold after 50% capacity is 100% profit. Based on the example above, if your club sold 50 tickets at \$28/ea, you would cover your expenses, and have an additional \$700 PROFIT.

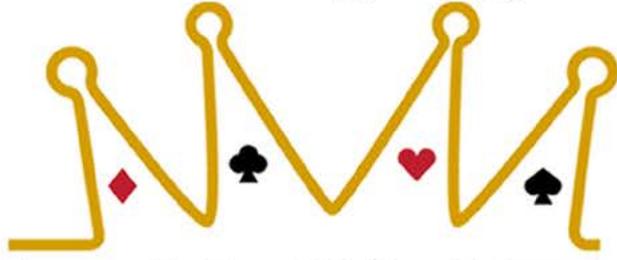
4 Reinvest in your members!

The goal of the public show is not to indefinitely grow the bank account. Magic clubs are not designed to be money-making machines generally. Instead, we want our clubs to be financially independent meaning they are no longer struggling to cover their expenses (cost of member services). So once expenses are covered, be the best club you can be and let your members know you love them.

The Vancouver Magic Circle is using their recurring-show profits this month to upgrade their professional sound system. My local S.A.M. Assembly #95 is using their annual show profits to fly in renowned director Bob Fitch for his 3-day-long performance workshop AT NO COST TO MEMBERS. The Edmonton Magic Club is currently planning their public shows through the summer and things are only going up from there. Like I said, the results of this project are immediate and cannot be overstated. If you don't think it will work for your club, try it out yourself and prove me wrong. Instead of a 4-question survey this month, humour me: make 1 phone call to your local school district or recreation centre and find out the rental rate for a multipurpose room. Join me again next month with your notebook for a few ideas to help with audience retention, additional revenue opportunities, and modifying your public show format from a dual-benefit to a triple-benefit event!



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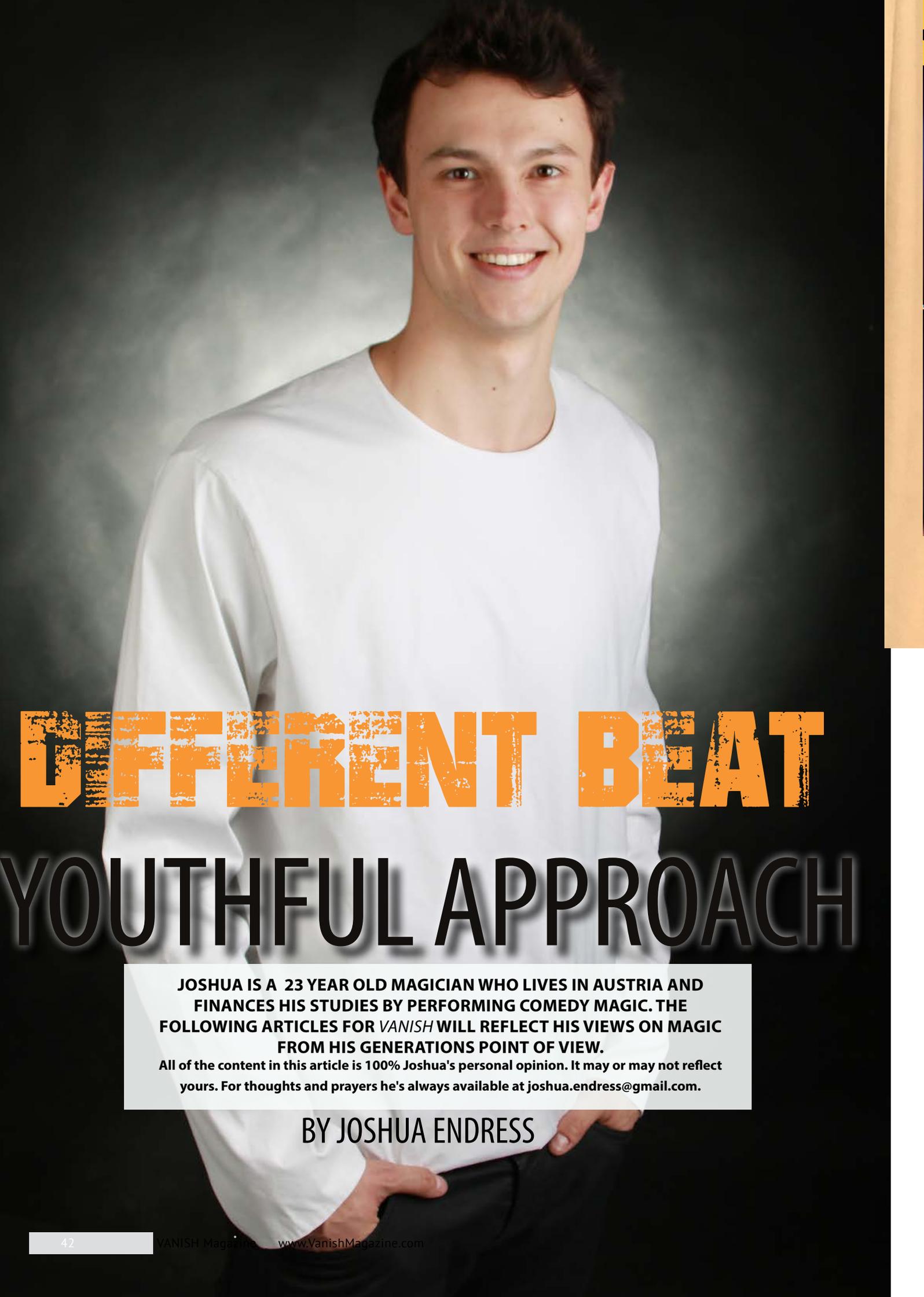
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DIFFERENT BEAT

YOUTHFUL APPROACH

JOSHUA IS A 23 YEAR OLD MAGICIAN WHO LIVES IN AUSTRIA AND FINANCES HIS STUDIES BY PERFORMING COMEDY MAGIC. THE FOLLOWING ARTICLES FOR *VANISH* WILL REFLECT HIS VIEWS ON MAGIC FROM HIS GENERATIONS POINT OF VIEW.

All of the content in this article is 100% Joshua's personal opinion. It may or may not reflect yours. For thoughts and prayers he's always available at joshua.endress@gmail.com.

BY JOSHUA ENDRESS



IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE PERFECT

Just a short flashback to my last article in the April edition of VANISH. This is what my actual promo photo looks like. (see photon left hand page)

It shows the "prettiest" version of me in clothes I actually wear in real life. It doesn't show any props because I want potential customers to book ME and not some props I bought at a magic store! That is also what they get, a show that is very much driven by my character.

Last month I took part in a so-called "Magic Slam" in Salzburg, Austria. The concept is pretty similar to a Poetry Slam (if that is a thing in the US?). I performed among five other magicians a short set of 15 minutes and at the end, the audience and a jury voted for their favorite performer of the night.

During the show (except the 15 minutes I was on stage myself), I had the opportunity to watch a real magic show. While sitting in the back of the room, I realized that I have not seen a magic show for muggles in years! No, videos of live performances on YouTube and (especially) performances for L&L audiences on DVD do not count!!!

First, I was analyzing each and every performance from my magicians point of view, my goal was to catch every bit of misdirection and analyze the use of every single piece of music.

Then I shook and realized how stupid I was for doing so. Of course (at least I think) I can detect every move and know beforehand that the ring will end up in the walnut... but who the f**** cares?!

Then I leaned back and ignored all my magical knowledge and just enjoyed the great show. And that is something I plan to do more often in the future. Watching a magic show like a laymen - you know, I want to laugh, be astounded and most importantly: WONDER!

While preparing for my short set at that Magic Slam, I realized that I was totally wrong for quite some time. I always dreamed about putting together the PERFECT show. A go-to show I could perform for all occasions. Same tricks, same set-up, same case, same prop management, same costume. Then I finally realized that there is absolutely no benefit in that (except you have a daily show in Las Vegas).

Different audiences require different shows! There is a big difference if I'm performing at

a Magic Slam for twenty-somethings or at a 60th birthday party. Is the venue a Comedy Club or a Variété? Do you perform for the local Rotary Club or the Christmas party of a car dealership?

One of the benefits of having your own show is ADAPTION! To customize a show does not only mean to somehow incorporate a company's logo... You can make every single show fit the needs of the different audiences you perform for.

My #1 goal on stage is to be IN THE MOMENT. I always reflect what the audience responds to (what they laugh about, when there is a audible reaction of astonishment) and readjust the direction my show is heading to.

It is also no bad idea to take a short moment between the first few effects to reflect on the audience. Take a sip of water and think about how you can adjust the show to be the best one possible for this crowd. Sometimes it is just about talking faster or slower, being as polite as possible or dropping your standards.

Personally (if possible), I like to be early at the events I'm performing at. I mix and mingle with the crowd, overhear their conversations and notice what they laugh about - in short, I am literally the "fly on the wall". This way,



before even going on stage, I already know how the audience ticks.

This brings me to the first accusation I have for IMO bad performers. They deliver their script as if it is the 1000st time they do so. A performer sounding on stage like he is delivering a remembered poem at his granny's birthday party, is the worst thing that can happen to any audience!

To have a script is undoubtedly important but do not stick to it no matter what. It's not the script of a stage play - only you know the line and no one is waiting for a cue - so feel free to improvise. See what your audience is up to, interact with them and **BE IN THE MOMENT**. Otherwise, you could have just sent a DVD of your show to be screened.

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SHOW REVIEW



TRUTH & ILLUSION WITH BEN ROBINSON



In April 2018 staff writer Harry Monk attended a one-man show by New York magician Ben Robinson. Ben is author of several books including his latest trilogy on Wonderment, and this show proved to be filled not only with Wonder but also on-the-edge stories that captivated an entire audience.

I had been looking forward to seeing this show for some time. As an ardent fan of Ben Robinson's writing since his best selling book "Twelve Have Died," to his articles in VANISH MAGIC MAGAZINE and the current trilogy on Wonderment, I finally had the opportunity to see him perform and hear him speak.

The show titled, "Truth and Illusion" was a genuine mixture of story telling and magic. The theatre itself was a terrific venue, the perfect size to see Ben's work up close and personal. It had a drawing room quality which seemed to elegantly suit his style. A sparse stage with a table, a few props, a stool and a large wooden board with a target imprinted with "TRUTH & ILLUSION" on it's surface.

The first thing that surprised me, something you rarely see in a magic performance anymore was a program for the show. There was

“

Ben was captivating and his stories were from the heart. At one point he held back tears

a long list of people who made these two appearances possible and obviously a lot of time, money and hard work went in to bringing it to a little town in Canada.

While the show was filled with wonderment and magic it was quite heavy on stories. I found Ben to be an extremely captivating story teller with a natural ability to bring you in to his world. Each tale had an element of wonder told with raw honesty. He was extremely open during his performance, at one point holding back tears and there were times I was left with a lump in my throat.

This wasn't your regular magic show where you sit back and merely be entertained, this was a show that made you think and ask questions. It was a roller coaster of emotions taking you on a journey from laughing one moment to tears the next. Yes, it had light hearted pieces, but even those had relevance to the overall theme of Truth & Illusion. Ben is also not afraid to speak his mind, even about the political state of the USA. Some people might have been slightly offended, some may have been confused because it wasn't what they were expecting. I would state this wasn't a show for young kids, of which there were a few in the audience. This was a man on stage, sharing stories about his life's experiences and how magic played a role. It felt more like a one-man-play in the life and times of Ben Robinson than a typical magic show, again, something many of the audience members were not expecting, but I just loved. It was a refreshing performance which perhaps would be suited to a different time slot as part of a festival, the afternoon

show I attended was mostly grandmothers and children.

Having read his books on WONDERMENT it was, however, exactly what I was hoping for. I believe this style of show requires a certain type of audience. Those magicians who have read his work would totally dig this performance. A friend told me afterwards, "Ben could read the weather forecast and draw you in."

This is what theatrical magic is all about.

On the magic side of things I had my favorite pieces. His finger ring routine was an example of marvelous skill enhanced at the instant the light bounced off those rings and beamed out to the audience. The outstanding moment for me, the one that fooled me badly, was his signed bank-note to cigarette, and like all the magic in the show there was a wonderful story behind it.

With the help of his wife An, both on and off-stage, Ben produced a very thought provoking show I felt will move on to bigger and better things.

Oh - and the target?? I'm not going to tell you - when you see the show it will ALL MAKE SENSE! I don't want to spoil the surprise - but it will fool the heck out of you!



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ALAN WONG & LUCA VOLPE

THE FOX

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THE PRODUCTION VALUE WITH THIS WALLET IS VERY HIGH AND HAS SO MANY FEATURES I AM SURE THEY HAVEN'T ALL BEEN DISCOVERED YET. LUCA USES THIS FOR CLOSE-UP AND WALK AROUND AS WELL AS STAND UP SHOWS. IF YOU EVER WANTED A FULL MENTALISM SHOW IN YOUR POCKET THEN THIS IS WHAT YOU SHOULD BE INVESTING IN.

WITH A PRICE TAG OF \$245 THIS ISN'T GOING TO BE FOR EVERYBODY HOWEVER THOSE THAT PERFORM ON A REGULAR BASIS ARE NOW ABLE TO HAVE AN ENTIRE ACT AT THEIR FINGERTIPS.

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Have you ever desired to travel the world with almost no props and be able to perform a full one-hour stage mentalism show for an audience of 10 to 1,000 people?

Sounds impossible, right? Well, now YOU CAN! With... THE FOX!

THE FOX is a highly engineered mini-folio created and produced by Luca Volpe and Alan Wong. With this folio only, you will be able to step on stage and entertain your audience with a fully structured show. The beauty is that everything you need is inside THE FOX!

Obviously, you will not only be able to utilize the full capabilities of THE FOX in just one show. You'll be able to perform many shows! In fact, the mini-folio has so many features that will allow you to create more routines for stage and close-up!



Here are some great aspects of THE FOX:

1. Peek (double and triple peek)
2. Switch billets and bank notes
3. Switch envelopes
4. Add number feature
5. Impression device
6. Predict serial numbers
7. Switch playing cards
8. Index

Also, if you combine multiple features, you can create amazing routines! You are limited only by your imagination! You will even be able to perform an incredible and easy Q&A Act!

You can also switch, with only one move, 2 business cards, some banknotes, a folded billet, some writing (or numbers) written on a Post-It note and more! Imagine what you can do with this feature only!

“

AN ENTIRE MENTALISM ACT THAT FITS IN YOUR WALLET AND CAN BE DONE CLOSE-UP OR ON STAGE"

ROMHANY



THE FOX comes in an elegant black box with silver embossing, stored in a high-quality velvet bag.

