

October / November 2013

VANISH

International Magic Magazine



MAGIC'S BEST KEPT SECRET

AMERICANS HOST 1ST UNOFFICIAL
MAGIC GATHERING IN DPRK

edition
10

this edition

**NORTH
KOREA
MAGIC**

1 **WORKING A CRUISE SHIP**
TIMOTHY HYDE SHARES SOME
TIPS ON HOW TO GET WORK ON
A SHIP

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LEARN MAGIC - FROM MENTALISM TO
CLOSE-UP TO STAND-UP ROUTINES

3 **EUGENE BURGER**
SOMETHING GAINED,
SOMETHING LOST



THIS JUST IN:

"Murray Hatfield never fails to deliver and HEADLINE is another awesome example. Professional magic from a professional magician."
 - Shawn Farquhar

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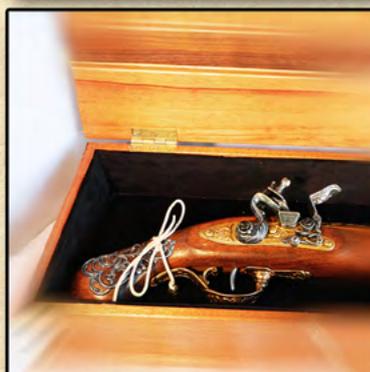


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The Eye of Odin stands next to the Linking Finger Rings as one of the strongest effects in magic. It starts where the Gold Medallion and Room service left off.

-Jonathan Pendragon



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JOHN CARNEY A PHENOMENAL SUCCESS!

John Carney's Revizzit experiment has already paid off big time, and the curtain is far from closing on this stage. The video collection has sold over 200 copies at \$95 each (you do the math!) and unlike traditional book or DVD sales, this unique, "streaming video ebook" is almost 100% PROFIT!

Released in January of 2013, *CARNEY 2013 - Exclusive Secrets* is a 12 part video instruction series. Customers receive an eBook that is magical itself - a new video appears in it's pages each month. - Twelve lessons covering everything from close up to stage magic. Along the way, you also learn indispensable lessons in technique, presentation, and creativity. Each video is a trove of insight and commentary, with a rich, documentary style approach. The book remains available to the customer forever, and is safely stored in the cloud so it can never be accidentally lost or deleted.

John self-produces each episode in his own home with a simple setup, and edits the videos on his computer using iMovie. Publishing this video series on Revizzit provided John with many benefits. Unlike his previous DVD productions, there was no overhead from printing and storing DVD media. He also had no shipping expenses, no

time spent fulfilling orders, and international customers were pleased to pay the same price as the USA customers. In addition, Revizzit's unparalleled protection of content, including screen-capture identification, meant that John could focus his energy on producing great videos rather than worry about unauthorized sharing.

When asked if he would recommend the Revizzit platform to other creative magicians, he said, "Revizzit is a game changer. I have controllable, one time costs to produce my videos, but none of the hassle and expenses of postage, addressing, customs, and physical delivery of products. I produce it, and money just shows up in my bank account!"

