

INTERNATIONAL MAGIC MAGAZINE

VANISH

SPECIAL EDITION 2020

DANGERFEST

By Ben Robinson



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HOT THIS
EDITION



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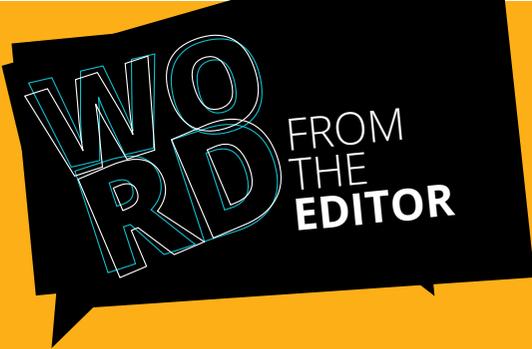
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SPECIAL EDITION

When Ben Robinson pitched me about a special edition for VANISH on Dangerfest I was very excited. If you have watched any knife throwing experts on YouTube or seen them on television you will be aware of the incredible skill required. Knife throwing is an art, sport, combat skill, or variously an entertainment technique, involving an artist skilled in the art of throwing knives, the weapons thrown, and a target. Magicians will understand the similarities between spending years mastering skills needed to perform incredible manipulation magic and those of the knife thrower. As entertainers we can all learn a lot from each others art forms.

The art and sport of knife throwing has been practiced throughout the history by many people, but only few historical documents are available.

Most commonly known is perhaps the fact that soldiers in the American civil war trained knife throwing as a pastime (there is a famous painting of this scene). Quite some African tribes are also known to engage in knife throwing. But in most cases, these "Hunga munga" are too big and either used only to scare an enemy or for ritual functions.

As a means of self defense, throwing a knife is not a good option, as you will give your opponent a weapon. And in a difficult situation, you will most likely not be able to throw the knife accurately enough to wound and not enrage your opponent. This is why most martial arts experts are opposed to using this option in a non-desperate situation.

Today, knife throwing has of course followers in the circus arts who perform so called impalement acts, where they frame their assistant (mostly female, hence the term target girl) with knives or do other stunts. But the sport has become attractive to a larger audience, who throw knives as a pastime in their backyard, and even gather for conventions and competitions.

Enjoy this amazing SPECIAL EDITION of VANISH MAGIC MAGAZINE and a very special thank you to Ben Robinson and the Dangerfest people who were very open to Ben interviewing and hanging out with them for Dangerfest.



Paul Romhany
GROUP EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

SEPTEMBER

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Dangerfest is now six years old. "It is modeled after the ground-breaking Brokenfeather Paloozah," says Brandon Danger Dillon, producer-impresario of Dangerfest. (See sidebar.) Dangerfest was held on the spacious grounds of Pierceton Indiana's Bait & Tackle bordering a scenic lake. Attendees camped out, stayed in local hotels and did what was necessary to be on the range at 8am to get "dialed in." Some hard-core people showed up from Canada and France, a week early unable to contain their enthusiasm.

The name "Dangerfest" conjures incendiary images of fire, skulls, knives and tomahawks... what could Dangerfest be about? For those with short attention spans—dig this. I have been performing magic all over the world for 45-years. I've had some gigantic gigs, and some gigs for a very few people. I've entertained Barbara and Frank Sinatra privately and I have entertained 100-people each on chemo-drips. This is not about me or my resume. It is about the next statement.

"Dangerfest is the hippest gig I have ever played because it is the coolest event currently sending shockwaves of good feeling through the zeitgeist."

OK — uncurious mind, stop reading. The rest of yahs? You are in for a moment of enlightenment. Biblical enlightenment? No. More like—an advantage to living in the 21st century is not only knowing what will happen, but being able to make that thing you know about, happen. In the land of high-tech, the man who floated the very first loan (in 1982) of 250-million dollars to a fledgling company called APPLE, was very far ahead of the curve because he could see the potential. My friend who convinced his superiors to make that investment is now the President of his company and he makes twelve million dollars a year. That's right, \$250,000 a week. Could you live on that?

Now, Dangerfest and making twelve mil a year are NOT synonymous, but the talent involved is. Talent? What is talent? Really, do you know? Is it doing something well? Or is it the ability to expand something known and take it to "another level"? In 2017, I asked the knife-throwing community to give me their reaction to the first time they stuck a knife by knowing how. Of thirty-three reactions received in six hours [representing twelve countries; and fifteen states in the US], over half responded with words describing awe, beauty and sheer wonder. Patrick Brewster of Flying Steel remarked, "It was as if I were a caveman discovering fire."

Well, to offer an extrapolation of my point, consider this. Anyone can pick up a kitchen knife and throw it at a door. Most who do, will not stick the knife into the door. Then there are people who can, I kid you not, hit anything. Just like the Sundance Kid—anything. (Floyd Fugatt wowed the entries at Blade Aces in Las Vegas in 2018. Yes, he could throw accurately. But more importantly, Mr. Fugatt is actually sight impaired. Legally blind. He has served the US honorably as a member of the US Army Rangers.) I saw a man throw a tomahawk 104-feet and nail his target as if he was standing a mere six-feet away. So what does deadly accuracy have to do with magic you might be asking? Magicians think: when you go into your pocket to retrieve a coin surreptitiously for your one ahead coin routine, you KNOW what you are doing and that you will succeed. You've done it a thousand times; 1001 should go as planned.



"DANGERFEST IS THE HIPPEST GIG I HAVE EVER PLAYED BECAUSE IT IS THE COOLEST EVENT CURRENTLY SENDING SHOCKWAVES OF GOOD FEELING THROUGH THE ZEITGEIST!"



Magicians used to spend a thousand hours — not even a consideration, but the pure truth of their understanding of their craft — to develop illusions that would provide for their lifetime...”