Extra props include:

1. Laminated colored test cards
2. Laminated symbol cards
3. Mind card samples
4. Billet peek samples
5. Normal envelope
6. Multiple out envelope
7. Impression device
8. Blindfold

Included in the package, you will also find a physical booklet with the full show explained and script. Plus, a download link where Luca Volpe



will show you the handling and features of THE FOX, plus another link where you can download all the extras to print.

Finally, your dream can come true! Take a full stage mentalism show with you anywhere in the world, and it fits in your pocket! I can guarantee that you will never leave home without THE FOX!

MY THOUGHTS:

The true value here is not so much the actual folio, although it is very impressive and does allow you to do a lot of things, but rather Luca Volpe's routines. If you are looking for the perfect pack small play big item then this could very well be it. One of the great things about mentalism is that you don't need a lot of props. You should be able to work with very little, just a couple pieces of paper, perhaps business cards, money and a pen. This is what Luca has put together and created a wallet to hold all his props that allow him to do his regular material from his show.

You receive an extremely well made leather folio that has secrets hidden in it which will enable you to do multiple peeks, confabulation style routines, switches and more. The folio is the size of a large wallet, although it's much thicker due to the nature of it. The one thing I will say though is that in performance you actually don't handle it too much. I often find myself putting it on a table and when I need it to do 'it's thing' then I pick it up and take something out of it and that's when I get the peek or do a switch.

The real value for me is Luca's input and the fact he has created an entire act with this. You also get a booklet which explains his opening of a symbol prediction, a psychometry routine, a color test, double mind reading and a social media prediction.

The booklet explains in detail each routine and you can perform one, two or all of the routines. The nice thing is that it also allows you to do this close-up or on stage. My favorite use of the wallet however is the ability to switch things (envelopes, etc.) as well as the peek ability, so you have three different cards placed back and very easily peek all three.

You can use this for an add-a-number routine, such as his Social Media Prediction or the one I really like is one where you show a list of movies to one spectator and ask another to look at the list. They think of only one movie and you are able to tell them the movie. You get a dual reality type routine.

Once you get this you'll want to spend time looking at the wallet and working it in. I am convinced that after the first time you'll be very happy of your purchase. Now this wallet won't make you a great performer, because only you can do that - but it will be a tool that allows you to do some very strong mentalism.

I've always loved the concept of pack small play big and this is exactly what this item does. It can also be used as an impression device. It's as though Luca and Alan took every



single mentalism wallet and put it all in to one. As far as producing wallets I'm not sure how anybody could top this one. It offers so much. The working mentalist will no doubt come up with their own ideas and way to use this.

You are supplied with additional items such as special cards, marked symbol cards, color cards, a blind fold and a PDF. You could use it for a Q&A act as well due to the switch ability of the wallet. You can do a mind reading bill routine or use it to switch billets.

While the price tag is \$245 I feel it is incredible value for money. As a working professional I feel the \$245 price tag is actually quite low, compared to what this allows you to do. Imagine this, you turn up to a corporate gig with just this one prop yet can entertain (again depends whether or not you are actually entertaining) an entire audience with seemingly no props. Your pack up is minimal. I am a huge fan of minimal props maximum impact, and THIS is what THE FOX allows.

I don't know if this is a limited run or not - I would imagine it would be due to cost and I know how this business works when it comes to manufacturing products of this high standard, so either get in now while you can because I doubt you'll be seeing these come up again on Ebay down the road. Actually I'm going to purchase another to have as a back-up should I need another one down the road myself.

Magic products don't get much better than this - it's a full show in a folio - gets my highest recommendation. Finally, you'll want to join the FaceBook group when you make your purchase because there are some fantastic people on there showing them in action using this as well as sharing some incredible uses for it.





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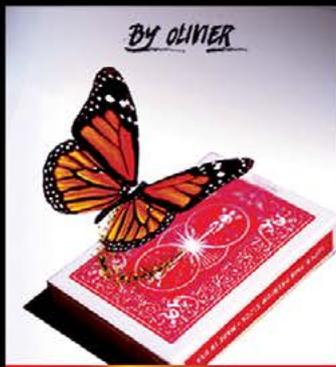
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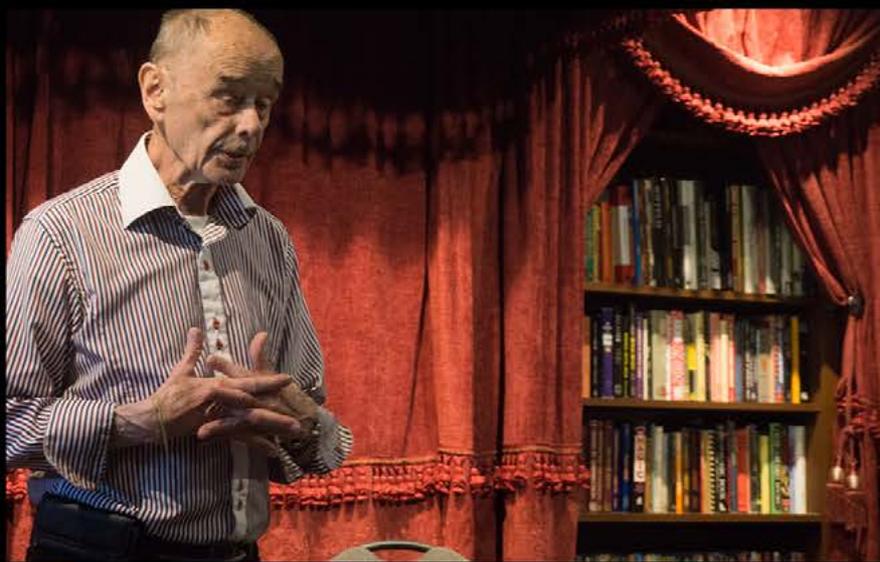
BOB F

THE MAN WITH TH



FITCH

THE GOLDEN TOUCH





"PENNIES FROM HEAVEN" - TOMMY RALL, STEVEN MARTIN, BOB FITCH

"Follow in your fathers footsteps - I did."
Steve Martin talking to Bob's children.

INTRODUCTION

By Hal Meyers - aka Dameon

Wow, seriously wow, I am delighted Vanish is putting Bob Fitch on its June cover. I've known Bob for over 35 years and had the opportunity to watch him perform in several shows on Broadway including Will Rogers Follies and A Funny Thing Happened on The Way To The Forum ... and I've been thoroughly entertained and delighted with his presentation of close-up magic at the Magic Towne House and to top it all off I've had the honor and privilege of working with Bob on material for my own performances on numerous

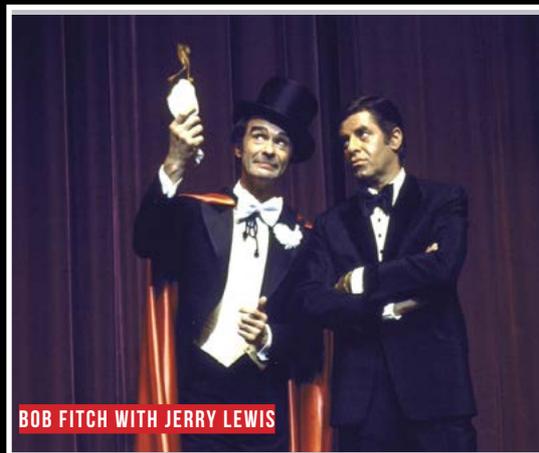
occasions.

The world of magic has a true gem in Bob Fitch. When you meet him for the first time, he instantly engages you with his sparkling eyes, warm smile and a firm handshake. You have no idea this tall, slender gentleman has performed for well over 50 years, shared the stage acting, singing and dancing with numerous - well known - major "stars," directed and choreographed national touring companies, appeared in Hollywood films and on TV... etc, and that some of your favorite magical entertainers - years ago - had (secretly) worked with Bob to hone their craft.

Bob was - for years - one of magic's best kept secrets amongst working



COCO - WITH KATHERINE HEPBURN



BOB FITCH WITH JERRY LEWIS

professionals. When he began offering his seminars, workshops and week long intensives quite a few folks jumped at the chance.

When Bob begins his workshop or you hire him for one-on-one consultations you will be blown away by the unbelievable breadth of his knowledge, the incredible ideas that flow from his mind ... the magical "understanding" of who you are on-stage. And, you will be mesmerized by his insight and how he points out one or two "tiny" things that will alter the course of your performance and enhance not only the effectiveness of your tricks but will transform your onstage presence/character.

I've introduced several magical friends to Bob, encouraging them to contact him - not that they aren't proficient at their craft - it's just having Bob work with you takes you to another realm. Some were hesitant, cautioning me that if it didn't work out it was "my fault". Others were cautious because it's not free. Thus far everyone I've sent has contacted me almost immediately following a session and thanked me over and over for what's been termed a life and performance altering experience.

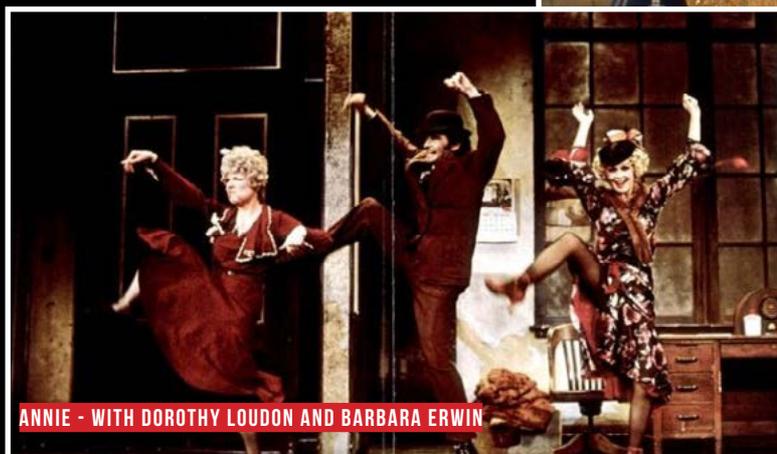
I try to talk to Bob at least once a month ... he's inspirational, fun, funny ... and just an all around great guy. And I should let you know, his better half, Polly is another gem.

I must say most of my best material is

LIZA MINNELLI'S ACT - NEIL SCHWARTZ - BOB FITCH - 1966- WORLD TOUR



WITH CAROL CHANNING AND JOHN MINEO



ANNIE - WITH DOROTHY LOUDON AND BARBARA ERWIN



BOB AND PAUL ROMHANY

actually Bob's handiwork. Now, Bob wouldn't admit it, that's the kinda guy he is, but it's true. Even things he never worked on with me I must attribute a portion of the success to him. He's helped me "think" - "breath" - "look" - "listen" - "create" - "share" and "cherish" my magical moments.

Thank you my friend ...

THE GOLDEN TOUCH ... By Paul Romhany

Twice in my life I have experienced what you might call life-changing moments when it comes to my magic career. The first was back when I was 18 years old and I went to a lecture by Marvin Roy. During that lecture Marvin showed us how to piece together a themed magic act, and taking his advice I never looked back. Almost thirty years later I had the same experience. This time it was at a three-day workshop by Bob Fitch put on by the SAM #95 in Vancouver.

Bob is a legend in our business and is synonymous as

one of the greatest magic directors and 'show doctors' of our time. He has coached many of the top performers in magic., over 300 magicians from David Copperfield, David Blaine, Shawn Farquhar, Paul Gertner, Timo Marc & Arthur Trace Bill Malone, Gene Anderson, Jeff McBride, Eric DeCamps, Stephen Bargatze, Bob Kohler, Bob Sheets, Xavier Tapias, Bob Sheets, Eric Leclerq, Vitaly, the Flicking Fingers and Thomas Solomon's *Ellusionist (Escapology) Show* to name a few., 4 FISM winners, the Flicking Fingers.

Bob has worn many hats in his lengthy professional career: Actor, director, magician, singer and dancer. A show business legend himself, Bob has worked alongside Katherine Hepburn, Angela Lansbury, Mickey Rooney, Steve Martin (Pennies from Heaven) and Liza Minnelli (Talk of the Town), Jerry Lewis and many others. He starred in 27 Broadway Shows, including, A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum with Whoopi Goldberg; received Broadway's Burns-Mantle Award for Best Featured Actor in a Musical for his villainous portrayal of Rooster Hannigan in the original Annie and has appeared in several Hollywood films, as well as dozens of TV commercials utilizing his skills in magic, juggling, fire-eating, dance, eccentric dance and physical comedy.

As a magician, he is well known for his coin, topit (Topit Workshop - 3 DVD's) and holdout work (Fitch-Kohler Holdout). He received the Lifetime Achievement Fellowship Award from the Magic Castle (2009); the MIMC w/ Gold Star from the Magic Circle (2010) and Magician of the Year Award from the Parent Assembly #1 in NYC.

He was consultant, coach and writer for PHENOMENON, the NBC Reality series and for Alain Nu's four one-hour Discovery Channel Specials (The Mysterious World of Alain Nu). He created the Coffee Cup Illusion for the second David Blaine TV Special and his Holdout was utilized for several effects by Criss Angel.

If anybody EVER asks me who is the one person they should seek out to help them become a better performer I have always told them to contact Bob Fitch - he really is life-changing.

His workshop helps you understand how people see you, hear you and ultimately how they perceive you. As Bob says, "if you know how they perceive you, you will better able to interact with them and better able to control their focus. In short, a better communicator equals a better entertainer.

During our time with Bob we also learned entrances/exits/bows and blocking. These are things the magic books don't teach you and you only get from an experienced director. One of the most important things we discovered during our time with him was how to breath - this was an eye opener for me, that one piece of advice alone changed how I do my act. We also worked on Speaking/Stretching and Vocal Warmups, as well as exploring concepts of our Character/Scripting/Truths and the Dynamics of our performances.

It doesn't matter how long we have been performing, we all need a tune-up, i.e a shot in the arm. The longer you are in this business the more you understand there's far more to magic than just tricks. We should all want to elevate our art. An outside eye can help to elevate your best qualities. What Bob offers is to raise your awareness; to give you more confidence; to help you look better, sound better, communicate more clearly; to break rules, take chances, and develop your own tastes. "YOU BECOME WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT!" And to give you the real security: "Better knowing your craft!"

WONDERFUL BOB FITCH - ROMANY

They say to know Bob Fitch is to love Bob Fitch. Who does? I does. Oh, and his wife Pauline too. I might have only spent four days with them but I recognise high quality people when I meet 'em. Bob is impish, gleeful, always in movement. He doesn't walk, his way of getting from one side of the room to the other is an energetic time-step or a bit of eccentric dance with a fragment of a song thrown in just because. In the airport at Montreal, we



TIMO MARC

Its incredible people like you, who keep me focusing on what its all about."



PAUL GERTNER

"After showing two performances on Pen & Teller, you can see that your lessons and workshops over the past 15 years have really paid off for me."