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October/November 2013

VANISH

International Magic Magazine

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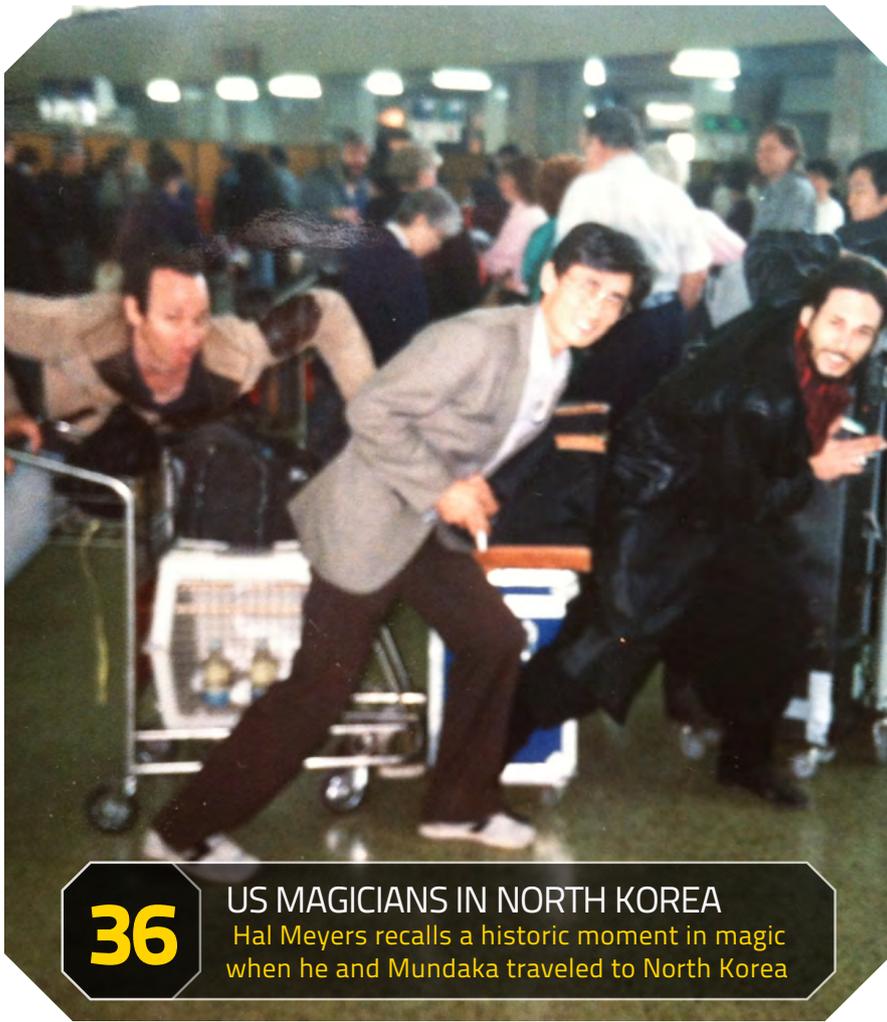
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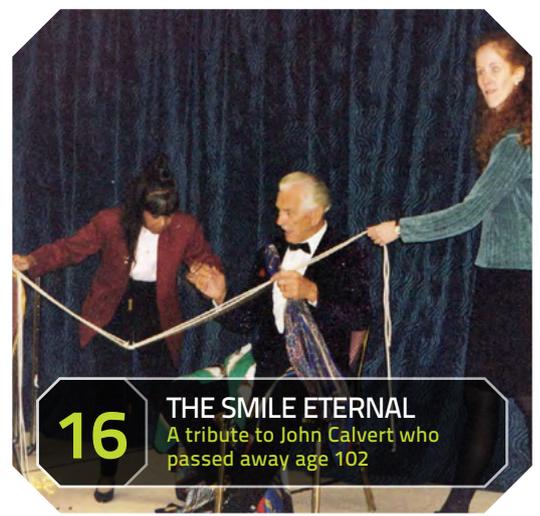
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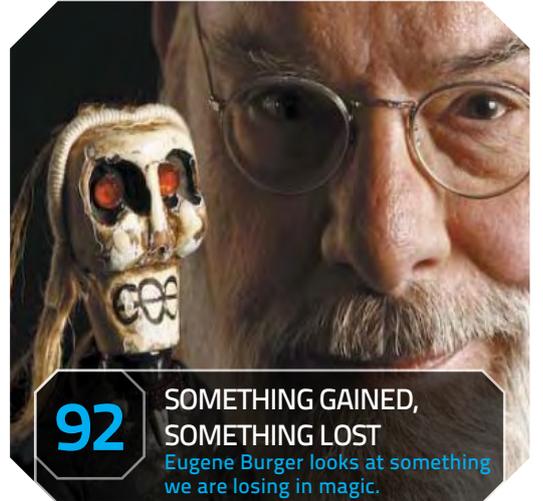
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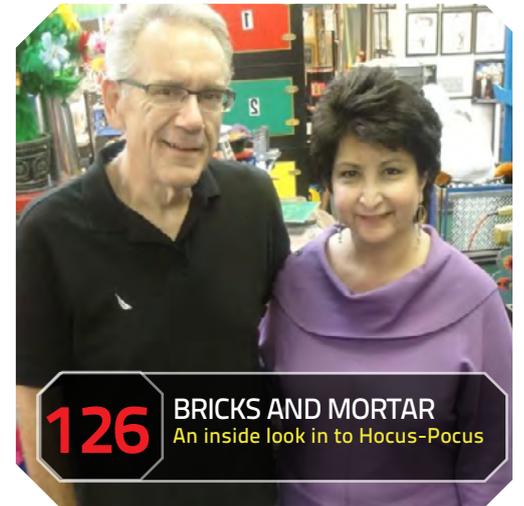
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WILL WORK FOR FOOD