KNIFE THROWING

The knife thrower can throw a knife without spinning, or rotationally, over hand, back hand, underhand or a blind shot over the shoulder not seeing the target with the eyes. I kid you not, I know knife throwers who can throw a knife with their elbow. Seems to me like the magician who can pluck his loads from an invisible space is very similar to the knife thrower who runs, dives headfirst into a tuck and roll and comes upright and then launches a knife whatever distance to the intended target—sock, pow, done like dinner. Assurity.

Because you are reading this article, it is highly unlikely you will spend the time and money to attend Dangerfest 2020. But, I can assure you, with what happened at Dangerfest 2019, there will be another, and it will be bigger, better, and go to even greater levels. Now, what “levels” would we be talking about?

Magicians used to spend a thousand hours — not even a consideration, but the pure truth of their understanding of their craft — to develop illusions that would provide for their lifetime. But today, so-called “magicians” click on a video for six-seconds (maybe) and then have business cards printed, or develop a website, saying they are “internationally renowned” even if that only means their friend’s grandmother had the magician do one trick at a wedding on some island.

In knife throwing there is no BS. You can either do it, or you can’t. It can take thousands of hours, thousands of dollars (or nothing at all we shall explain) to attain a goal. That goal btw is a secret. Only the knife thrower knows the goal. And that goal is a factor of an unspoken language with a secret and hidden perception. Wait a minute; what is this about?

A theatrical example: in Las Vegas there is a juggler named Anthony Gatto. I’ve seen him many times juggle nine balls. He can juggle without using his eyes to throw and catch because he knows what he is doing with muscle memory and a heightened awareness. Can you sniff that goal yet? I know jugglers with both The Big Apple Circus (New York), and the Moscow Circus who have juggled as many as twelve small hoops; kept all airborne, doing their dance, and then caught all twelve and placed the hoops around their neck; executed, blindfolded. Now, do that with knives. Goal achieved: you are in the Dangerfest state of mind.

The magician with a short attention span is not a magician. The knife thrower that cannot stick the knife — where they desire — is not a knife thrower. In fact, among those that attend DANGERFEST, most would use the term “knife thrower” rather cautiously. People who make comments like, “I’m not too crazy about all these puppy mill black belt organizations out there” are the real deal that are unseen, and, yes, serious, if not dangerous. People who call themselves “magicians” and do not provide a wondrous experience are not magicians. Those who do not put in the time, blood, sweat, carry wood, learn knife making, balance, breath, stance, and attain unspeakable talents, but talents nonetheless, are not knife throwers. Knife throwers are usually, I have found, highly intelligent. They can feel the air. Spacial acuity is like breathing. Instinctive. Intuitive. Developed. Extraordinary.

I had the good fortune of knowing the famous Fortean writer John A. Keel (1930—2009). Keel brought the world The Mothman, and investigated alien contact before there was The X-Files. Keel said “mountain climbers are very special people.” I learned he was right, because he was one, and because he and Dr. John N. Booth (1912—2009) inspired me to tackle Mount Everest in 1989. (I ascended to the Base Camp, 17,800 ft.) This brings us back to Dangerfest. Special people at a special place doing something special.

FALLING BACKWARD

I fell backward into this world while ascending though my sixth decade. I looked at my notebook of material I sought to produce and returned to an idea I had in 1981 that I never acted on. In November of 2016, I initiated that idea by plugging “knife throwing” into youtube.com and found four people: Adam Celadin from The Czech Republic (previously profiled in VANISH), Kimberly Mitchell (USA, who co-founded Kick Ass Knife Throwers on Facebook), Jason Willard Johnson (USA, world’s fastest knife thrower) and Leigh Maulson (Canada, a great visual artist, friend, and the greatest trick shot knife artist alive).

There are others too. One called, “The Wolf.” Another, “Nesto.” One guy I call Maniac because that is what his last name almost sounds like. I swear there’s another chap I refer to as “Population Control” and he accepts this with glee. And shortly into my journey, I met Danger. Danger and Mrs. Danger run Dangerfest.

You’ve stepped, amazingly, gingerly, into a wondrous







world. Like Alice, “everything will now be different.” Magic and Dangerfest meet in excellence—putting it plainly. Perhaps too plainly for what really happens. Because what happens is extraordinary on many levels.

It is the re-definition of “competition”, “excellence” and, as stated previously, the conquering of a goal.

Perhaps most importantly, “the study of the conquering of the goal.” Working under a strict deadline for a stage show and a book with Jason Willard Johnson, not only did he keep the bar almost unattainably high for me to grasp, but he made several things immediately clear for our work:

- 1.** Your name doesn’t go on it unless it is what you wanted.
- 2.** When I made a mistake, he liked how I corrected the mistake right away.
- 3.** My notice of my mistake was immediate because I knew what I was after.



Ben Robinson
with Lowik Vgz

Translation: If you learn from your mistakes, your act will be better. You won't make the same mistake(s) again, and if you do, you have not been paying attention. (I recently saw a magician in the Midwest do a very poor presentation concluding with a Sword Through Neck that not only injured emotionally, but got the front door to the club broken when the angry patron left.) When your knife ricochets because it is made of a certain gage of steel and you threw it like a baseball instead of like a knife, you better pay attention. People who make stupid mistakes in knife throwing can get injured. You don't want to walk around Dangerfest barefoot, even though a guy lovingly referred to as "The Dirty Barbarian" did.