NATHAN COE MARSH

No single person has been a bigger influence on me as a performer than Bob Fitch. He made a huge impact on my stage presence and confidence He's taught me to polish material and he's forever altered my rehearsal and pre-show process.

couldn't find each other for a good long while. I was looking for the Bob of his publicity photo, he was looking for the pink-feathered Romany of mine. When I finally spotted him, wearing a cap and a warm checked woollen scarf, his collar pulled up against the cold, his lined face looked tired. My first thought was 'Damn! I've left it too late.' I was wrong. Bob is sharper and more insightful perhaps than ever, he quickly sees through your outer concocted persona to the real person you are, to the better performer you would like to be. He intuitively measures your potential and notices your learned mistaken performance habits. As a Broadway actor, dancer, magician and director for a long lifetime, he's seen it all, worked with the greats; our best magicians, Blain, Teller and Copperfield seek him out for advice. He has more energy at eighty-two than I have at - ahem, a little less than that.

I had wanted to have Bob help me with my act for more than fifteen years. When I made lists of what I would do if I made any real money at this magic game, hiring Bob was always at the top. Last year, I bit the bullet, flew to Canada and hired his expertise for four whole days in his studio. "What do you want to do with your magic?" He asked the minute I had taken off my coat. He listened carefully to my answer, then used it to sculpt his direction of my act for the next four days. We went through every line, every movement of my act,

we moderated my character. We laughed, we danced, we even cried. I have two whole forty-five minute cruise shows that I wanted to work on. I didn't think we'd have time to do it all. We did. The snow was two foot deep outside the studio, the air so cold that I could only go out for a few minutes before rushing back into the warm. For four whole days, working from early in the morning to late at night, I was in magic bliss. Bob went home to Pauline each night, leaving me to watch the bright moon making the snow dazzle white from the studio windows, marvelling how lucky I was to have the attention and expertise of this amazing man.

Bob's help doesn't come cheap, four days of one-to-one direction was a significant investment for me. It was worth every dollar. I feel utterly privileged to have spent that time with him and Pauline and to have had his great influence woven through my magic and now through my life. The encouragement and acknowledgement he gave me is pure gold that will last as long as I do. I wish Canada wasn't so far from England, we might only have spent four days together but I miss him. Wonderful Bob. If you have a chance to meet him yourself, take it, it will change your performance and your life.



BOB AND ROMANY



SHAWN FARQUHAR

I have been fortunate to be a part of Bob Fitch's workshop twice and in each case he has opened my eyes to how much more I have to learn. I have a solid foundation in regards to methods and effects, but Bob makes you look deep into yourself and your performance style to create an affect on those who see your magic.



JIM VINES

(Multi award winner and future FISM contestant)...."I attribute so much of what has made this act successful to the wonderful insights I learned from you. I'm so humbled, amazed and grateful for your input."



CHEF ANTON

"Bob's teaching has shaped my career. He taught me the importance of Character continuity and drawing your audience in with changes of emotion."

MAGIC IS EDUCATION

BY JEFF CHRISTENSEN



“WONDER PRODUCES CURIOSITY, WHICH CREATES AWARENESS AND MINDFULNESS. IT DISRUPTS OUR SENSE OF REALITY AND QUESTIONS THE CERTAINTY OF OUR KNOWLEDGE.” - BOB FITCH



Members of the SAM #95 at a recent 3-day workshop with Bob Fitch

This month we focus on education but from a slightly different perspective.

SAM #95 Vancouver, Canada is a smaller sized magic club that meets monthly in our individual members homes. While most of our members are either amateur or semi-professionals we do have a few world-class

performers in our ranks. In May 2018 about a dozen members had the privilege of attending a club sponsored Bob Fitch Master class workshop. The event was held over an extended weekend and each of our members was provided the opportunity to perform and receive extended theatrical feedback from Bob.

When we organized this event we knew that it would be a great learning experience for all of our members. What we didn't know is just how great it would be. Imagine an entire magic club connecting over a common love for magic with the sole purpose of helping each other improve their craft. How wonderful does that sound? I've been fortunate



BOB WITH JEFF CHRITSEN

enough to have attended a great number of magic and educational workshops over the years and this one has to rank as one of the best ever.

Bob provided valuable feedback to each of our members and offered them a path to help them improve their act. Through all of it we were each challenged and supported to help make our magic more magical. In addition to this, members also received valuable instruction in theatre and movement skills. They learned breathing exercises and how to find their performing voice. As one member noted during his performance feedback session:

"I JUST REALISED - I DON'T THINK I BREATHE THROUGH MY ENTIRE ACT!"

Paul Romhany - Chaplin magician

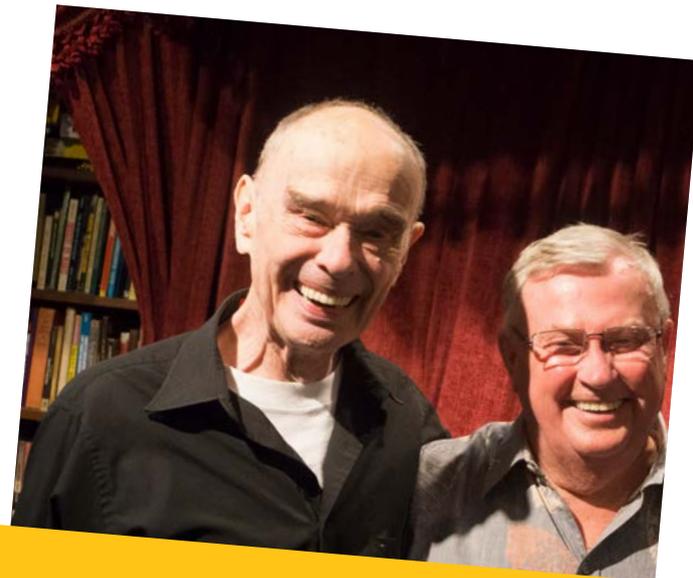


BOB WITH TREVOR WATTERS

I was most fascinated to see the feedback that Bob gave to Trevor and Lorena Watters. Trevor and Lorena performed an amazing piece from their international award-winning act. By the time Bob was finished he still managed to find many moments for them to make their act even better. It was an amazing learning experience to see how their wonderful act could be broken down into individual moments and phrases.



ROD CHOW PERFORMING AT THE WORKSHOP

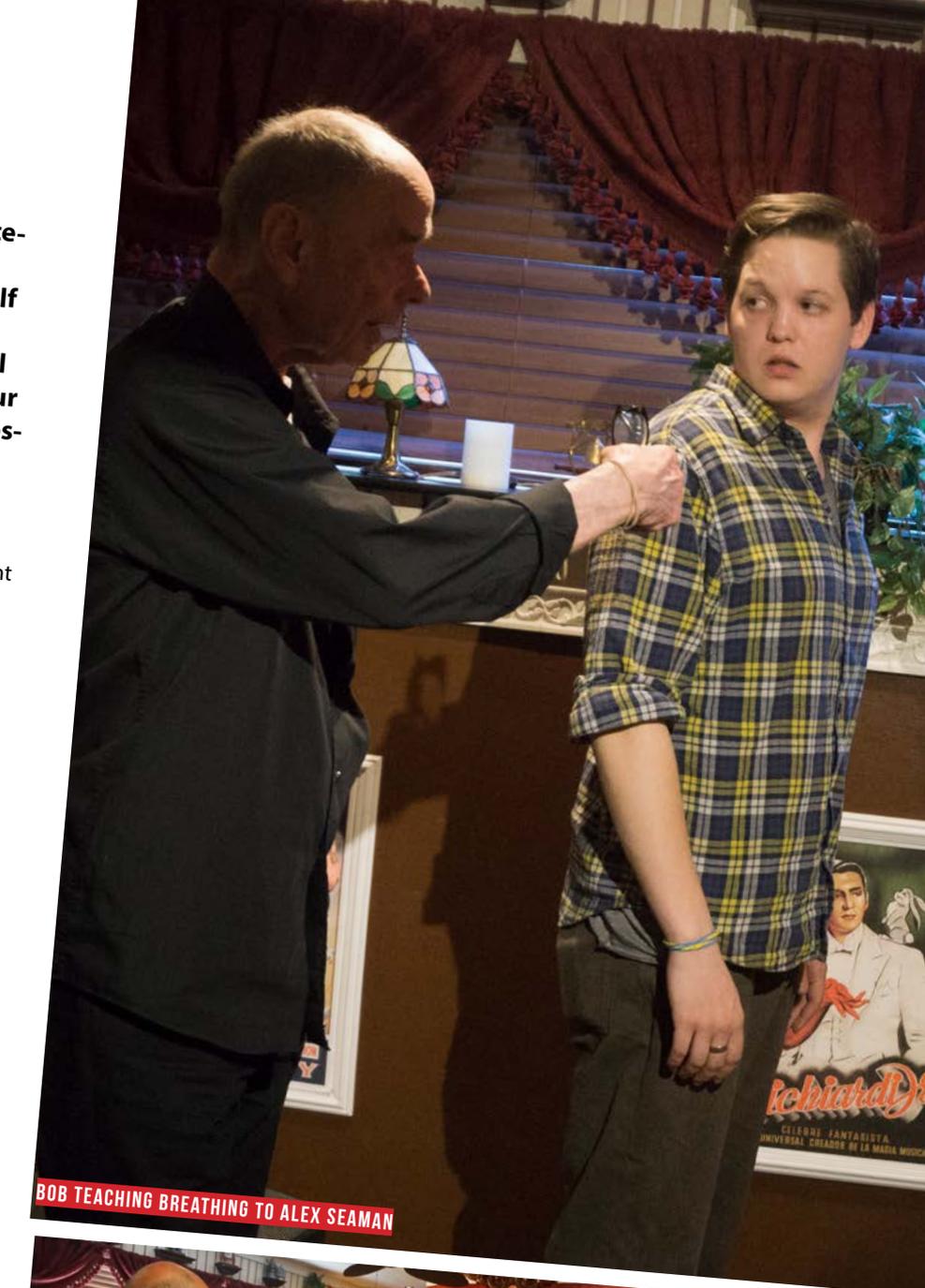
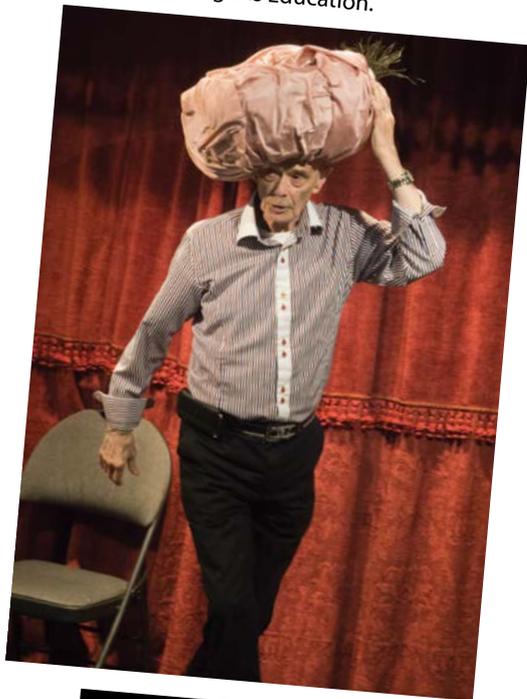


"Bob Fitch's Master class was a priceless and eye opening experience. With Bob, he makes you ask yourself the questions to help find the YOU in your magic. Using Bob's essential tools for the stage, we have lifted our performance to a new level of professionalism."

Trevor & Lorena Watters
FISM North American Champions of Magic

It's no wonder that the best in magic have sought out direction from him. David Copperfield, Jeff McBride, Shawn Farquhar and so many more understand the amazing gift that is Bob Fitch. I would strongly encourage other clubs to take the next step and organize a learning experience like this. Some members have also talked about organizing smaller sessions where they can provide each other feedback and continue to learn from each other. We've heard so many positive comments from the members who attended that we'll definitely want to organize another event like this in future. Thanks Bob!

Remember... Magic is Education.

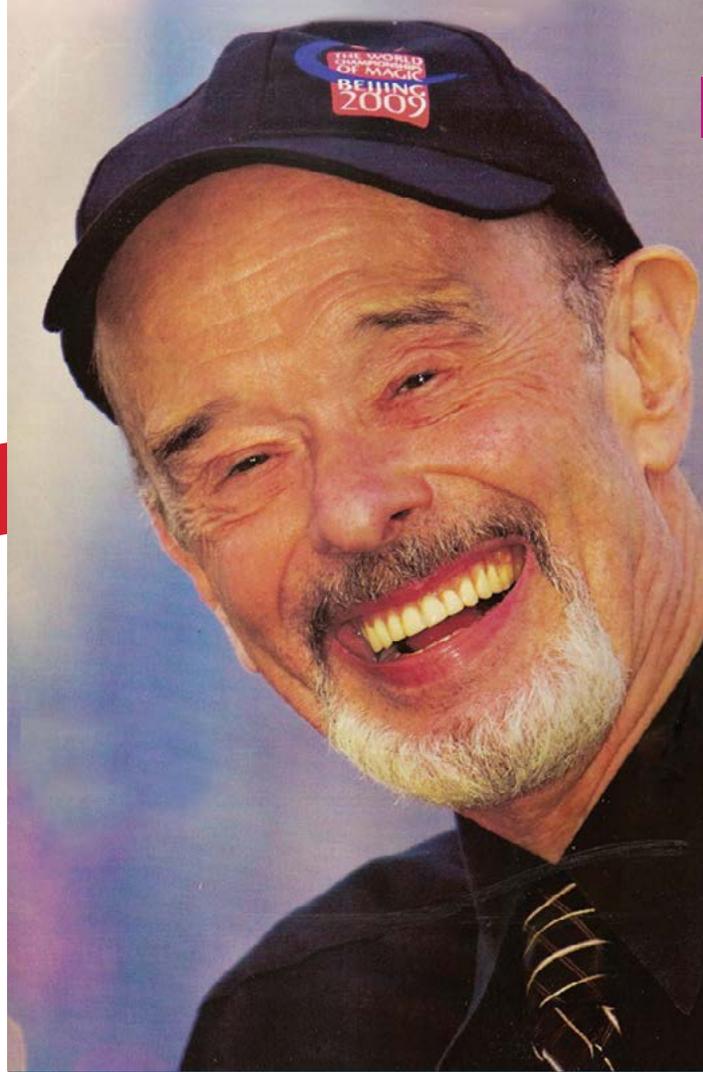


BOB TEACHING BREATHING TO ALEX SEAMAN



"Art creates empathy, compassion and understanding that are among the strongest antidotes to xenophobia, closed-mindedness and isolationism."