Leif David and FREE shows

FROM THE EDITOR

THE BEST KEPT SECRET IN MAGIC IS FINALLY BEING TOLD

I have spent more hours putting this issue together than almost ALL of the past issues combined. I felt in order to do the cover story justice I needed to run it in its entirety. This is where VANISH really comes in to its own - we are not limited by page numbers or the cost of printing hard copies, so if a story needs thirty-two pages then it will get thirty-two pages! We have also added a video montage of extra photos at the end of the story, click on the link and enjoy the visual journey.

My sincere thanks to Hal Meyers who worked so hard in bringing his, and Manduka's incredible story to life. During the past three months I ended up reading nine different versions until everybody was happy with the end result. I think that, like me, once you start you won't be able to put it down. I also ended up with a large box of photographs and memorabilia from the trip, which I scanned, correlated and put together for the article. I am very proud that VANISH was chosen to bring this story to the rest of the world, and it is finally told.

Also in this issue is a fitting tribute to a true legend of magic, the late John Calvert. As soon as I heard the news of his passing the other day, I instantly spoke to Ben Robinson and asked him to write a fitting tribute. My sincere thanks to Ben for his wonderful tribute and I know he is hurting from the loss, like so many, of the passing of John. Everybody involved with VANISH would like to extend our deepest condolences to his amazing wife Tammy.

For those who follow television talent contests, I would like to mention that my all time favorite performer is doing incredibly well on Australia's Got Talent right now. Raymond Crowe has made it the semi-finals and in my humble opinion has what it takes to go all the way. There is something truly magical about Raymond, and I would say when it comes to making magic an art form he is in a field all by himself. Search on YouTube to watch his incredible performances. I'm not a big fan of these type of shows, but do recommend just watching his segments.



Paul Romhany

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For anybody who is thinking about entering something similar, look at what Raymond has done and how he has made such an impact in such a short time, from his choice of material to his stage presence and how he is winning over an entire country.

VanishLive.com is thriving thanks to the hard work of Mick Peck. He is doing an incredible job turning VANISH in to a daily newspaper. If you haven't already checked it out you better get over there now and bookmark it. It's a daily version of VANISH in newspaper form that has new stories and news every single day.

Finally I would like to personally thank everybody who sent well wishes to my wife via social media after her two recent operations. She was overwhelmed with the amount of magicians who sent messages. Even though we don't personally know a lot of you, we do feel that we have a special connection via our love for the art of magic. It was very humbling to know that so many people care. Her recovery will be slow but she is out of hospital and on her way to good health.

Paul Romhany

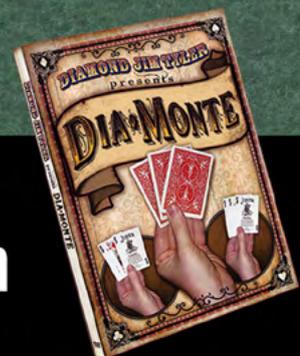


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Indian Rope Trick

From Australian magician Joel Howlett comes this record breaking news

If you have a story or a news related item please e-mail the editor at editor@vanishmagazine.com
We try to keep the news as current as possible and generally this is the last piece we work on prior to the magazine going live.

Mythical Animal Performs Mythical Rope Trick :

On a recent visit to Far North Queensland, Newcastle Magician Joel Howlett became the **FIRST MAGICIAN IN HISTORY** to perform the "Indian Rope Trick" with a Lumhultz Tree Roo climbing the rope! Mr Howlett says "Having the Lumhultz Tree Roo Climb the rope added an Australian feel to the trick". Joel went on to say that "Just being around such a rare animal was a

privilege".