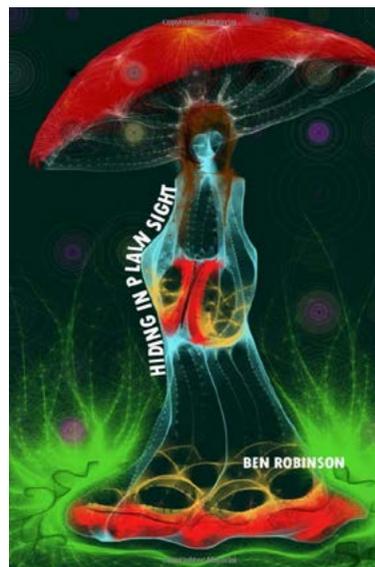
About that Dirty Barbarian. One of the unique features of Dangerfest aka "a knife throw" (if you are not familiar with the term) is that said Barbarian was brought to the US from France by demand. Generous souls who crowd-funded thousands of dollars and euros to introduce our brother to his American tribe. Consider him a Guest Artist. Lowik Vgz, 29, is a soon-to-be a superstar in his native France. Appearing as a model, athlete, X-Game-talented, badass knife thrower, that seemingly can do anything, and a Special Ed. teacher, are just a few of his incarnations. It is Lowik's attitude of "can do" that first inspired me to speak to him regularly. He was included singly to do a video representation of an arcane knife throw that is included in my new book, *Hiding In Plain Sight*. While that may seem like a bold commercial, it isn't.

Actually, Lowik and I met because of an idea expressed in two different places (New York and Burgundy France) at the same time. Sort of two minds that both thought of something, and then while we did not know each other, we found one another on line, and began a collaboration. I'd never met him in the flesh before Dangerfest. Just a small miracle of those who attend this insanely amazing confab.

While Dangerfest is a story of knife-throwing, "magic" and good will, this is also a story of mind and attitude. The notion of competition that exists in most sports is changed positively by the producers and attendees of Dangerfest. Everyone wants everyone to win, get better and develop the knife throwing mind. We hunger to see this done



"Hiding In Plain Sight" World Premier



"Hiding In Plain Sight" is available from Amazon.

well. We love seeing inventive throws, such as a bearded gent named Travis Dishon (Florida) who recently threw two tomahawks, one with each hand. That might be fodder for one of those new fangled “axe-throwing” bars you might infer—and you’d be very wrong.

“Axe throwing is not knife throwing” the head of Dangerfest says.

Mr. Dishon is not a beer-drinking tomahawk thrower. (In fact, as prognosticated by at least one person who knows him, Mr. Dishon was predicted to win and did win the world championship of the No Spin category of the International Knife Throwers Hall of Fame competition held in Austin, Texas in 2018.) Travis Dishon threw both tomahawks, stuck both of them in targets simultaneously, but threw the tomahawks from behind his back and then rotated the tomahawks over his shoulder to fly in front of his body. The body-stretching Dr. Reed Richards of The Fantastic Four has nothing on Travis Dishon. Oh, by the way, Dr. Richards of The Fantastic Four—he’s not real. He’s a cartoon turned movie with special FX. Travis Dishon is a real person with a sandwich and dance named after him. When Mr. Dishon was unable to attend Dangerfest 2018, the producers made a life-size color standing figure of him and then walked it to the range from a few hundred yards. Everyone greeted what they thought was the bearded thrower. When the cutout was seen to be what it was, hilarity ensued. When that life-size cut out was brought to Dangerfest 2019 with the real Mr. Dishon gleefully photographed with his effigy, Population Control wittily offered, “Oh my God there will be a rip in the matrix.”

Similarly, Judah Myers decided to clear the parking lot, the knife throwing range, walk across a main road bordering the festival and throw a tomahawk 104-feet and stick it with brilliance, mind and power.

Power. Let’s look at that a little bit. It’ll help you understand Dangerfest a bit better.

From the outside looking in, the name alone may make you think of leather-wearing, tattooed, bad ass, gun-toting, outlaws. Reminds me of the type Harry Anderson referred to at the opening of his shows, “(a man) I am proud to call my friend.” And yes, those that completely miss the point show up with an attitude they are gonna “win”, “kick ass” and in some cases, mix it up with other attendees to show what a piece of slime that crawled out of the ignorant void looks like. Weekend warriors with ego and a chip on their soldier are better served picking a fight with their local bouncers. Dangerfest caters to the genuine artist-athlete enthusiast and the skillful amateur and professional. One man with a broken leg insisted on wheeling himself in his small scooter-like cart that favored his injured leg, to retrieve his own knives even when others offered to let him stay put and help him. Commitment plus.

The following is excerpted from a Facebook chat between two knife throwers on October 22, 2019:

SM: *That is some fantastic throwing. As a new thrower I look up to you and a lot of other throwers. 10 out of 11 is super impressive. You may get frustrated but keep in mind even on a not so good day someone thinks that is amazing and it inspires them to work harder to achieve.*

KM: *SM I love your comment. Thank you.*

SM: *KM, you’re welcome. I’m just trying to give back to a sport that has helped me. A kind word goes a long way. It’s something that’s common in this community, but very rare in the world.*