BOB FITCH SPEAKS: TRICKS OF THE TRADE



I LOVE MAGIC! I LOVE MAGICIANS AND THEIR IMAGINATIONS. THEY MAKE POSSIBLE, WHAT SEEMS TO MOST PEOPLE, TO BE IMPOSSIBLE. THEY PUSH THEIR BOUNDARIES OUTSIDE OF THE BOX. THEY CAN HELP MARRY THE LIMITATIONS OF THE LEFT BRAIN TO THE UNLIMITED POSSIBILITIES OF THE RIGHT AS LONG AS THEY THEMSELVES DON'T PUT RESTRICTIONS ON THEIR CREATIVE PROCESS.

The one tool I always found missing, after directing, problem solving and refining the programs of over 300 magicians, was the one I was most able to share with them, i.e. my Theatrical Experience, i.e. the Tools of the Theatre!. Communication tools. These were tools they didn't even know existed, much less know that they needed! Tools to raise their awareness, to give them more confidence and more choices. Tools to help them look and sound better, because that's all the audience knows is what they see and what they hear. Tools to make them more believable and give them more presence. Tools to help them relax, compete and survive in this Art Form, we call Magic. Tools to spark their own creativity and define their own process. These, I realized are the real "Tricks of the Trade."

Let me ask you a question: Are you the same person you were 10 years ago? Do you view things the same way you did 10 years ago? Are your priorities the same? If you answered "NO" to all of these questions, then pat yourself on the back, you are pretty self-aware. Next question: Do you still do Magic the same way as you did 10 years ago? Think about it ... You've had lots of experiences in the past 10 years and lots of

questions about How to Solve Problems. Have you applied what you've learned and the answers you have found, to your Magic? If not, why not? The magic grows as you grow. My feeling's here? That Magic is about life! We all know the saying, "Art Reflects Life." It does. How we do things ... is who we are.

Can you say that you are more professional now? Do you speak better? Have more confidence? Are you more relaxed, more mature? Are you a better entertainer? In the context of your own home or studio, these are safe questions, and necessary ones, because answering them allows you to step out of your "same old patterns" and get into the "now" of your own Reality Show.

Speaking of Reality Shows, let me ask you another question. Where do you think Magic is going in this new century? More smoke? More thongs? Or will it be more meaningful, more theatrical, more personal? I HOPE SO! Nowadays people are smarter. They want plots and stories that are more meaningful. They want to FEEL! And so too with Magic. The Magic has to be smart, more important, more meaningful. Audiences want to relate and to identify with what's going on. They want to laugh and cry. In short, they want

to be TOUCHED! What are the real secrets, the Hidden Secrets, the Tools of the Trade to help us do that?

My suggestion: Take a night course in short story writing ... or join a Toast Masters group. Perhaps there's some basic Acting, Theatre Games or Improv Classes being taught locally. They're lots of fun. A basic class in film directing would be fabulous. A ballroom class, Yoga or Pilates will change the way you feel. They also erase depression. Try working with a local theatre group. You'll learn a lot. Start a small study group that can work together. If you're serious don't ask local magicians, mostly because they're not trained either. Its hard to know what to look for and harder still to help someone else to find and develop their Tools. My final thought is that you should enjoy a collaborative adventure with "a director". Let's elevate this art form of ours; take it seriously and find the best that's in us. That's the Magic for the 21st Century!

FINAL THOUGHTS

BOB FITCH

1 THE GOAL OF MAGIC IS TO CREATE A SENSATION.
Drama adds impact to Magic. It makes the experience of the impossible, more powerful.

2 THE WHOLE THING ABOUT ACTING IS TO GIVE.
You must, above everything, be generous. You don't hoard, you must say, "I want you to hear this story. I want you to see this illusion. It is wonderful."

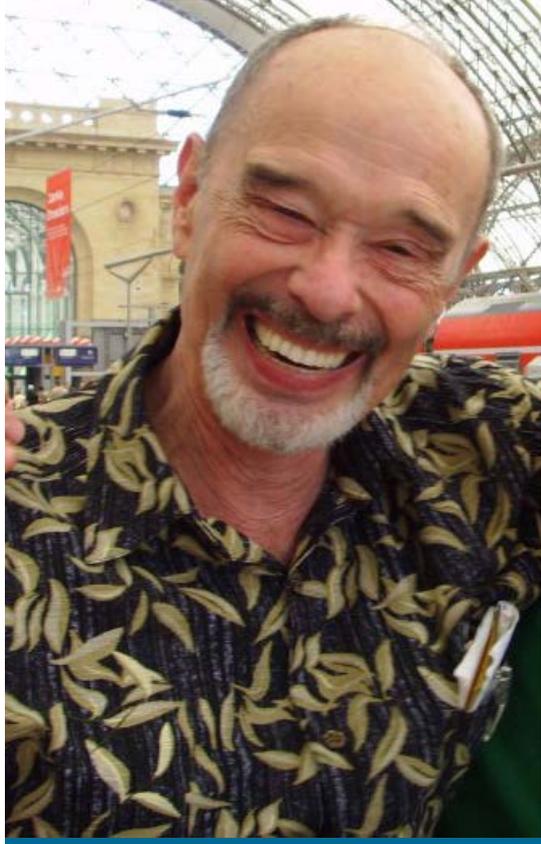
3 YOU MUST DEVELOP ENERGY FOR THE STAGE.
Everything you do is important. You have a great responsibility about what you do.

7 IN PERFORMANCE YOU'RE ALIVE.
You feel it and you express it, your audience feels it and feeds it back to you. It is the inseparable give and take bond between the performance and the audience. You must experience it before the audience experiences it. Make them see it! Does it excite you? Don't explain. Take them there.

4 SPEECH THINK ABOUT THE WAY YOU SPEAK
Care about your own words. Edit them. Be clear and articulate about your thoughts, stories and ideas. Make us see with your words.

5 ON STAGE YOU ARE EXPOSED - IN THE SPOTLIGHT - EVERY MOMENT IS SCRUTINIZED.
There is no place to hide. And every line is meaningful.

6 YOU MUST WORK ON YOUR INSTRUMENT AND YOUR INSTINCT
Your body, voice, gesture and intentions and get them all working together.



8 ON STAGE, PROPS SPEAK TO YOU.
They make it easier to do your job. They have a life. Respect them. Every prop has it's own truth and nature. Give it dignity.

9 AN AUDIENCE COMES TO THE THEATRE TO EXPERIENCE THE LIFE YOU BRING TO THE WORDS.
On stage, you can't afford to be boring. There's never been anyone like you and there never will be, so you might as well be yourself.

10 IF YOU STUDY DANCE, IT WOULD BE ABOUT YOUR LEGS.
For piano that would be about the instrument and your fingers. But you use your legs, your voice, your hands, your eyes, every part of your body. Your body is your instrument!

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FASHION OF MAGIC



Jamy Ian Swiss photo by Michael Bulbenko



By PERK

Perk is a freelance writer and fashion designer who has always loved magic. His writing website is aspergillpress.com and his fashion website is perkskinz.com. Contact Perk for all your custom clothing needs.

Fashion is as enmeshed with magic as “abra” is with “cadabra”. And just as that cliché phrase grates on many of today’s magician’s nerves, so does the wearing of the top hat and cape. So what does today’s fashionable magician wear? Let’s explore the fashion of magic.

We interviewed three American magicians to get the inside scoop. Keith Frye is a local magician in southern New Jersey, who grew up performing close-up magic with his father. Jamy Ian Swiss performs close-up magic internationally and is known as an historian of magic. Richard Turner performs close-up magic and prefers the term “card mechanic” to magician.

Charlatans, pick pockets, and grifters have always used sleight-of-hand and misdirection to earn a living. They need to fit in with the current fashion and are not considered magicians. Magicians use sleight-of-hand and misdirection to entertain the masses, either from a platform or close-up. Top hats and tails were the height of upper class fashion when Houdini was performing, so he naturally wore those clothes. As the audience’s taste in clothes changed, so has the magician’s. Jamy points out how Doug Henning wore tie-dye and jeans to fit into the late 1970’s and how Penn and Teller countered with the gray business suits in the ‘80’s. We tried to get a comment from Penn and Teller, currently performing at the Rio, about the gray suits. Apparently Mr. Teller responded, and said “ ”.

Magicians should put as much importance in how they look, as how they perform. And how they look is usually a function of the magic they perform. Card mechanics often wear garb evoking the days of the wild west, such as a white shirt, flat brim hat, and black vest. This look is often chosen by Richard, who is from Texas, and currently on fire! Lifelong, ceaseless dedication to the craft has put Richard and his magic in a sweet spot. Both he has and his recently released documentary film, “Dealt”, have won awards. Following our interview he had a German film crew lined-up, and then was off to speak to Facebook. If you think you are serious about practicing magic, see how you stack up to the intensity Richard displays in his movie. For this Vanish article, he said, “Over the past 45 years I have had very authentic gambler outfits, often custom made, some not so traditional, and I have had a number of hats, but never a top hat.” Jamy agreed, and said for magicians in the 21st Century still wearing the black top hat and cape, “They are missing the picture.”

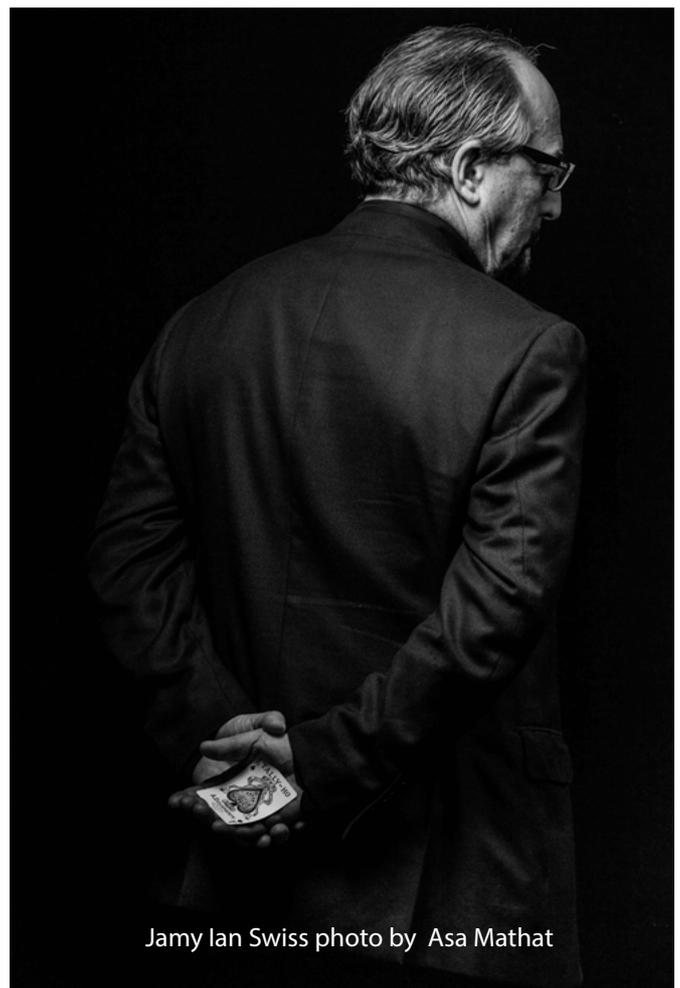
Ah, the top hat. If beginner magician’s didn’t wear them, there would be almost no market. All three magician’s interviewed for this article often wear a hat, but not the infamous top hat. Jamy noted he often wore a Kangol cap backwards, but is starting to get away from it. And the hat, as Keith patiently explained to me, is not “funny”, but a carefully thought out piece of the act. For example, one of Keith’s characters wears a red fez, to pay homage to the great magic of Britain’s Tommy Cooper. Now that’s using fashion to make a statement!



How many other magicians honor their heroes during their act, either through dress or routine? Leave a comment on the Vanish blog.

Because this article is written mostly for guys, we will keep the discussion on footwear brief, but it is still oh-so-necessary. Jamy enjoys dressing in bespoke suits, and encourages others to investigate this niche of the fashion world. He wants you all to know, "Nothing turns off a sophisticated eye quicker than a nice suit with cheap shoes. You may not believe this is true. You'd be wrong. You'll never hear it from the people judging you." Keith added, "I consider it important to look the part...and wear what is authentic for your character. For me, that means braces (suspenders) in a bright or complimentary hue, and wingtip (and often coloured) Oxford shoes." Wingtip oxfords will show you are man of style and tradition. Footwear matters, gents! If you care to further explore the topic of upscale men's footwear, you could begin with a couple of articles posted on the MensDesignerShoe.com blog, by this author.

Authentic. That word popped up while interviewing all three magicians about fashion. It seems a magician in a top hat and tails is about authentic as a three dollar bill. It can be hard when you are just starting out, especially when you are trying to establish a persona. Jamy reasons, since you will tone down the more outlandish elements of your style as you mature, you might as well do it sooner, rather than later. But the key point to take away about the fashion of magic, especially when performing close-up, mentioned by all three magicians, "Dress slightly better than your intended audience."



Jamy Ian Swiss photo by Asa Mathat

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<i>Kostya Kimlat</i>	<i>Paul Gertner</i>	<i>Martin Lewis</i>	<i>Danny Archer</i>	<i>Craig Petty</i>
<i>Shin Lim</i>	<i>Francis Menotti</i>	<i>Anton James</i>	<i>João Miranda</i>	<i>John Carey</i>
<i>Greg Wilson</i>	<i>Matthew Wright</i>	<i>Marcelo Insula</i>	<i>Luke Dancy</i>	<i>Alan Rorrison</i>
<i>Darwin Ortiz</i>	<i>Jeff McBride</i>	<i>Woody Aragon</i>	<i>Patrick Kun</i>	<i>Chris Wood</i>
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<i>John Archer</i>	<i>Justin Miller</i>	<i>Chris Randall</i>	<i>Paul Romhany</i>	<i>Michael Lair</i>
<i>Caleb Whiles</i>	<i>Jason England</i>	<i>Christian Engblom</i>	<i>Marc Spelmann</i>	<i>Robbie Moreland</i>
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JEFF HOBSON - THE INTERVIEW SERIES

Jeff Hobson is one of the most in-demand comedy magicians working today. His refreshing and clever mix of comedy and magic has brought him back for repeat performances all over the world.

His television appearances include HBO, Showtime's Comedy Club Network, Fox Family's Masters of Illusion, NBC's World's Greatest Magic as well as the star of Thames Television's Magic Comedy Strip a 16 week television series in England. In December of 2013, he appeared on the top-rated U.K.'s iTV with The Illusionists.

He is a favorite entertainer to many of the Fortune 500 companies. He has an uncanny ability to break the ice and allow everyone to enjoy themselves with his program of audience participation, comedy, magic and even fire eating! During his performance, Hobson tip-toes his way throughout the audience teasing the crowd. As his finale, Hobson returns a dozen wristwatches that were stolen during the show to the surprise, laughter - and often times - shock of the audience members!