From Italian magician Riccardo Rampini comes this news story about a website that will be of interest to magicians.

Findacadabra is a sort of "Google Maps" entirely dedicated to magic. I launched it about two years ago, and it now features more than 800 points of interest (POIs) including magic clubs, shops, museums, theatres, libraries, graves and other places related to magic,

with visitors from about 100 Countries all over the world. Moreover, Findacadabra is a "collaborative website", where every magician can login (the registration is free) and add new places to the map. I think Findacadabra can represent a useful tool for magicians and for everybody who loves the art of magic, and may give a small contribution to the wide-spreading of magic history and culture in the world.

www.findacadabra.com
Check out the video at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a5NVivsuBF8>

COMPETITION WINNERS

from the last issue.
Winners for **Carl De Romes HOT SPOT** were:
James Croop
Marty Fuchs
Dan Sclare
Kyle Copeland
Cameron Mount
The winner of **Matthew Wright's NUT DROPPER** was Craig Smith from the United Kingdom.



Actor and magician Steve Valentine, who appeared on the cover of VANISH Edition 2, was in Vancouver recently where he was filming a role for the hit TV show SUPERNATURAL. Steve has also just released a new DVD of his lecture at the Magic Castle.

The Illusionists 2.0 has recently been announced for its debut show in Sydney, Australia from January 9th 2014. This new show features an all NEW cast including The Master Magician, Luis De Matos of Portugal, will thrill with his mega illusions. This award-

Moorpark resident and teen magician Collins Key was one of six finalists left on the NBC reality show "America's Got Talent", competing for a \$1 million prize and a headline show in Las Vegas. Howie Mandel, a judge on the show, called Key "the new face of magic for young people and for families. Key started practicing magic at age 12 and has performed in the Magic Castle's junior program since he was 13.

winning host of the BBC's The Magicians will leave audiences astounded by his ground-breaking mentalism.

The Warrior, Aaron Crow of Belgium, has audiences frozen in their seats with his dangerous acts. From swords to paintball guns to crossbows, The Warrior wields his talents with a confidence that will leave you in no doubt as to how he won first place at the World Championships of Magic.

The Deceptionist, James Moore of Britain, brings the 'dark arts' into the 21st century. With a personality that charms and stunts that amaze, The Deceptionist has wowed millions world-wide with his modern approach to classic magic tricks. Do not try this at home.

The Unusualist, Raymond Crowe of Australia, is the local artist breaking through the world magic scene. Part magician, part comedian, part inventor,

The Unusualist has been touring the world with his uniquely Australian take on illusions.

The Hypnotist, Dr Scott Lewis of the United States, has audiences under his spell with mind-control tricks that bring out the inner artist in his subjects. Host of the longest-running hypnosis show in Las Vegas history, The Hypnotist has been mesmerising audiences across the globe and now its Australia's turn.

The Manipulator, Yu Ho-Jin of South Korea, will have you second-guessing your memory with his lightning fast card tricks. Fresh from his 2012 win at global magic competition FISM, The Manipulator will fool even the fastest eye.

The Futurist, Adam Trent of the United States, is the hot new name in magic. Combining classic magic tricks and cutting-edge technology, The Futurist dances his way through acts that demonstrate



why he has been dubbed the 'next big thing' in magic.