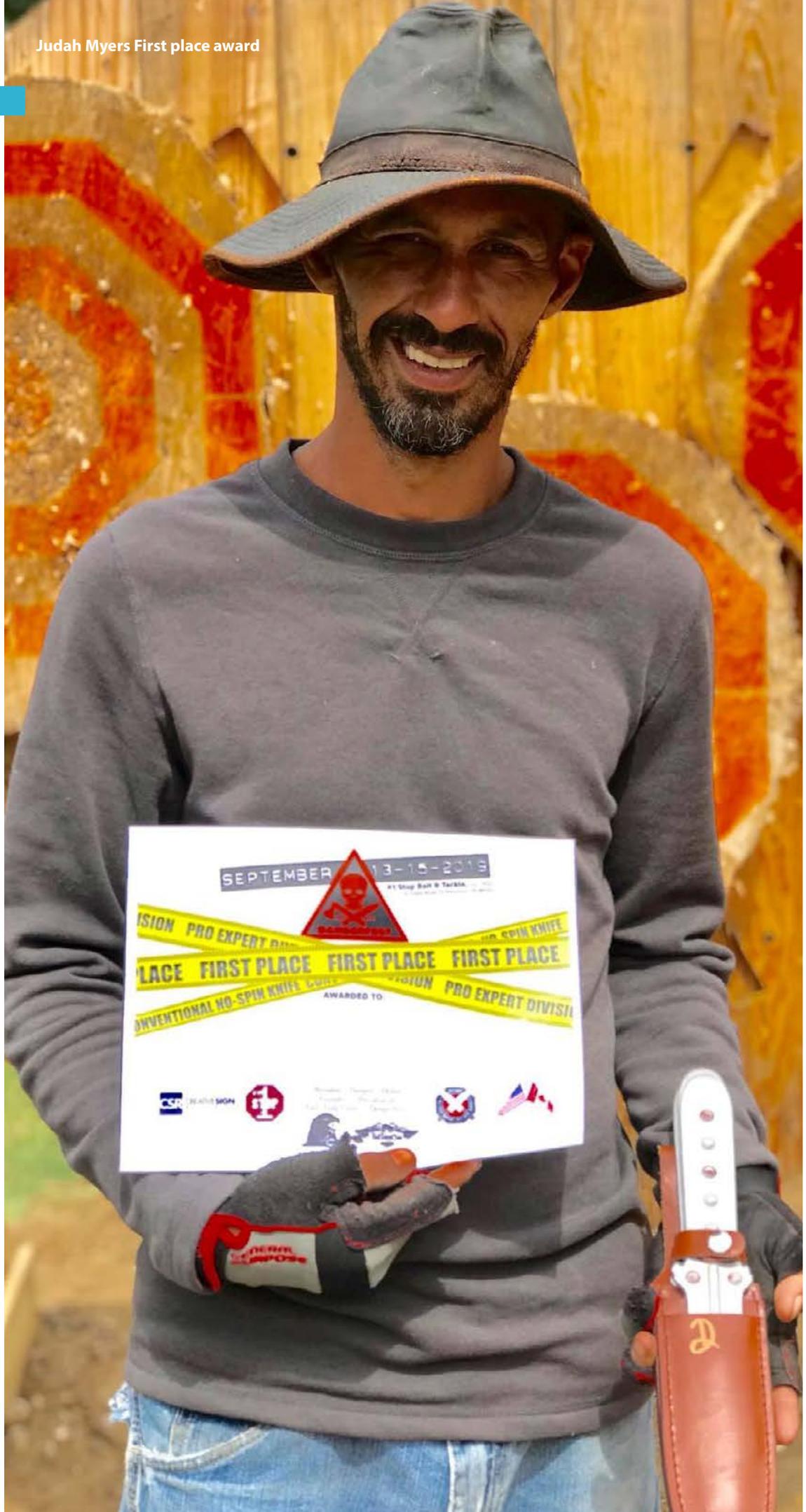
The expression presented freely defines the knife throwing community as evidenced in the macro sense of Dangerfest.

“Travis Dishon threw both tomahawks, stuck both of them in targets simultaneously, but threw the tomahawks from behind his back and then rotated the tomahawks over his shoulder to fly in front of his body.”



Travis Dishon with Travis Dishon

**“Axe
throwing
is not knife
throwing”
the head of
Dangerfest
says.**





Planned knives thrown 1/1000th of an inch



Jason Willard Johnson —Ben Robinson— Darrin Glenn Cook



Dangerfest is a quiet concern, often hilariously stated, of a silent center that can do anything. Dangerfest is full of people who have studied measurements as small, and reliably reported, as “one-one thousandth of an inch” If you dispute such exists, I refer you to a film currently showing in The Elgin History Museum (Elgin, IL), which not only confirms what I have stated, but, shows this measurement in action.

Elgin. Watches. Small measurements.

Magicians. Small measurements. What does the word “sleight” mean? “Slight”...omg... small measurements = “sleight”? Slight measurements.

The first time I took a formal lesson in knife-throwing, Jason Willard Johnson, told me “adjust your step, by a half-inch.” I thought he was kidding. However, when I did what Jason was directing me to do, I achieved what I was after. Small measurements matter. So does breath, stance, power, muscle memory,

wood grain, water, back and shoulder aches, travel for study, and yes, a bit of cash too. A hand-made, perfectly balanced, throwing knife made by one person can cost upwards of \$200.

Is it worth it? Was I studying knife-throwing, or had I joined a militia—or both? “I’m sorry Mr. Robinson, you’ve asked the wrong question. The answer is number three.”



Ben Robinson performing at Dangerfest

Dangerfest makes this clear. Of the near hundred attendees of Dangerfest 2019, a dozen have since posted ebulliently on line that their life was not only made better by their experience at Dangerfest, but they felt brotherhood without enmity for those they met, spoke with and hung out with. And, I need to tell you something: there was not one paper cut, strong argument, or one object thrown that was not a knife, "hawk" or proper throwing implement. People from about twelve different states and five countries all got along. It reminded me of Paul Daniels' plea to his 2000-person audience in Eastbourne, England, in 1986. Said the great entertainer, "We've achieved peace through art and wonder tonight. Bring that home with you. And tell them to stop making bombs." Paradoxically, this festival/throw called "Dangerfest" creates joyful peace!

In fact, there was glorious entertainment too. At Dangerfest 2019 on Friday the Thirteenth (September), as the sun set into the harvest full moon above, in a parking lot full of patrons, while standing on the most wonderful flat bed trailer, with my composer Sean Thomas at stage right, we unloaded a fresh piece of music written for the opening of my show. It was a great time had by all. Stopped traffic bordering the event too.