Hobson introduction to Las Vegas started with an audition at the famed comedy club, Catch a Rising Star at Bally's Casino. This audition turned into numerous return, headline engagements. In 1993, Hobson joined the cast of Spellbound at Harrah's Casino. This run lasted over four years including being the only act held over by request of casino management during a mid-contract show change. After a three-year hiatus that took Hobson to Reno to produce and star in the critically-acclaimed magic production show called, Carnival of Wonders, he came back home to become the "Host of Las Vegas". Since then, he has starred in his own, one-man show, Money and Madness and been the Master of Ceremonies for countless special events and production shows including the World's Greatest Magic Show and V-The Ultimate Variety Show.

In this interview Paul Romhany asks Jeff questions about touring, his advice to other performers and inside information on The Illusionists.



HOBSON



as seen on

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FOX

RACHAEL

America's Got Talent Live

TODAY

SHOWTIME

"Super Funny"

Broadway World

"Inspired Flair"

Miami Herald

"Priceless"

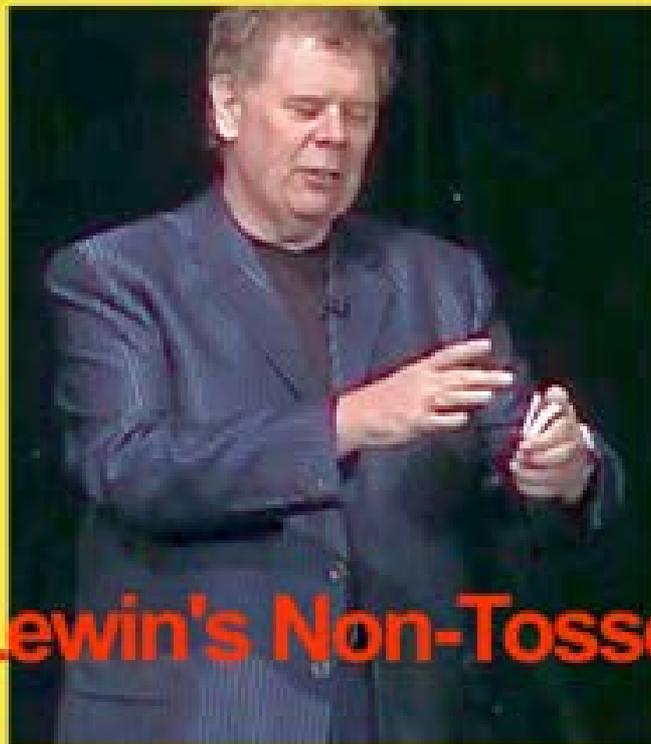
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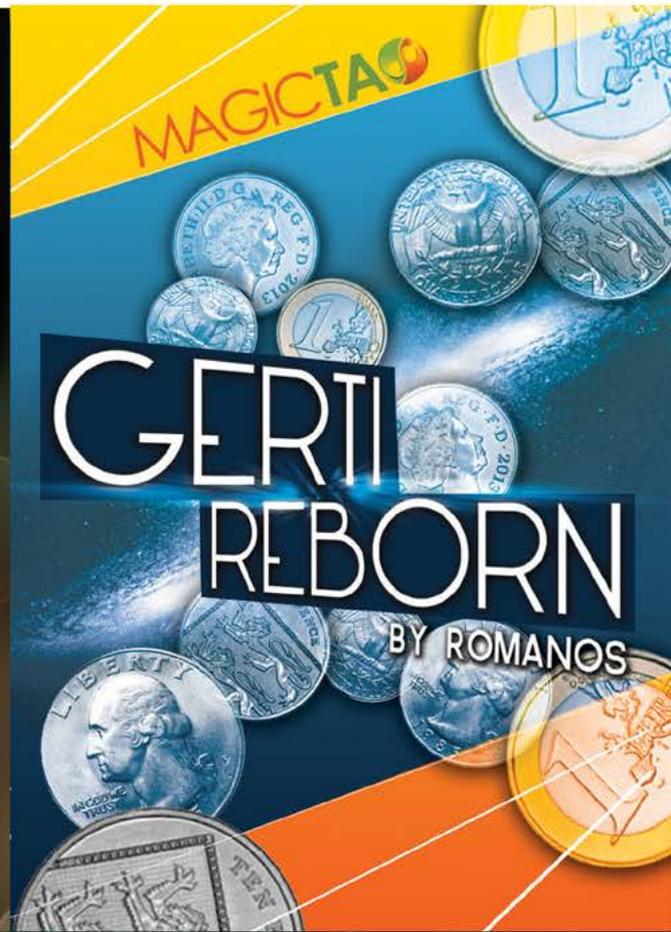
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WALK AWAY RENEE

REAL WORLD MAGIC - JIM SISTI

There are many articles and columns scattered throughout the magic literature, including a few that I've written, that dispense advice regarding how to book a show. This month's column will be a bit different as I'm going to talk about how (and also when and why) to not book a show.

First off, you should always walk away from a potential booking if you get a sense, based on your initial discussions with the potential client, that you're walking into a possibly adverse situation.

A typical example would be the unfortunately common circumstance where they expect you to perform a stand-up show on a banquet hall dance floor surrounded on three sides. This ordinarily means that if you adjust your sightlines for the show so that everyone can see, this results in a situation where the people closest to you are at your immediate left and right, usually at a ninety-degree angle, while the people at

tables in front of you are quite a distance away. Thus, you end up with a terrible angle problem if performing any material that has any kind of sensitivity in that regard while audience members in front of you are so far away that it takes more effort than it should to keep them engaged. This is why it's of paramount importance that you ascertain from your contact person exactly how the seating is going to be arranged during the booking process. If they tell me that the tables are arranged around a dance floor, I tell them that it will be a much better experience if everyone would simply move their chairs to the dance floor for the show and then simply return them to the tables if dancing is to follow. Another example is best illustrated by my experience many years ago with doing Blue and Gold Banquets which, for the benefit of my non-U.S. readers, is an awards dinner of sorts for Cub Scouts and their parents.





"BEFORE I CLOSE, LET ME GIVE YOU ONE MORE REASON YOU SHOULD WALK AWAY FROM A SHOW — YOU'RE NOT THE RIGHT PERFORMER FOR THAT SPECIFIC SHOW OR CIRCUMSTANCE "

The usual format is that the magic show follows dinner and the award ceremonies. When the show is about to begin, the scoutmaster makes an announcement for all the boys to come up and sit right in front of the performing space. However, this always creates two problems. The first difficulty is that the boys, now out of reach of their parents (or any other adult, for that matter), tend to act out as they feel unsupervised. The other problem is that the adults, who now have been relieved of their parental duties by the magic show, are free to chat amongst themselves in the back of the room, creating a din that even a good microphone and sound system will have trouble competing with. This perfect storm of awfulness almost always results in a, shall we say, less than satisfactory presentation.

It was my buddy, Paul Green who, after I mentioned to him how much I hated doing these events, asked me if I allowed them

to have all the kids sit up front. I admitted that this was usually how it went. His advice, gleaned from many years of doing these types of shows, turned out to be priceless. Since the kids usually sit with their parents during the meal and the awards, he advised me to make sure, when booking the show, that it be stipulated that the kids sit with their families during the show. (I used to couch this request, not as a demand, but rather disguised it as a suggestion that it was just a way that everyone could enjoy the show together as a family.) As a result, when this request is honored, the kids remain supervised, the adults aren't huddled in their own little clique creating their own wall of noise, and these types of shows are a pleasure to do.

However, what happens if, as with my first example, the prospective client says that moving the chairs will be impossible and the show will have to be performed

surrounded on the dance floor? Or, as in my second example, if your contact tells you that they always have the kids come up front for the magic show and they're not keen to change the procedure? There are many reading right now who think toughing out both scenarios is the obvious choice. We're troopers, right?

I would have said the same thing much earlier in my career but in more recent years, experience has brought me to the response suggested by the column's title. If the client is not willing to adjust to the very simple requirements I request to ensure that my show (and by extension, their event) is a success, I am more apt to walk away from the gig than I was when I was younger. It's become my opinion that if you know, due to the circumstances, that the show has a huge chance of stinking on ice, it's much easier on your reputation to just take a pass. Truthfully, spectators probably won't say something like, "The magician

had a difficult time because he was in the middle of the room" but rather, will probably say instead, "Boy, that magician sucked, didn't he?"

Before I close, let me give you one more reason you should walk away from a show – you're not the right performer for that specific show or circumstance. In recent years, I see more and more of the following kinds of posts on social media platforms: "I've been asked to perform at an assisted living facility this Saturday. What kind of tricks should I do?"

"I got a call to do a show for an audience of adults and kids together. What kind of show should I put together?"
I'm always tempted to inform posters who have these types of inquiries that they're really asking the wrong questions. The question that they should be asking is, "Who on my friends list is local and has experience with these types of shows? I'd like to make a referral."

If you're not familiar with a particular audience or variety of show, please do magic a favor and, after referring another performer who actually has the required experience, walk away gracefully. Then, do some work so you'll be ready next time.



Jim Sisti has been performing magic for over 30 years and his career has taken him from local nightspots, trade shows, amusement parks and restaurants to the off-Broadway stage. Following a 12-year career as a popular Connecticut radio personality, he turned to magic full time and now, his client list boasts numerous Fortune 500 companies and even a celebrity or two, including actor Richard Dreyfuss.

Jim's articles, columns and effects have appeared in MAGIC, Genii, MUM, and Apocalypse. The Magic Menu, the periodical he created specifically for restaurant and bar magicians, was published for a very respectable eleven years and even now, the large hardbound compilations continue to be best sellers and are a continual source of reference and inspiration to close-up workers worldwide.

Jim also works as a freelance copywriter for L&L Publishing and is responsible for writing a good percentage of the advertising, DVD, and book jacket copy for the company. Also, over the last decade, Jim has edited and published Richard Osterlind's best-selling books and appeared with Richard in a number of enormously popular instructional DVDs. In addition to appearing in them, he also directed Richard's last four independently-produced DVD projects, and many more.



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A NO BULLSHIT APPROACH TO MAGIC

BY CHARLES BACH

“There are too many lazy (magicians) out there that don’t want to practice or put true effort into the art.”

MARK PARKER - Illusion designer

My series in Vanish has been continually striving to make better magic through creative thought, better performance, more originality, and primarily taking the art in a forward direction. I seek out people that I feel have a lot to contribute to the growth of magic in these ways and don't always have a platform to share their knowledge. Through this magazine, we've been able to offer an incredible wealth of insight to readers that will allow them to develop and improve their shows beyond what has already been done before.

I was fortunate enough to have Mark Parker consult with me when I was starring in a large production at Resorts World Genting in Malaysia. After purchasing two of his books *4e Illusion Design* and *Vivify*, I liked his thinking and knew he would be great to work with. Our show was moved from a

theater to a large, almost arena-like venue that challenged site-lines, staging, lighting and more. With Mark's observations and honest advice, we were able to adapt the magic to work in these new conditions and make it "fill" the space. The show was extended twice and he definitely deserves some credit for that. Collaborating was honest and the focus was always on making it the best magically and finding solutions. A less ego and more "let's go" approach.

We are best served with honest feedback and Mark is most comfortable when you give him the freedom to truly give you the truth about what works and does not. I did and the end result is always better magic.

The interview you are about to read has been cleaned up a bit as Mark Parker has a talent for dropping more f-bombs than a shop teacher losing his finger in the band saw. But,

most importantly, it's a dose of honesty that is sorely needed in our current, "don't say anything to offend anyone" world.

Tell us about your start in magic, what excited you creatively, what drove you into the magic business?

My start in magic came at a young age 6-7 years old (40 something years ago)

David Nixon, a quietly gentleman magician, had a TV series on British television and I became fascinated by Magic. I visited the local library to borrow any books I could find related on Magic and through that I was introduced to the Hopkins book 'Magic, Illusions, Scientific Diversions & Trick Photography' which to the inquisitive mind of a child was mind blowing. After loanin



PHOTO: Charles Bach, Paul Romhany and Mark Parker in Singapore.. The Mango beer must have turned in to water!!

from the library I saved up pocket money to order it from the Dover publications catalogue at the local book store. I still have that crazy book, it's inspiring and full of madness & genius.

I studied practiced & performed all sorts of magic in my younger days. As a 9 year old kid, I freaked out our neighbour's Mother (no, not by exposing myself) but by vanishing her daughter from their garden swing. I had attached some old bed sheet to the frame and as it got wrapped around the swing the daughter ran 'upstage' into the hedge nearby and hid. Once the bedsheet got dropped, I never will forgot how freaked out her Mother was. I had a great sight-lines & a hedge on my side :)

You have an enormous amount of magic knowledge beyond the ability to draw and design magic illusions. Yet, you don't announce it, post it on social media, or make a big deal of it. Still, the top magicians know you and continue to come to you when working on new projects. What are your thoughts on this?

I think it's something a lot of people don't know about me unless you know me personally. People think you are just a 'guy that does drawings' which is hilarious to me, as I have forgotten more about magic than a lot of people know. That's not me being arrogant it's just that I'm nearly bloody 50 and been around magic a long time, studied a lot of books (you remember those right!) & practiced hard (you remember that right!) In fact, I still have a mean riffle pass.

Maybe I should get down with the kids and get onto social media, take selfies with celebs, photograph my dinner and talk total bollocks about myself :) hahaha no chance of that ever happening.

How did art and design play into your life and magic experience? And, how or when did you end up merging them to become an illusion designer?

It was a natural progression I guess. I left school after failing most of my exams except Art. (Totally my own fault I just didn't attend that often and was busy honing my cue skills at the local Pool & snooker hall... I can kick most people's ass on a table still) Anyhow I got into Art school and I studied Graphic Design for 2 years then went on to work in that industry.

Before I fully answer the question in hand I have to jump back a bit.

At 11 years old I also began another journey in taking drum lessons (I still play today) and for a while this did move a focus towards drumming and music for a number of years playing in bands etc. At 21-22 at the job I was working, a colleague showed a sh** card trick, which really did kick start me back into magic. I really knuckled down and I guess you could say applied the practice philosophy required to learn an instrument, to now refreshing my existing magic skills and learning new and more advanced sleight of hand routines. Within a few years of study and practice I considered myself ready to perform commercial close-up gigs.