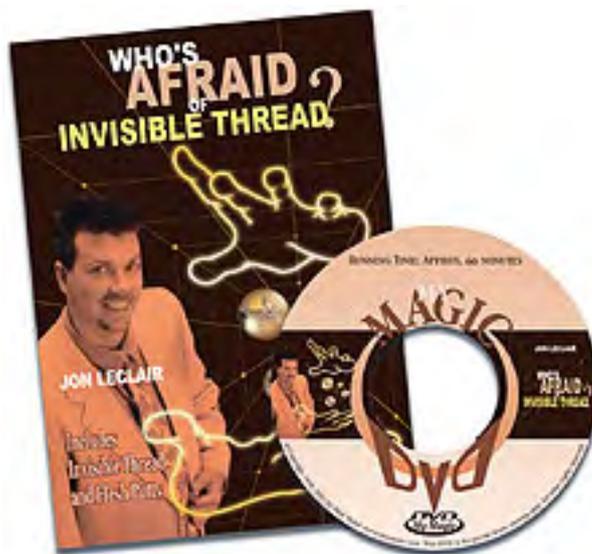
Jon LeClair 47, passed September 10, 2013 peacefully in his wife's arms at home. He was born on November 15th, 1965 in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, to Jack F. and Sherry LeClair. Jon was a caring, creative, generous, loving individual who enjoyed making others smile and be surprised. At a young age he was inspired by magic and went on to be a professional magician. He is the author of the bestselling magic book and DVD "The Art of Invisible Thread", which was later translated to French.

He married the love of his life, Kuniko Yamamoto May 5, 1992. He is survived by his loving wife Kuniko, his parents Jack F. and Pam LeClair, Sherry and Milford Garness, his brother and his wife Jack K. and Lynn LeClair, nieces Rikki and Jacki LeClair, nephew John Keith LeClair, aunts and uncles George and Kathy Arnold, Jean and Robert Schnider, and cousins.

The memorial service was held September 14, 2013 at Mckee Funeral Home, North Port, Florida.

"NATIONAL MAGIC WEEK" PROCLAIMED BY SOCIETY OF AMERICAN MAGICIANS
October 25 to 31 2013

New York- October 1, 2013- - Dal Sanders , National President of the Society of American



Magicians, proclaimed the week of October 25 to October 31 2013 as National Magic Week throughout the United States and Canada. For seventy five years the Society has recognized the anniversary of the death of Harry Houdini with a special "week" of events to highlight the charitable work of the Society throughout the year.

During the year the members of the S.A.M. perform for Senior Citizens in nursing homes, plus in VA Hospitals and for schools and libraries for children who cannot afford the luxury of live entertainment. The free shows are part of the service programs by its members. Magic Week is when the magicians can take their bows. Public magic events and exhibits will be taking place all over the country.

Each year governors, mayors and other governing bodies throughout the country are requested to issue proclamations declaring the last week in October

as National Magic Week, encouraging magicians throughout the country to participate in the activities.

For more details and a history of this event see <http://www.magicsam.com/press-kit/>

DAVID COPPERFIELD has announced he has decided to start a film production company, called Red Safe. One of his supporters is Paramount President Adam Goodman, who will partner with Copperfield. Not much else is known about about Red Safe yet, as the production company is just coming together now, but if puts as much passion in to that as he has in to magic then we know we will see great things.

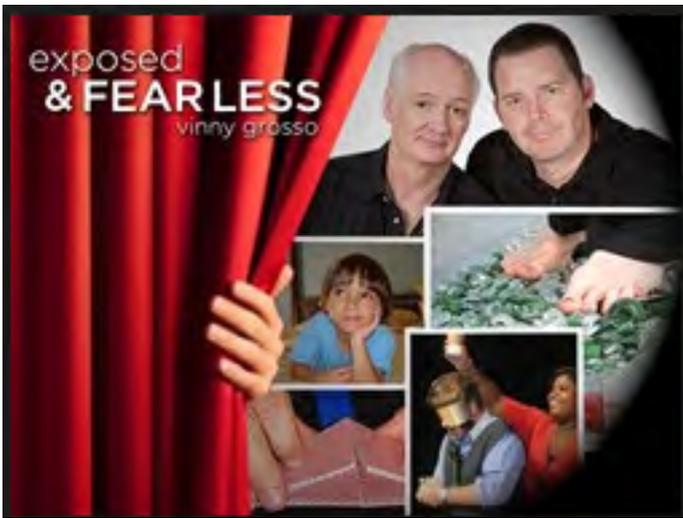
NOTHING TO HIDE, the live theatrical production created by magicians Derek DelGaudio and Helder Guimarães, will play a limited New York City run this fall at the Pershing Square Signature Center. Golden Globe nominee and Emmy Award winner Neil Patrick

Harris directs. Nothing to Hide arrives in New York following a celebrated, extended 2012 run at the Geffen Playhouse in Los Angeles. Harris, a fan of magic since his childhood, also staged the L.A. premiere and will repeat his work for the Off-Broadway run that begins Oct. 23. It will officially open Nov. 6 with performances scheduled through Dec. 8. Nothing to Hide is written by DelGaudio, featuring magic choreography by Guimarães. The show also features artistic direction by Glenn Kaino, production design by Dave Spafford, lighting design by Adam Blumenthal and music by Pedro Marques. It is produced by Werner Entertainment and Ostar Productions.