Obtuse the Magician

"What's that Martha? A magician! Hey, let's stop and watch." Total gas. A few children came dressed in classic magician gear of top hat, cape and wand. The press wrote a story. The next night, Obtuse the Magician (Owen Oldaker) presented a fine piece of spirit theatre with ghostly writings on tablets; with logos and special wands presented to appreciative, smiling people.

Smiling continued for the next few days. Largely if you saw someone at Dangerfest they were smiling. Surrounded by that kind of energy brings that affect. You sign a Liability Waiver upon registration that absolves the producers of injury, and also asks (not too subtly) to leave your politics, religion and sexual preference behind when you cross the Dangerfest boundary. Everyone attending knew no one screws with people at Dangerfest. People left their wallets and purses easily unattended, and there was not one tremor of distrust. "An armed society is a polite society" one celebrity knife thrower told me. I'd listen to him if I were you. He's the Good Guys. Power + Armed = Dangerfest?

Armed with: Magic. Skill. Thought. Poetry. Song. Entertainment. Dedication. Costume. Commitment. Loyalty. Good cheer. Humor. Intelligence. Ancient recognition and modern chess-playing insight. (And a lot of knives.) You build your cache of these qualities if you really pay attention at Dangerfest. Bill Marx once said, "I am so old I was hep before it was hip to be hep." Dangerfest is hep; the perimeter approached, crossed and sometimes conquered.

A recent FB post (October 24, 2019) by Travis Dishon:

We need more knife throwers in the world. Let me explain: We all start off throwing knives and joining groups to learn a new skill. Once you are in you find something unlike anything you have seen. Yes it is a competitive sport and we all want to be the best but at the same time we want to see everyone being the best they can be. We all help each other out and give tips, do videos, and share any information we can to help. But more importantly we raise each other up and not tear each other down. If we are having a rough time our bladed family is there for anything we need at the drop of a dime. It is absolutely amazing what we all do for each other. People we have never met except on FB, people we see every couple of years and yet still closer than most blood families. I love my Bladed Brothers and Sister and am Blessed to be a part of something so Awesome!! FULLTANGCLAN!!

While the world is at war, Dangerfest is the quiet to the expanding and contracting clock spring of a sub-culture. Oh, sure, I did hear gun fire and firecrackers and laughter...it's not a "quiet affair" exactly. What was quiet was disagreement by warring parties. We were there for one reason and one reason only: to enjoy throwing a knife and sticking that knife where we intended it to be stuck. It's a rush. An adrenaline, acetylcholine-discharging piece of happiness. For different people, it takes different amounts of time to figure out the instant calculation of speed, distance, angle, and power.

About knife throwing changing lives—



I was in a downward spiral. Mental issues, had no friends to speak of, then bam I saw one of Adam Celadin's videos on YouTube. That led to TomTom, then Brandon Danger Dillon popped up on facebook and I realized Danger was in Indiana. That saved me. I got into knife throwing as a release, not just a hobby. I have also gained so many friends. I would rather call them a family. The community is amazing. I mean, come on, I'm just a regular dude that gets to toe the line with world champions and learn from them. It's awe inspiring to see them do the things they do and then to attempt them right along side them. No one vibes anyone and everyone is willing to help each other regardless of skill. It has been a blessing to me."

—Logan Lynch



FULLTANGCLAN

Congratulations—you've made it this far: knife throwing is a language. Magic is the most international of all visual languages. It is also an art. Knife throwing is a language, a sport and an art. Parity. Perfection. Excellence = FULLTANGCLAN. Men and women who "deliver."

I've entertained world leaders and outlaws. Plainly put, I think history records Albert Anastasia as an executioner in New York City. I should know, his guards once drew real guns on me when I produced a trick knife at the christening of his granddaughter. I was the opening act for the late, great Dick Shawn ("LSD" in Mel Brooks' film *The Producers*). A fake knife broke up the bodyguards and brought the laughter of the crowd. Target achieved. I "warmed up" the audience for the headliner. That was my job, and I delivered. When a guy with a cauliflower nose tells you to "Go on and make them people's smile like they never smiled before" you do what you are told. At Dangerfest, rules were dispensed once. Everyone listened and toed the line of what was permissible on the grounds. Not one problem.

Harpo Marx said, "If you're asked to do twenty-two minutes, give them your best sixteen and get off." It's about delivering a knockout punch. And that talent is not necessarily incumbent upon one who throws knives. No, achieving a specific target is what skateboarding culture calls "leveling up," "another level" or "the next level". No pop culture jargon here; just the truth. Dangerfest is the next level of collaborative experience.

That next level is illustrated widely by a small group of men and women now wearing a black and white T-shirt that has a white eagle on it. These folks answer to a certain spelling of their crew and a vocal call that is not for the uninitiated. In addition, I'm pretty sure no one who is a member of FullTangClan knows exactly what they are a member of. That's not a joke.

Kevin Moravec, of FullTangClan recently posted a video on Facebook where he claimed he'd been running a fever. His cure? To place a meat cleaver in his back pocket. Then stand facing his target with a can in his right hand. He threw the can at the target, then instantly obtained the meat cleaver. He threw it with such speed and power that he nailed the can to the target. Moravec, stood motionless, then turned back to the camera with his best Blanche Dubois accent and flicked off his cap and glasses and swooned, "I have exorcised the demons!" It was true and fall-down-on-the-floor funny.

This is one wacky crowd and I'm not sure I'm allowed to speak much about it. You can't join it, but you can be invited to wear the shirt. You can't know what it is, even when you are in. You might know someone who is FTC. The elite knife thrower, FULLTANGCLAN, born of Brandon Danger Dillon's Dangerfest, is real, hearty mystery—made up of some very funny, intelligent people.

And, those cats can throw. They'll be setting world-records, impressing one another and laughing til dawn, next September, in Pierceton, Indiana, at Dangerfest 2020.





Author Ben Robinson

Ben Robinson has been a professional magician for 45 years. He was inducted into FullTangClan at Dangerfest 2019.