— // —

IT'S AN INHERENT PROBLEM WITH MAGIC BECAUSE YOU CAN BUY SH TO MAKE YOU LOOK GOOD QUICKLY WITHOUT SERVING YOUR TIME AND TRULY PUTTING THE TIME, CARE AND ATTENTION IT TAKES INTO BECOMING A GREAT PERFORMER.**

— // —

So looping back, during all this time of music and magic I would always make a few hand sketches of illusion ideas and designs. It was Philip Hitchcock, a British performer and builder, that said to me "you should do a book sometime" I laughed and thought nobody would care even if I did. Eventually, of course, I did and the 4e book popped out. It's a curse and a blessing really because people pigeon hole you as a designer of illusions but that book started me off on a path that has been very kind to me.

I'm not a writer by any stretch of the imagination. I admire those that can. Jim Steinmeyer writes very eloquently and it's great. I cannot pretend to be able to do that. Put it this way. I'm more of a "say it how it is



Backstage before filming with Daly

“A piece of magic should continually be improved.”

and if you don't like it you can (bleep)-off kinda guy” and that doesn't bode well on your first book. That said, my next one I'm planning will be exactly that. I have a certain personality type so I should just show that and you can either like it or not.

My books are just to inspire further thinking hopefully and not just take off the page as is. I mean once something gets printed, it's stopped creatively. So it's up to the reader to continue this.

Some magic consultants just throw out “What If’s” and have no method or idea how to make them happen. What is your philosophy on the creation and follow-through of an illusion & magic design/creation?

Currently, it's all about ideas with no real methods...because you don't need f*@!ing methods anymore!!! Methods are as follows: Pick up shots, Stop downs because of 'sound problems' edits, stooges & produced reaction interviews blah, blah, blah, etc, etc, etc. I mean who cares about this sh** that mostly can't be recreated live. The scales of balance are all wrong. It's 90% of the above and a 10% of actually being a magician. It really needs flipping as there are too many Poseurs now who can't do jack sh** away from their comfort blankets of camera cheats and stooged BS.

It always makes me laugh when these clowns go onto a live chat show and do something very pedestrian like a four ace trick or some dealer trick performed out of the packet.

There are too many lazy (magicians) out there

that don't want to practice or put true effort into the art.

David Copperfield would do a TV special and then with the majority of the material go on a live tour with it. That's smart and also says without saying it, “Hey, I can actually do this stuff live.” Unfortunately, it's almost impossible to visually compete with the new brand of TV bullshit magic with real time magic.

Personally and maybe I sound like a moaner, but it's about time someone comes back and brings some respect to the art of magic as a magician and not a poser!!

You can't buy talent at any of the dealer websites.

My philosophy is firstly about the ideas with no method restrictions, the dream scenario if you like. Next, it's how can this be achieved on a stage or wherever the performance is, which in turn technically, for the methods, can introduce some compromises before you get to the point where it starts to get designed.

A piece of magic should continually be improved.

It's an inherent problem with magic because you can buy sh** to make you look good quickly without serving your time and truly putting the time, care and attention it takes into becoming a great performer. The greatest musicians on this earth had to do this so why do a lot of magicians in the public eye these days think it's ok to essentially short cut and bullshit their way onto TV or stage? I recently saw one of the worst magic TV series that is all of the above, just a waste of time and an embarrassment to magic. Sadly, I'm sure there's more to come.

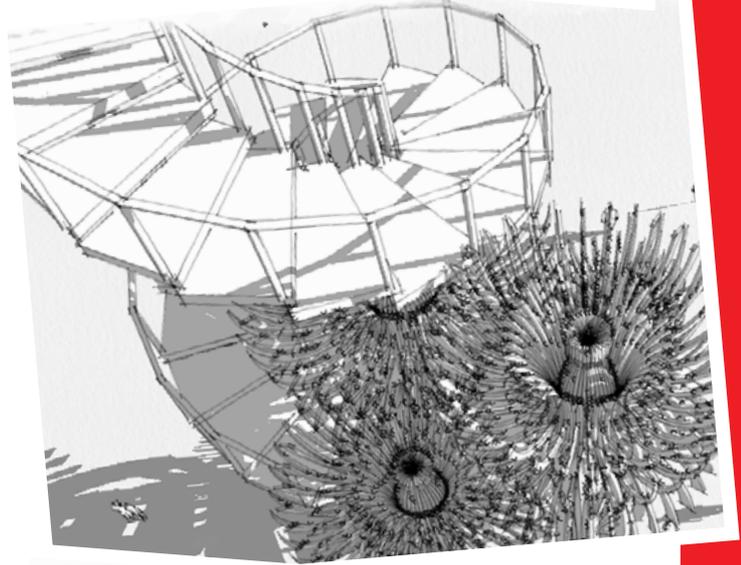
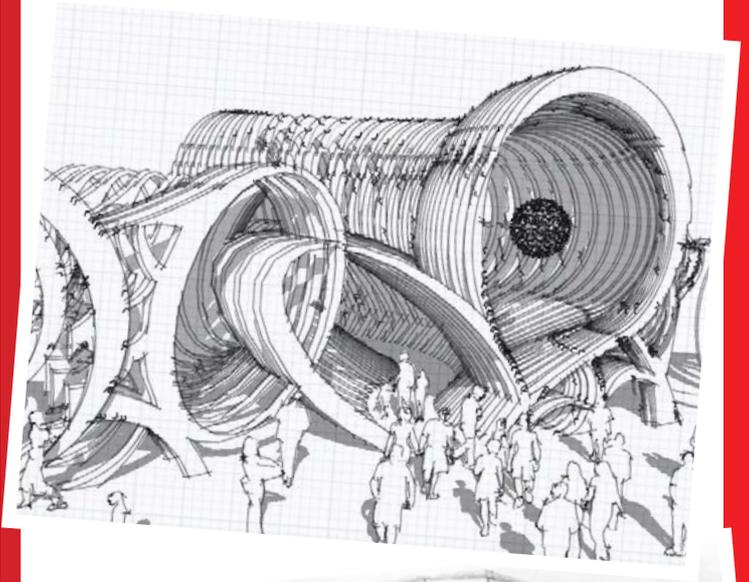
One of your best skills is not only to see a way to find areas that need improvement, but also to find solutions and ways to solve those problems. Why is this an important part of consulting? Give us an example of a problem that needed a solution in a television or stage production for a well-known magician?

Thanks, Charles. I appreciate that comment.

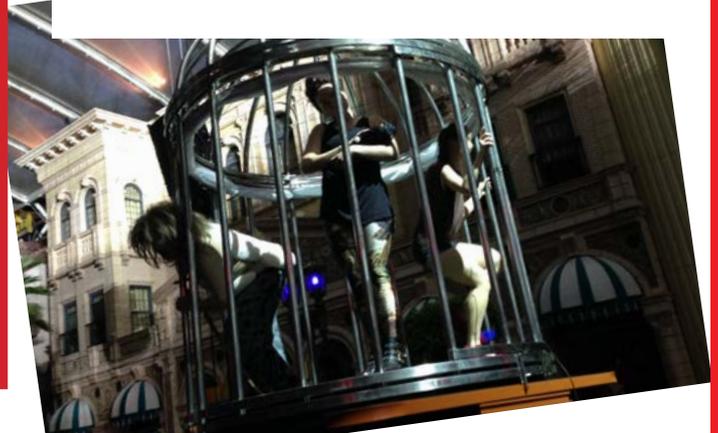
“My books are just to inspire further thinking...Once something gets printed, it's stopped creatively..”

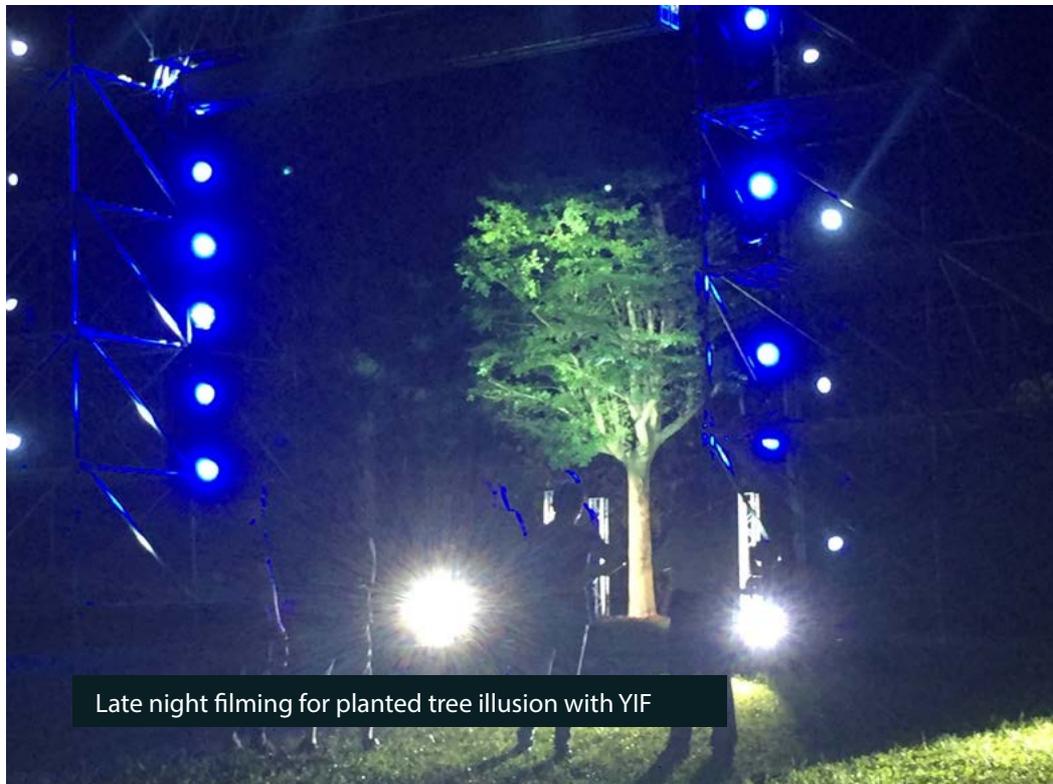
Ok, for example, recently, Lu Chen & I sat together and created a short story-based sequence of magic over 9-10 minutes and it was very beautiful and magical. We poured for days over the magical creations and the script, almost to a ridiculous level of detail, but totally worth it. The final piece has some innovative magic. It was due to air on a TV special, which unfortunately got postponed so it's been waiting in the shadows to strike at some point and I look forward to seeing him do this justice.

We talked for days and weeks on this one piece, we disagreed at times, listened to each other, we laughed a lot, we created and then eventually go and drink. This went on for days and weeks. Lots of roadblocks came up creatively and technically and you really need to understand how things work on a practical and creative level to find applicable solutions. I am fortunate enough to have a dangerously quick mind in these situations and combine that with good like-minded people around you, solutions will be found. Possibly, a bit of liver damage too! :)



Rehearsal for Universal Studios Mid-Air Vanish





Late night filming for planted tree illusion with YIF



It is important, I feel, to be honest with the performer you are working with and not blow smoke up their ass like some annoying sycophant giving out constant high-fives.

I take the approach that if something is sh** I will say so, but justify it. Too many people just say things are not good but can't back it up with logical justification. Even worse are those that say something is great just to kiss ass. It about making your client look their best and giving honest, real advice in the process.

There are a few types of magic consultants that may be a waste of time and money for a quality magic production. Can you tell us so we know what to look for and avoid?

I have a particularly low tolerance for idiot Wannabes giving advice that have been around magic for five minutes and self appoint themselves as a consultant on a production. It's usually a producer type that sees how a few things work and they are set.

Idea stealers. You discuss an idea with these types, they don't really give you much response and appear to be considering this...then BAM, a few minutes later they announce to the room this great eureka moment...annoying as hell and Hulk will smash!

Lastly there are the Undermining types that slip into productions because of 2 minutes of fame over one marketed trick or a card move, usually they can give nothing creatively, don't really want to work hard so they just go all out to undermine those around them and suck up to the bosses to get hired again. Poison to a production!!

Who do you see "doing it right" in magic and where do you think illusion or magic performance is headed? What might you see that could be improved or should be considered to improve most magicians' shows?

My answer to that is there are too many doing it 'fast and very wrong' just to get noticed quickly or famous, it's a short term fix, long term



Crazy mid-air escape illusion

fail. Tomorrow's fish and chip paper, as we say in the UK.

Most magicians should just stop buying 'things' to fill time and actually put some time and effort into creating some signature and original magic.

'You can't walk into a music store, buy an instrument then call yourself a musician. Then a week later, wing it on stage!... Magic stores create the opposite! There are people paid to be on TV and stages right now all around the world that are just 'winging it'. It's an insult to your audiences, you lazy B-grade jerks.

Recently, I have been working with some



You can't walk into a music store, buy an instrument then call yourself a musician. Then a week later, wing it on stage!!



performers really looking to change directions and do things in a more refreshing and cohesive way. My process with them is more long term with joint brainstorming, conceptual sketches, notes back and forth, more brainstorming and generally pushing the boundaries much more before anything solid gets decided. It takes time but the results and the creative process are very rewarding.

I get asked too many times can you design a 'cool' prop and yes I can, but it's not that exciting or inspiring for me on a creative level. So, free thinking ideas is what I do best. I can draw/design. So what?! That's just a bonus. It's really time to stop wheeling things on and off stage and start to be more creative.



Eric Olsen - one of the best magic builders in the world



During filming for National Geographic DMC

You have some very distinct thoughts on the use of blades and placement of props on-stage. Could you tell us more about these issues you see with illusion performance?

Very simple. Stop shoving them into props like a hot knife through butter. You are supposed to be cutting or piercing a human being! Not hitting a music or pyro cue to look cool. So many times you see this and all that's really happening is the psychological message being sent out that 'she's already gone' or 'she's not in there anymore' (I mention both because I have heard these whispered a number of times while sat in an audience)

A strong performer will undeniably appear to the audience, that it's 'them' doing the magic, not the apparatus.

Another issue is using the stage backdrop being used like a little girly comfort blanket for no reason. Get your ass as close to the audience as you can (sightline permitting)

My all time favorite is the 'stupid side step dance' that all badly practiced/rehearsed performers do every time they steal something or do a move. It's hilarious, like a bad nervous twitch or something going on.

Do you feel that one particular style of magic is more popular than another?

Simple answer to this
Great magic is great magic in whatever form, you can't question it.

Sh** magic is just sh** and you can try rolling that turd in some glitter, but its still a turd & nobody likes to see other people's turds. Next question :)

Note: One thing to remind a number of people out there "The 80's & 90's are long over!! Sorry to burst your time warp bubbles, but what looked good back then doesn't translate so well these days. Get with the times, dress with the times & talk with the times!



A lot of illusionists are doing the same stuff. Over and over you see the same illusions with a different guy presenting them pretty much the same way with little variation. Does that bother you?

Yes. they are doing the same stuff and this reverts back to buying dealer items to fill time. Laziness bothers me and it's just really lazy to approach any show creation this way.