Magician Vinny Grosso Pulls Back the Curtain in New Book

A new book explaining how some inspiring people are able to accomplish the seemingly impossible and how you can do it too. Successfully funded on Kickstarter within two weeks, Exposed & Fearless gives you a behind the scenes look into these people's lives.

Vinny Grosso is in the business of doing the impossible, he is an internationally recognized magician. His illusions, however, pale in comparison to the real life stories he is writing about in Exposed & Fearless. Grosso draws inspiration from many of the people he knows



book and other rewards. Funding continues on Kickstarter.com through Oct 3rd, 2013. The buzz resonating through artistic and literature circles across the country is a true testament to the wide appeal of Exposed & Fearless. The accompanying Exposed & Fearless show, premiering in New York City on March 21st, 2014, will bring to life many of the stories in the book, infusing the emotion of a drama with the thrill and wonder of a magic show.

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and works with that really doing amazing, seemingly impossible things. From Colin Mochrie and Brad Sherwood, stars of the hit improv comedy show *Whose Line is it Anyway*, who create a new comedy show every night, to Banachek, a man who literally fooled scientists with his incredible feats of mentalism. *Exposed & Fearless* will reveal the

secrets of how these and others went from ordinary to extraordinary and how you too can do the same. *Exposed & Fearless* was launched through Kickstarter on September 3rd, 2013. Within just two weeks it reached its funding goal with well over 100 backers pledging financial contributions in return for exclusive copies of the

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Photo: Ben Robinson with John Calvert

The Smile Eternal

John Calvert—A True Giant Passes

August 5th 1911 - Sept. 27th 2013

By Ben Robinson

At the time of his death, John Calvert was truly 102 years young. Born August 5, 1911, John decided to go on to his next show, somewhere in the cosmos on September 27, 2013.

I first heard the name in September of 1973. My future teacher in magic, Milbourne Christopher (1914 – 1984) was the first biographer of all things stage magic to include him in the final pages of his master opus, *The Illustrated History of Magic*. Under the covers, by flashlight, age 12, I read about Calvert's exploits on land, sea and in the air piloting his own massive airliners, transporting

his "International Cast of stars and a Harem of Lovelies" to a myriad of theatres around the world including the Olympia in Paris, Lowes State on Broadway, before hundreds of thousands in Singapore, and in almost every country on this planet. His life was laced with adventure, sometimes-dire tragedy—it made me yearn for more. Much more.

I joined the SAM in 1976 and read of Calvert's appearance at the New York City 1978 national magic confab, where he did his eyeless shooting routine—yes—with real, live ammunition. One man

who did not believe the bullets were real once had the tip of his finger shot off on stage. But, in thousands of performances of this absolute miracle, there was only one accident, and it was a factor of another NOT doing as told by the great Calvert.

I'll leave it to others to recount the seemingly unlimited tales of this man's travels and adventures. William V. Rauscher's biography of Calvert is a good starting place, if you've never heard the name before.

In 1980, I was teaching magic at Buck's Rock, a creative work camp for artistically inclined (and advanced) students ages 10 – 16. I heard that Calvert was bringing his entire 2-hour extravaganza to the famous John Hancock Hall in the center of Boston. At the time I was in New Milford, CT and broke as any American college student could be. I hitchhiked the 200 miles round trip, playing it very fast and loose that I could get a ticket. I was in luck. I sat far house right, and the overture began. Two hours later I felt as if wings had alighted my feet after seeing this man. After what I had seen and heard, my midnight travel with strangers fazed me not—I now had "Calvertitis," the thrill of unknown travel ran in my veins! I made it back to New Milford, CT in time for the 7am wake-up call to campers nary ten hours later.