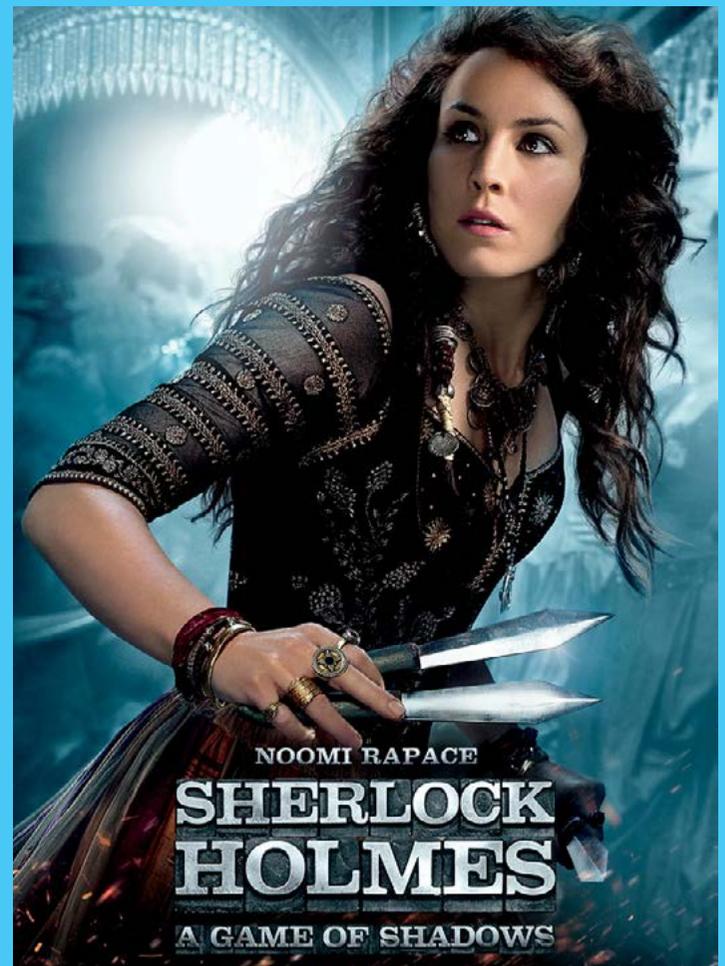
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Ben Robinson performing

FAMOUS FILMS WITH KNIFE THROWING:

- **The Butcher Boy** (1917): Buster Keaton's first film. Fatty Arbuckle will dazzle you with his knife juggling. Yes, he really did it. He could also roll a cigarette with one hand.
- **North By Northwest** (1959): Cary Grant and Eva Marie Saint burn up the screen with flirtation, passion amidst evil doers after them both in Alfred Hitchcock's masterpiece, that yes, involves a knife thrown, no less at the UN.
- **The Magnificent Seven** (1960): Possibly the most famous knife ever thrown in a film. Unfortunately the knife they use did not exist at the time, but it's a hell of a throw and shows you that, yes, you CAN take a knife to a gun fight.
- **Batman Begins** (2005): Bruce Wayne snaps a bat-a-rang into a wall, and I asked the special FX guy if Christian Bale really threw it. He replied, "This is a Chris Nolan film mate. Chris wants it. Christian wants it. It's real. We do this." Half spin. Handshake grip...
- **Sherlock Holmes** (2009): Most of it is FX, but, imagine if what is presented here were real...yes Clara, it exists. This fiction is based on something very real. It's called Dangerfest.
- **The Expendables** (2010): Snipers, para-military outlaws with aged testosterone and some slick editing. OK, I doubt Arnee or Bruce ever got out of their trailer long enough to even consider throwing a knife. But it's a good scene, shot well. Hell, this movie is for the over-40 to get their knife freak on...so...it could be worse.
- **The Hunger Games** (2012): Well, Jen Lawrence ain't too hard on the eyes. If you like fictional rebellion by guerrilla troops, well, you'll see a Hollywoodization of Free Thinkers Vs. Mind Controllers. Wait, that's just fiction, right?
- **SKYFALL** (2015): Bond, James Bond. Daniel Craig. Does it get any better? No spoiler here, but the knife is an essential part of the finale. What could Bond do with a knife?









BRANDON DANGER DILLON



Lowik Vgz, Alisha Linder Kemp, Danger

Brandon Danger Dillon produces DANGERFEST with his partner Alisha Linder Kemp (known as Mrs. Danger). They live in Columbia City, IN and are the founders of Dangerfest and FullTangClan.

Dangerfest is now six years old and lucky seven will be 2020. Dangerfest has crazy sick momentum. Are you exhausted?

Yes. I was exhausted for a couple days after. I didn't have time during the throw to rest. It also took me a few days to process the whole weekend. The love I received was overwhelming. That was something that I had never experienced before.



// THE LOVE I RECEIVED WAS OVERWHELMING. THAT WAS SOMETHING THAT I HAD NEVER EXPERIENCED BEFORE."

How many people contribute to the production of this knife throw, beyond those that just show up to throw?

Alisha is always a huge piece of the puzzle handling all of the logistics. Previous years it has always just been Taylor Hull and I handling all of the heavy lifting. Acquiring all the lumber, backboards, picking up the log rounds (targets), painting and hanging them, painting the minimum lines etc but this year I needed much more help. We moved locations from Columbia City to my dad's bait shop in Pierceton, Indiana. The property at the bait shop wasn't ideal for the range so lots of work needed to be done. Luckily my dad owns a backhoe and his neighbor let us borrow his dump truck. We ended up moving over a dozen dump truck loads of earth to level out the range and spectating area. There was my father, myself, Mitch Mathias, Sean Thomas, Rick Carpenter, Jeremy West, Alisha Kemp and John Mock that all had a hand in helping prep the range.