What do you feel might be missing from magic that your creations or consults are able to bring into the future of magic?

Its not about me or anyone creative consulting for a performer, it's about the overall attitude and desire to create new & exciting things. Being prepared to put in the serious time and effort to do so is equally as important. Most people are not prepared to do that, as it's not a fast enough route to market. I can really help with this but its a two way street.

How do you feel the new media platforms of YouTube, Instagram and Facebook have affected magic? How has television made magic different in both good and bad ways?

Good and bad really. Awareness is great and magic is cool again, but it has gotten so ridiculous that live audiences are, I believe, expecting an almost CGI type magic experience...scales of balance again.

I'm not against a sprinkle of TV trickery to enhance something, but it's just the easy 'method' now and for me, that's not magic.

Too many people are learning magic from YouTube, etc. I feel again because it's fast and easy. Honestly, you can't beat learning magic from a book. Although it's a tougher and slower process, it stays in your fibres forever & of course a very low risk of performance style mirroring.

I also see young kids exposing magic and performing 'monkey tricks' terribly on YouTube so I would prefer them to politely (bleep) off.

Top tip! Study Dai Vernon and his natural approach to magic. Even as a stage performer you can translate these teachings onto the stage. I believe every magician should have a solid foundation and knowledge in all aspects of the art. Without this you are winging it

Television, as I have ranted about, really needs to up its game. Channels need to do much better research on the people they are chucking money at. Rather than be impressed by a fancy show reel and charmed with a few card tricks in their offices.

Investing large chunks of change at a marketable image, over working with a true artist is just frivolous, lazy and stupid. In the current climate we may as well train up a

good looking actor to be a TV magician who quite possibly may do a much better job than these so called TV master magicians. It really comes out in the wash when they perform live and become exposed for what they truly are...Not that great!

Reminds of an old TV advert in the UK for KitKat. It was set in the office of a record label with a young hopeful band sat across from the decision makers desk waiting for his decision...when he says words to the effect of "you can't sing, you can't play & you look awful" cut to disappointed faces...then he hits them with, "You'll go a long way."

You can truly see the passion for magic that Mark has and his frustration with magicians who take the easy way to become successful. Those that have put in the thought and time to create great magic will have a lasting impact on the art. Those that take the shortcuts undermine the respect the art of magic can and should have.

Fortunately, I do see glimmers of the message of being really good first getting through. There are magicians who see the value of a solid base of knowledge, practice and experience and the best path to success.

Continue to read, study and research what you are working on, then take it beyond the page. Allow those before to inspire you, without copying, to create new and original approaches that are yours alone.

When and if you are ready for an honest, raw opportunity to make your magic better or create something new and visually stunning, get it touch with Mark and be prepared to put in the work to collaborate with him. It is worth the effort.

See more of Mark's work at:

www.artfuldodgers productions/ Illusion Design & Consultation - Creative Show Effects - Performance Direction

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-XEON STEEL- CREATOR OF *FIVE & BASH*

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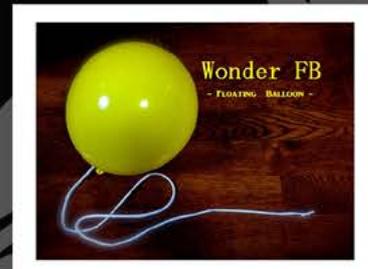
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Card Through Meshbag



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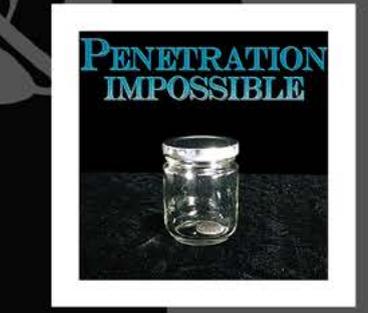
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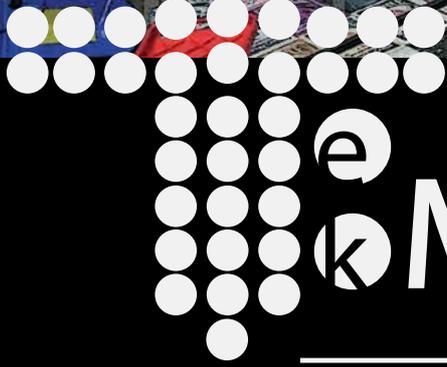
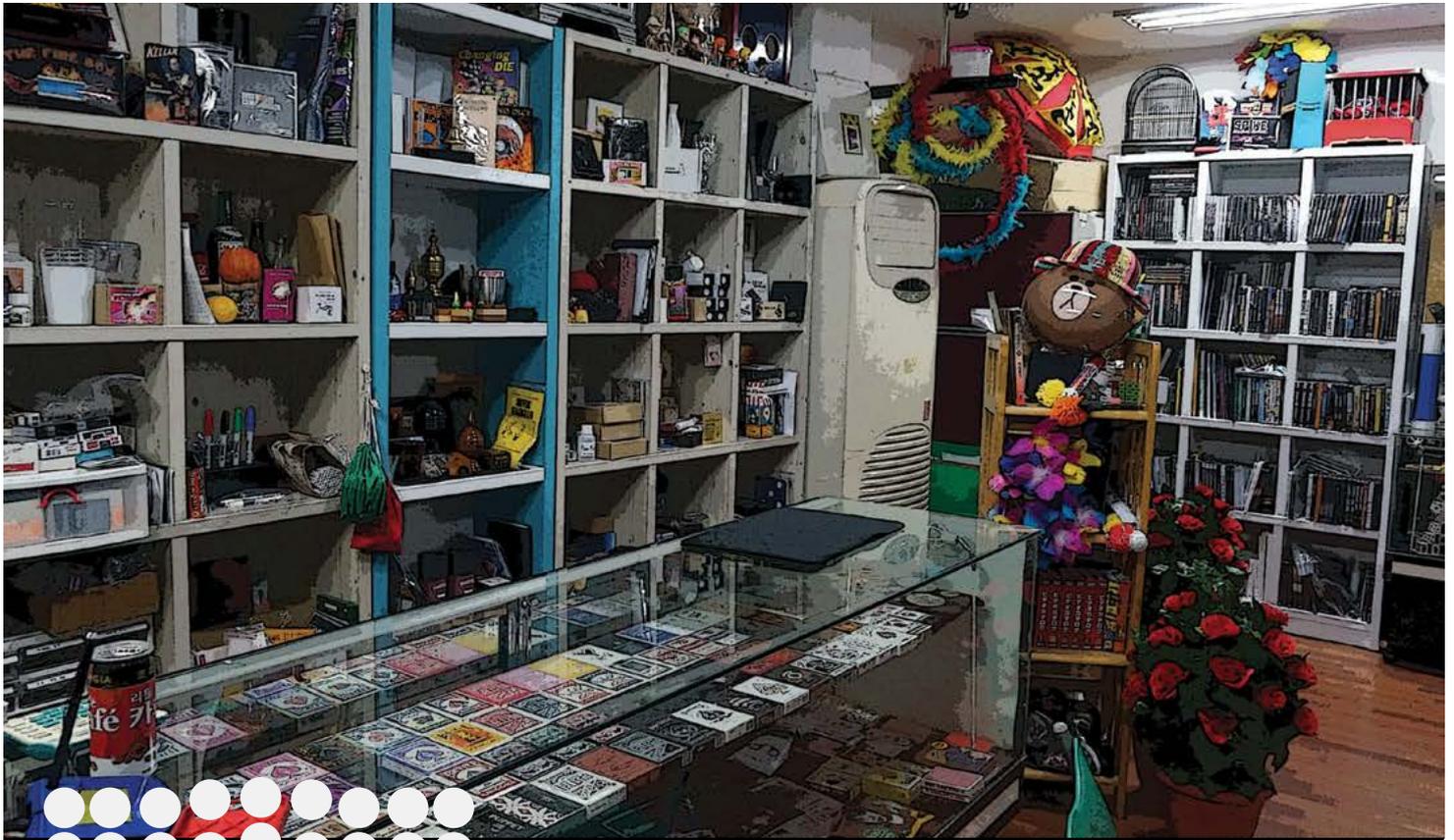
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If you have any questions please contact us at:

shawn@kingofmagic.net (Native English Speaker)

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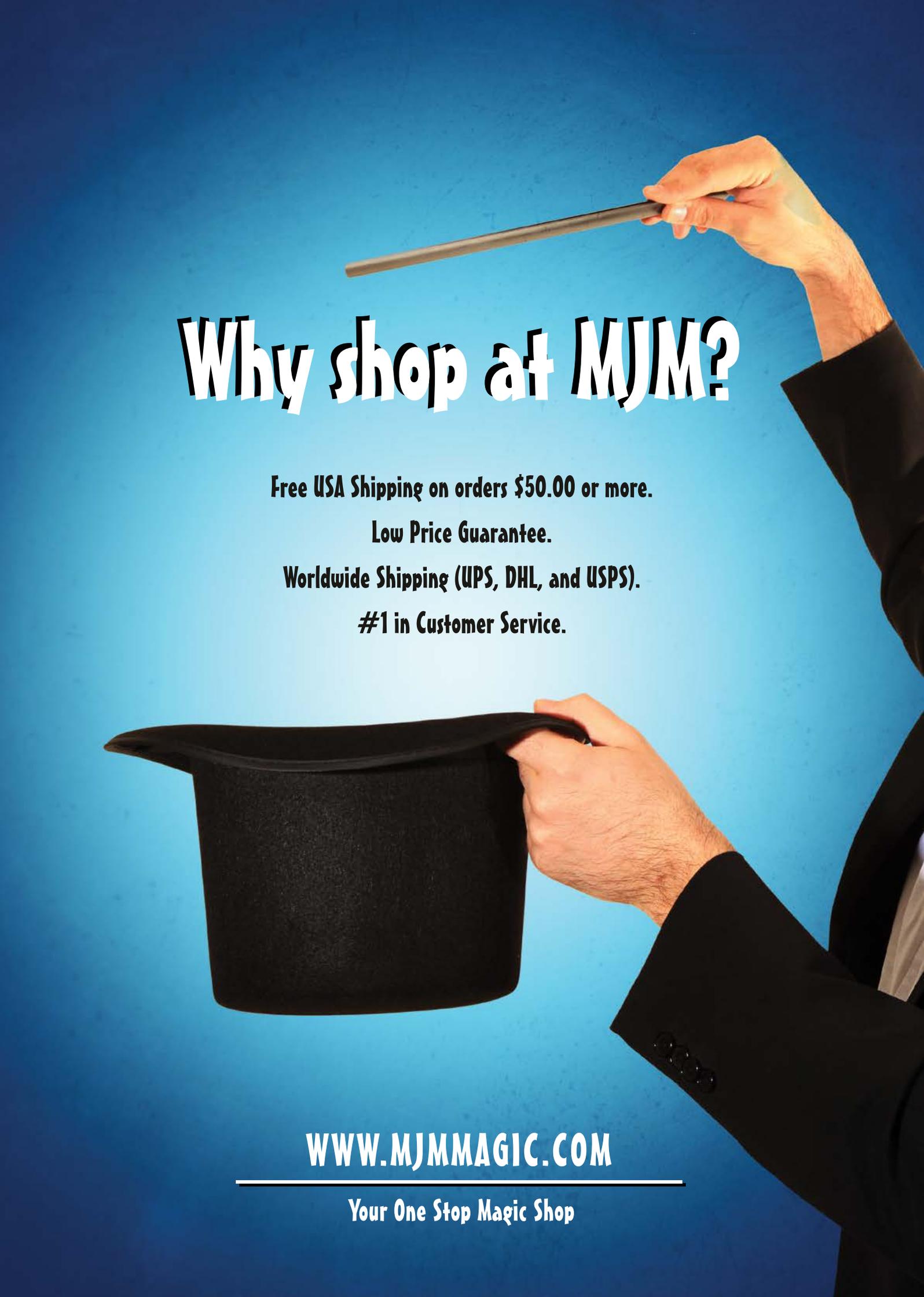


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and your foot!*



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1 THE PEEK PACK BY BRIAN GILLIS



PRICE: \$45.00

AVAILABLE: All magic shops

WHOLESALE: www.murphysmagic.com

(REVIEWED BY NICK LEWIN)

The Peek Pack is a very fine piece of close up magic that can also be performed to larger crowds. It is the first ever release by the wonderful performer Brian Gillis. The effect plays like a six person version of the tossed deck, with the performer able to match each selected card to each particular participant. Brian credits an idea from the great Charles Reynolds as being an early inspiration for the routine, however the presentation is quintessentially Gillis.

The prop supplied with the effect, I don't think given the title that it is a spoiler to say that is a pack of cards, is well made and nicely packaged. The online instructional video features live footage and a teaching tutorial with Brian and Gregory Wilson is excellent.

In Brian's hands the effect is a killer, and includes many nice touches. I particularly liked an apparently casual piece of dialogue in the middle of the routine that goes a long way towards eliminating the very real possibility of a participant either guessing at a card or trying to trip up the performer. I think a little more time spent discussing strong outs would have been useful to some.

The key words in my last paragraph are "In Brian's hands..." The selection process in this routine is very fast and controlling, and repeated six times. Brian is a very masterful and forceful performer and handles it extremely well, but in my estimation other folks handling could be much less successful. This is not an effect for a beginner or the faint of heart! That said it is a very fine solution to a great magical effect that if you have the "right stuff" to perform it, will definitely find a place in your act. Even if it doesn't end up in your show then you will have had a good lesson in spectator management if you give a seriously try to mastering it in performance.

2 THE DANCE BY BRAD HENDERSON



PRICE: \$6.00

AVAILABLE: Select magic dealers

and the author at <https://www.austinmagician.com/dance/>

Review by Nick Lewin

"The Dance" is a very fine book that goes deeply into the greatly misunderstood world of cold reading. As any good mentalist (or fortune teller) will tell you it is the ability to perform effective and insightful cold reading that can lift their craft and transform it into an art form. The title "The Dance" is a very apt metaphor for the slippery waltz, tango or Texas two step that the cold reader employs to convince his audience/client that he has a deeper insight into their life than he really does. Henderson is a successful magician, hypnotist and mind reader who understands this topic intimately from his own personal experience. This book contains real information in a very compact form.

What is cold reading? Good cold reading allows the practitioner to make some educated guesses in order to skillfully draw out personal information and then to re-present that same information in a slightly transmogrified form to his subject. This three-part loop is a very subtle and powerful tool, which can result in sensational impact when performed skillfully. At the very least, correctly employed, it can transform many a standard piece of mentalism into something much deeper and more personalized.

Brad Henderson has written a very fine book on this somewhat shadowy topic. It is a very carefully written treatise that is a must read for anyone wanting to master this art form. Not only does Henderson totally understand the mechanics of his subject, but in this third expanded edition of his classic book, he also articulately explores some of the ethical and transactional elements that surround this topic. If you are going to present a total stranger with information that might inadvertently or casually change their life, it is incumbent upon you to take more than a passing glance at the ethics of your actions.

With topics such as Asking the Right Question, Rewriting Memories, Getting Them to Do the Work, Spinning a Miss into a Hit etc. Henderson teaches the basic skills needed to navigate this important subterranean area of performance. However it is his skill as a thinker and writer that enables him to adroitly finesse these topics into something more valuable. His precise point of view turn this book into probably the most insightful and revelatory classics yet published on the art of cold reading. For those interested in this fascinating and profoundly fascinating topic I wholeheartedly recommend Brad Henderson's elegantly written book.

3 BOX OFFICE BY JEREMY MAROUANI



PRICE: \$29.95

AVAILABLE: All magic dealers

WHOLESALE: www.murphymagic.com

A hundred movie posters are shown to the audience. A spectator freely chooses one of them. In a few seconds, you will be able to guess which movie your spectator has in his mind, without apparently asking any question! BOX OFFICE is very easy to perform -- the cinema theme will amaze your audience. And, they'll be entertained and have fun at the same time!

GAMIFY YOUR MAGIC!

The version we prefer is the one when the experience becomes a game. You introduce the cards like a family game and ask your audience to memorize a movie. After the spectator shuffled the postcards, you're going to find the movie. You place the cards, one by one, on the table. As soon as they see the selection, they tap together on it without you seeing what it is. In a few seconds, you are able to reveal the movie: funny or in a serious way, describing a scene or two, the poster, actors, music or whatever you want!

At the end, you are able to tell them the exact position at the BOX OFFICE that it ranked!

THE GAME IS YOUR MISDIRECTION -- it allows you to make mentalism attractive and fun!!

An effect that packs small and plays big!

Close-up or stand-up trick. Also nice for pre-show...

So easy that you'll only be concentrating on your story!

BOX OFFICE comes complete with:

10 postcards, size 4" x 6", printed on both sides to represent 100 very popular movies.

1 postcard, size 4" x 6", for an optional finale with its position at the international box office.

Download that contains complete video demos, instructions, details and PDF file in English.

Skill level - beginners

MY THOUGHTS:

I love any mentalism routine with a MOVIE themes and posters in particular, and there have been a few over the years. All the others offer a very similar effect where a spectator can view one of many movie posters, however this method is quite different. This version contains 10 laminated cards with 100 movies on them,

all modern movies and a few classics including Charlie Chaplin's Modern Times. You also receive a download tutorial which explains everything in detail and is well done. This method is extremely easy to do and has a nice kicker at the end where you can have a prediction and match a number to the movie. There is nothing to memorize. This is a nicely themed piece of mentalism and if you can combine this with other movie type routines you'll have a great little piece of magic. The nice thing about this version is that it is very casual and I do like the way it allows you to almost not care about the cards that they look at. The really nice feature here is that there is no fishing - in other words you don't have to ask them any questions.

WHO: Beginner to professional - no technical skill required.

WHERE: The cards are a little too large to put in your pocket for walk-around but it can be done close-up or I would imagine even parlor if you had a person on stage. It can be done completely surrounded.



4 INDEXPRESS BY MICHEL AND VERNET MAGIC



PRICE: \$49.00

AVAILABLE: All magic dealers

WHOLESALE: www.murphymagic.com

A mentalist's dream!

Imagine if you could find any billet, secretly, in one second. Now, with Indexpress, you can. We developed an index that has all the best features of previous indexes combined, and much more. Also, Indexpress includes a full explanation of "The Invisible Deck," a stunning effect from Michel's professional show:

One spectator freely thinks of one card from an "imaginary deck." The mentalist mentions that something strange happened to him before the show. He sat at a bar to have some coffee, opened a sugar packet and at the moment of pouring it, the white of the sugar and the black of the coffee formed an image of a playing card.

The mentalist takes an empty sugar packet from his pocket and says: "Nobody saw me. I opened the sugar packet and I wrote what I saw." The empty packet is folded and placed into a wine glass held by another spectator. The spectator who thought of a card is asked to say it aloud. The packet is clearly taken from the glass - on it, in bold writing, is the thought-of card.

The perfect billet index

Ultra-thin

Precision made

Specially designed

Made with the ideal material

Includes: Two indexes for 26 billets each, PDF instructions and video download (with live performance, instructions and history).

MY THOUGHTS

The idea of using an index to find playing cards is very old.

Annemann had a version in one of his earlier books and over the years many others have released ideas and tools to help with this. This is one of my favorites because it is extremely durable and will last a long time. You need something made from this material simply because if you use it a lot then it will wear out, this version will last a very long time. Al Baker used the idea of a billet rather than playing cards which Annemann used to do. This is much easier to access and use than Annemann's original idea that can be found in The Jinx no. 82 because the counting is much easier and quicker to find what you are looking for. You will receive a download tutorial where you will see a live performance and learn an amazing version of The Invisible Deck. It's a great effect that uses nothing more than a sugar packet. Any card is called out and it is written on the sugar packet - everything in plain sight. This would make such a great opening routine that you can do anywhere from close-up to stage. This is by far the easiest index I've ever used and it fits in your pocket so you have it ready to use at all times. The thinking behind this is extremely clever and this could very well be the ultimate pack small play big routine I've seen. If you want to index billets this is the perfect system. You are supplied with two index gimmicks, each of a different color which enables you to index an entire deck of cards using billets.

WHO: Mentalists and Magicians, a great way to open a show (although doesn't have to be an opening routine). Easy for the beginner but certainly something a working magician will want to carry on them.

WHERE: close-up or a large theatre.

5 PUSH (RED) BY SULTAN ORAZALY



Price: \$24.95

AVAILABLE: All magic dealers

WHOLESALE: www.murphymagic.com

A signed playing card through a bill!

Imagine being able to have your spectator freely select and sign a playing card.

Next, you ask to borrow a bill (ANY currency).

Then, without ANY switching of the card or bill, you VISIBLY PUSH the signed card through the borrowed bill!!

THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT YOU CAN DO WITH PUSH!

You will have the ability to penetrate a signed playing card through a borrowed bill and have both totally examinable at the end without switching either of them out. PUSH is the perfect walk-around illusion.

This is an effect that you will want to perform everywhere you go.

The custom gimmick easily fits inside of your wallet and can be adapted to any Bicycle Playing card within a few seconds.

USE ANY CURRENCY

SUPER VISUAL

PRACTICAL

EASY TO PERFORM

100% EXAMINABLE

MY THOUGHTS:

This is a different version of card through bill - rather than half a card you have the corner that goes through the bill then everything is restored. You are supplied with a download tutorial that will teach you how to put the gimmick together (you'll need exacto knife but all other little necessary items are supplied) and some time to do it. Once you've made it up then you are ready to perform. There is some handling required and you do need to watch your angles. It looks great from the front but from behind not so much. This is somewhat limiting however if you can manage your audience then it shouldn't be a problem. It would be nice to show it openly and cleanly but that is not possible with this version. A nice feature though is that you can use any paper currency and your playing card. The card can be signed, which again is a nice little feature. It's a nice visual little penetration and if you don't mind DIY type of effects then it's worth spending the time to make

up. Just be wary of where you place your audience and you'll have something you can carry around with you.

WHO: Needs some work to master so wouldn't recommend for beginner but somebody who is used to handling cards.

WHERE: Angles are an issue with this so best viewed from front on. More of a close-up effect.



6 MAGIC F** STICKERS



PRICE: \$6.95

AVAILABLE: All magic dealers

WHOLESALE: www.murphymagic.com

Here's the Aronson memorized deck order, put together for you in a place where spectators won't notice! Simply place the sticker on your card box and you're good to go!

SHEET TWO - 5x Premium Stickers for the base of a card box.

Perfect for anyone learning Aronson. Hidden in plain sight. You can easily glance at the crib as your box sits on the table.

MY THOUGHTS:

This is actually something I had made up years ago and use it all the time - I had shown a few close friends who have been using this idea of mine as well. It is funny because I never thought of putting it on the market. I'm glad however somebody else has because this looks better than the one I have. These are stickers you can put on any card box that have cheat sheets for a memorized deck. You have the option of Aronson stack or Mnemonical stack. There are five stickers in each set. What is nice of course is that you can now have the stack order in plain sight and should you forget you simply have to peek at the box. It's one of those odd things that every box should have on it, just in case you have a mind melt and forget your stack order. If you have taken the time to learn a stack you probably won't need this, but it doesn't hurt to have just in case.



7 OMEN BY CHRIS CONGREAVE



PRICE: \$40.00

AVAILABLE: All magic dealers

WHOLESALE: www.murphymagic.com

Chris Congreave's Omen is a self-working powerhouse of playing card mentalism with three jaw-dropping moments of magic.

Omen is perfect to perform on 1-2 spectators.

Two Person Presentation

Two spectators are invited to take part in your demonstration of the strange!

Spectator number one names any playing card (let's say they name the 9 of Spades). They are told to keep that card in their mind.

A second spectator is asked to freely cut a deck (which has been on view from the start) and remember the card they cut to.

Now for reveal number one. You pick up the deck, look at your spectator and without asking any questions, find the selected card.

Now for reveal number two. With an empty hand, you reach into your pocket and remove a matching card! So now not only have you found their card, but you have also proved you predicted which card they would freely cut to! Sounds good, right? But I know what you're saying. What about the thought-of-card card? Well, let me just say your final reveal is a show stopper!

Omen comes complete with

Special Omen deck

Full DVD instructions

MY THOUGHTS

You receive a DVD with a gimmick deck of cards. The trick is very easy to do and has some strong magic revelations in it. If you don't mind carrying around a deck of gimmick cards that enables you to do one trick then you won't mind this. You'll need to spend a little time setting it up but once it's done you are all set and won't need to do anything else again. I think it's stronger when performed on two people although you could do it one-on-one. It's a novel prediction with strong elements with the finale as certainly the strongest moment where you turn over three cards which tell the spectator the name of a card they merely thought of. It's quite

easy for the audience to follow as far as card tricks go and as I said, if you don't mind carrying a deck around just for one trick then this could be for you. For those who care about this type of thing it's a fairly easy reset which makes it good for the table hoppers out there. The nice thing about this is that the outcome can be different each time, so in cases where you find people following you the finale is different, however the 'force' of one particular card will always be the same. it's a great use of an old idea.

WHO: Beginner to professional - easy to do - strong and unexpected climax

WHERE: close-up preferably using a table.



8 SIRI C.T.W BY KEVIN CUNLIFFE



PRICE: £25 (+shipping)

AVAILABLE: www.kevincunliffe.storenvy.com

Description

The performer begins by explaining how clever you must be in order to be a magician.

However with modern technology nearly everyone now has what's known as a smart phone. With this said the performer then offers a demonstration as to how modern technology is now also just as impressive by using the voice recognition software Siri. The performer removes his phone and activates Siri which can be heard to the full audience. Siri then gives instructions on an amazing card effect to which a spectator selects a card from a deck of cards that they mixed themselves and replaced the card back into the deck and mixed it once again. All without the performer knowing the card. Siri then names the card and instructs that the card is no longer in the deck but has been in the performer's wallet throughout. The performer then removes his wallet and the card is indeed found within his wallet.

• You receive a specially designed audio CD containing several ver-

sions of this routine and also several methods on a PDF.

- Zero slight of hand required.
- No special wallets required
- Any deck can be used. Cards can even be borrowed.
- The selected card can also be signed and still found within the wallet and also be kept as a souvenir at the end of the performance.

PACK INCLUDES:

You receive a professionally mastered CD which includes multiple audio tracks these tracks have been carefully designed to suit every performer and also all types of handset, including iPhone and also Android, which include a force card which is named on the tracks and also a version in which the chosen card is not named (This allows for different presentations to be used). There is also a fully Universal track which can be used with any style handset and also any pack of cards I.

The Disk also includes a PDF which includes various handling methods and also the full script.

BONUS SIRI 2.0 included.

Which allows for any freely chosen or named card to be signed, lost into the pack yet can still be found and seen in your ordinary un-gimmicked wallet, and also kept as a souvenir after the routine. In the most fairest manner.

MY THOUGHTS:

This is the third time this month I've seen SIRI used in this way as a voice over doing a magic trick, so I'm guessing it's becoming quite popular. You receive a CD ROM with a PDF manual which teaches two basic handlings of card to wallet. The routine here or presentation is the key rather than the trick. The first method taught is very easy and requires no skill and perfect for the beginner. I must admit I did find the Siri voice a little different than the one I normally use, however I'm not sure if the audience would pick that up. There are several versions of voice over you receive and all recorded at high quality. The jokes used for me were a little too corny and I think a comedy writer could really have fun with this concept. Personally there are far stronger methods than the ones taught (two different versions) and I think if you do any card to wallet the spectator needs to be the one taking the card out of the wallet - however this can be kind of forgiven here as it's about the presentation of SIRI doing the trick rather than the magician.

I think the idea of SIRI doing a voice over can be taken to a different level. I do like the concept of doing it for card to wallet as it's funny and novel. I would also suggest actually putting it on your iPhone so it really does appear to come from the phone. If there was the addition of graphic that Siri does on the phone would really have made this more realistic.

The nice thing about this is that you can do it anywhere from close-up to a large theatre.

A lot of thought has gone in to this and the production of high quality audio. You have several versions to choose from which is also a good option. As I said - as far as card to wallet routines go there are much stronger versions out there - however this is all about SIRI doing the magic and not you.

WHO: More for beginners who don't want to do a trick with any skill involved but get a few minutes of fun from their phone.

WHERE: Close-up or stage



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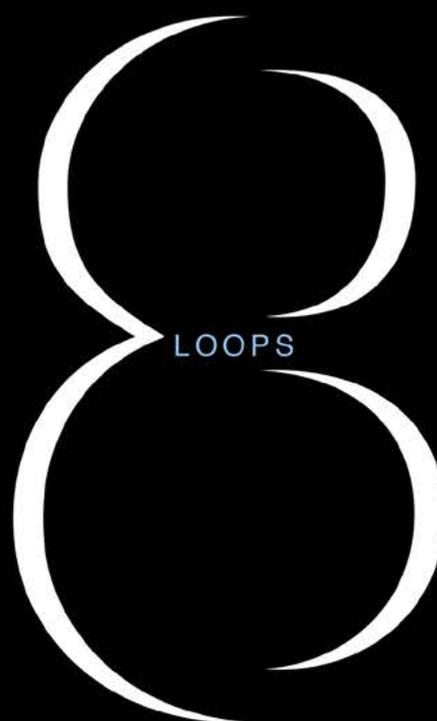
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