You've stated that knife throwing "changed your life." When did you start throwing knives?

That can be a tricky question. Technically I started throwing the summer of 2008 when I bought my first book on knife throwing (written by Harry McEvoy) and my first set of knives. I taught myself how to throw that summer but didn't pick it back up until 2013. What I mean when I say that knife throwing changed my life is I had no goals or drive. I wasted my youth.

VANISH asked the head of Dangerfest, Brandon Danger Dillon, to give us some background on his history and how Dangerfest came together.

THE ROAD TO DANGER...

Technically started throwing the summer of '08. Got laid off from work, bought a book on knife throwing and throwing knives. Taught myself to throw from said book (Harry McEvoy).

Didn't get back into throwing until 2013. Heard that a friend from High School liked to throw knives.

Got together with JJ Tingle to throw and shortly after we found knife throwing on YouTube, together we started the FullTangClan.

JJ was primarily a no spin thrower, I was a spin thrower exclusively in those days. I was dead set on becoming an Impalement thrower. We went to Busker Fest in 2013 and set up and threw knives without permission. I watched all the stage acts available on YouTube at the time. One Sharp Marriage, Throwdini, Che Che, John Bailey, Jack Dagger etc. Found out about competitions when I joined Facebook.

In 2014 I attended my first knife throw, Brokenfeatherpaloozah. Threw well {Expert}. Later that summer Alisha and I performed at Busker Fest downtown Fort Wayne, IN. Trained every day for the World Championship in Austin. Met a bunch of local people and turned them into knife throwers. At the time I had so many throwing friends that I decided to have a throw in our backyard.

2014, Taylor and I went to the World Championships for the first time. We both did well. Taylor had only been throwing for about 6-weeks and put up a Master score. A 253.



2015, the first official Danger Fest and the last one in my backyard 10-12 throwers attended.

2016, we moved the throw to Taylor and Rose's backyard. We also had our first out of state throwers attend and we also had our first prize knives donated. 15 throwers attended.

2017, we moved the throw to Taylor's parents house. More room for shenanigans and camping. 23-25 throwers attended.

2018, Taylor's parents house again, 33 throwers attended.

2019, moved the throw to the bait shop in Pierceton, 56 throwers.





Dangerfest 2018

JASON WILLARD JOHNSON

Jason Willard Johnson is universally accepted as one of the greatest knife throwers alive. He's taught Special Forces, appeared on *Knife or Death* (Hist. Ch.) and in May 2019 set a world record for quick drawing a knife into a target at 0.82 seconds.

You are a world champion. You've taken knife throwing mainstream on TV, and in many other media. How long have you been at it?

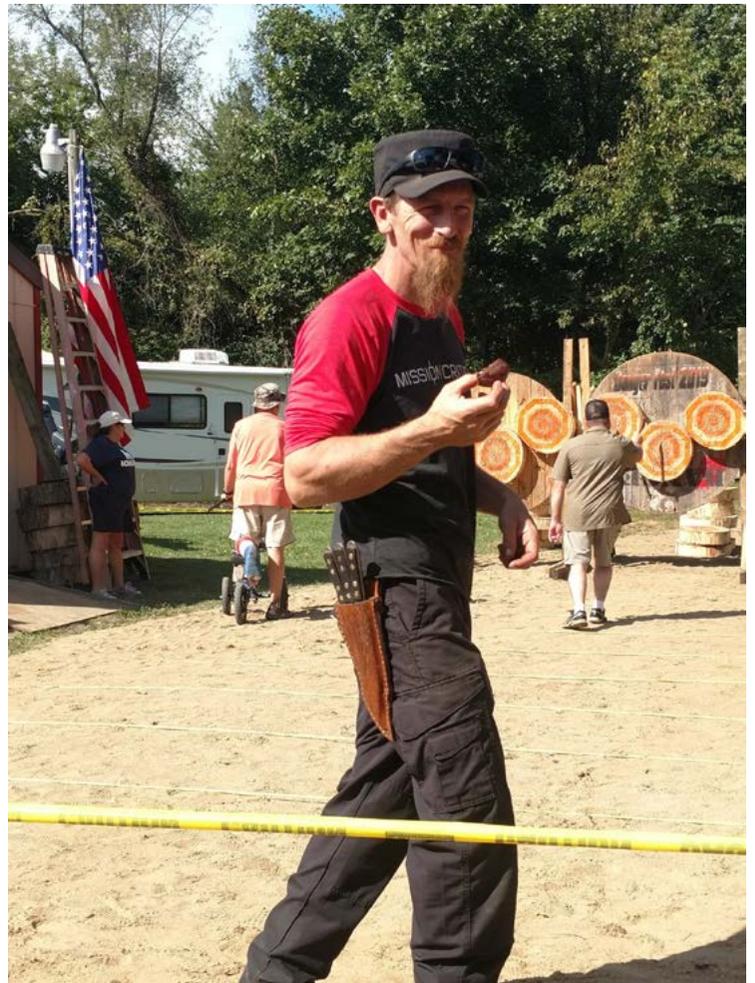
I have been at it all my life. I started when I was 10 years old and it turned into what you see today. A simple projection of logic and energy. There's nothing new under the sun here. But I guess you could say I have brought everything throughout history into one culmination of skill with projected implements.

You have a new knife on the market. Can you tell us about The Saber tooth?

The Saber tooth is the development of about 25-years of trial-and-error with blades that looked good but either failed or were too thin or whatever. This is meant to be a knife 1st and they come razor sharp I make it myself. I had a great teacher I guess you could say. Travis Wuertz, a student of Tim Hancock, is the one who gave me my grinding skills. In my head I knew what I wanted, Something that would hold up to what I needed it for. I just needed to set the precedence for what that was. I can't blame people most people don't use knives to the hardcore abuse that I do. If the tool doesn't exist, make it.

You describe yourself as a "warrior", "martial scientist" and "pro-knife thrower". Care to share how you became you?

A Warrior perhaps, it must be in my blood. Martial science is simply logic to me. How I became me is a bit recondite. I have studied many things in my life. Many different martial arts many different sciences many different religions. Each one must walk his path who I am is no different than who you are. Knife throwing was just a whole lot of free time logic and dedication. Understanding the science perhaps that makes me special. But it's something I can teach. Anyone can do this. Just look at me as a researcher.



You travel almost constantly. You've followed your passion and succeeded. Any advice to others wanting to do the same?

I don't feel I have succeeded yet. Am I following my Passion? Hell yes! This is one of the only countries where I have the freedom to do that. To not do it is a fool's gesture to my own heart. Win or lose. You only die once. Make all before great, and understand we don't get out of here alive. Go do it.

It's the end of the day, you've had all your calls, you've given interviews, taped videos and TV spots, and you finally have some alone time. What do you do—throw knives?

Throw knives yes haha. Watch my kids grow up. Ride dirt bikes. Hanging out with family, training in various Arts, I have had so many hobbies I don't even know where to start. Basically anything that occupies me and challenges my brain. If it tickles your fancy try it. That's the spice of life. Push yourself every day when you wake up and realize that the motivation comes for those who want it. But it's work. So play hard too.

JOE BROKENFEATHER DARRAH

Joe Brokenfeather Darrah is one of the Deans of American knife-throwing with fifty-six years experience making his bladed acrobats fly in the circus, among many other places. He is the founder and producer of Brokenfeather Paloozah, creator of the model that is Dangerfest.

Joe, it is an honor to speak with you. You have so much experience. Let's start at the beginning. When did you first throw a knife? Did you immediately realize a new path in life?

I first threw a knife at age 4 or 5 years old, it was my Father's M-3 Military Trench Knife that he was issued while in the 101st Airborne Ranger's, he also taught me to throw hatchets and Tomahawks. I don't know if at that age I realized I had a new path in life but I certainly remember the exhilaration I felt the first time a knife that I threw stuck soundly making that solid Thunk as it did!

What gave you the idea to begin Brokenfeather Paloozah?

I held some AKTA (American Knife Throwers Alliance) Tournaments with some local people back in the early 80's after being made the SE PA. Regional Director by Harry K. McEvoy (then owner of the AKTA and owner of Tru-Bal Knives) and given an AKTA Charter. Many years later Bobby Branton (the current owner of the AKTA) had asked me to become the National Tournament Director and this was after Co-Founding the IKTHOF as well as having thrown around the country and winning many World and



National Championships I decided to go back to my roots and hold a laid back tournament where folks could come learn, teach and share with each other where it wasn't quite so intense it was just a back of yard get together and relaxed throw. The name Brokenfeatherpalooza was given to our Throw by our good friend and great supporter John Grabowski using my Native American name as well as the name of my Knife Company Brokenfeather Custom Knives.

At Brokenfeather 2019 you had massive pendulum that provided throwers with a moving target. What other treats have you in store; or are favorites of yours?

Yes the pendulum idea came from a Wild West Arts Throw that my buddy Michael Jordan (AKA Rebel) and I used to attend regularly down in Okeechobee FL. That we enjoyed, as for other treats I'm sure as a Magician you

can understand the need for secrecy and that would be telling! We have held in conjunction with our conventional, Mt. Man and No Spin Throw a Whip Cracking competition with many facets of whip cracking including Targets, Speed and Accuracy as well as a World Blowgun Association sanctioned Blowgun Tournament and we've taught trick roping with lasso's as well, I'd love to add an Archery event but until we could come up with a good backstop that's not going to happen.

You are a very experienced knife maker. Your Brokenfeather knife is a primary example. Can you tell us a bit about that?

All of the knives I make are Brokenfeather knives and each one instead of being stamped with a logo as many others do I hand engrave my logo on every knife I make. The first knife I made right about 47 years ago was a collaboration between myself and Harry

McEvoy I called The Screaming Eagle after my Fathers Aiborne unit but for over 20 years I turned out between 500 and 700 knives a year, the one you refer to I believe is my Signature Blade which I modeled off of an old Circus Throwing Knife and then engrave it like a feather.

Finally, Brokenfeather like Dangerfest is a ton of work. Can you comment on whose involved in producing such an amazing event complete with neon-colored glow sticks outlining the range for night throwing?

Honestly I'm not sure who came up with the Glow Sticks but I know John Grabowski was involved, not sure who else on that but my good friends Michael Jordan and Raphael Rivero are the real people that help pull it all off and paint the log rounds placing line and lane markers as well as post invites and set up the FB Page and this past year several other came and helped clear some trees and shrubs. And last but certainly not least my Wife Sue and Son Shane, not to mention the World Class Magicians we had this year thanks to you my friend!!!



CHE CHE WHITE CLOUD

A Living Legend

By Joe Brokenfeather Darrah

Che Che White Cloud worked as a performer in his families circus since the age of 5 along with his Mother, Father and Sisters. He also did exhibition casting for Zebco Fishing Reels landing flies in a shot glass at up to 50' away.

He also did exhibition shooting with both BB Guns for Daisy as well as Archery trick shots for a Bow manufacturing company and in his act on stage in the circus.

He was raised on The Seneca Reservation in Salamanca NY. along the Allegheny River but spent many years as a headliner entertainer in Las Vegas as the World Premier Knife and Tomahawk Thrower at several clubs there!

Later in life Che Che White Cloud was a regular at various throwing events around the country such as Las Vegas, SC, TX, OK, NJ and PA. Giving tournament throwers the benefit of his over 7 decades of performing and throwing experience as well as some light hearted heckling.



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