By 1988, I'd been produced as my first one man show and had a book come out under the good graces of Boston's magic man supreme, Ray Goulet, who also happened to be the producer of the 1980 Calvert show. Ray was also best friends with Bill Rauscher, whom I'd gotten to know. And because my book had done well, and my show was also well reviewed in its debut in Stockbridge, MA, and heading first to New York, then London, Rauscher felt that a meeting with Calvert might be in order.

On October 23, 1988, I wheeled an original illusion Larry White invented; I named The Trisection, into a rental car at 6am, and then drove three hours South to Woodbury, NJ to the church Bill Rauscher presided over. Errant I, I snuck into the back of the church about fifteen minutes after the morning service began. Nearly 300 white-haired men and women sat facing Reverend Rauscher as his sonorous baritone filled the grand hall. However, with all appreciation

to Bill's sermon, something quite extraordinary happened, which, to this day, I cannot explain.

As I crept in from the center back doors, my head, as if made of iron filings, suddenly was drawn, as if a magnetic force propelled me, to a man sitting seventh in from the house left, in the first row. My head whipped, my neck lashed in attention, my body froze. Somehow, amidst nearly 300 people in that hall, I was drawn to the back of a head facing away from me! I knew it was he. The great man himself. Indeed, the Calvert charisma had drawn me into his web at a distance of nearly 200 feet, not even facing me!

After the morning sermon, we met for the first time, and I watched as he performed the most dazzling stand up close up magic I had ever seen. Watches were stolen. Coins rifled up his sleeve and changed into a myriad of materials from previously stolen watches to a woman's earring he'd somehow obtained. Shrieks and smiles abounded. Calvert joked, "This is the first church service I've ever attended where entertainment followed the preacher during tea!" Later, Bill, John, John's savvy, sturdy and diminutive wife Tammy and I sat down in Bill's living room and spent three hours talking. John later helped me out of the house with my illusion and promptly dropped it on my hand accidentally—this was after Rauscher conspiratorially told me, "Be careful, John is accident prone." No matter. I look upon that scar on my left had as I would a priceless jewel.

When we met, John was 77. I was 27. He was almost exactly 50 years my senior. We really got on. Over the next 30+ years John and I stayed in touch as much as we could. I have handwritten letters and cards from him from London, Paris, Spain, Florida, Los Angeles and Rome. When I was engaged in 1999, I told my fiancée that were we ever near John Calvert, it was our duty to travel to him, help him; be with him. We surprised him in Charlottesville, VA, bringing our parrot Stubby to meet him. John loved animals. He sauntered down a long hallway in the hotel he was appearing at under the producership of Peter Monticup, and he carried a large, heavy blue velveteen backdrop. I was holding Stubby in his travel cage. John saw me, and from a distance of about 10 feet threw his massive weighty curtain at me, as I also quickly handed the cage to my fiancée An, so as to catch

“
John later helped me out of the house with my illusion and promptly dropped it on my hand ...

the flying curtain. A typical Calvert opening of an impromptu two-man juggling routine, all topped off by me being nearly knocked down by the weight of the curtain, and him saying with a hearty chuckle, "I'll bet you did not expect that Ben!" I introduced An and then he barked, "Now, don't ask anybody, just hang that curtain, and be quick about it!" We did not see him until the end of his 2-hour performance.

Afterwards, he asked to meet Stubby, held him on his hand and had us howling with tales of birds he'd known all over Africa, when he was making films there. Stubby loved John—he too felt the natural effusive charm of the great man. I told John An and I were to marry. Calvert became serious and asked us to join him privately away from autograph-seekers. He looked at An and sternly said, "You love this man?" An said she did. Calvert looked at me, his eyes blazing in seriousness, "You love this woman?"

"Yes, John, I do" I softly replied.

He stood there and put his hands on both our shoulders. The moment was laden with expectation and excitement. Finally he turned to me and said, "Well, then, if she gets out of line—spank her!"

John was a man's man from the 1940's, beginning his film career by doubling Clark Gable.

I don't know how many times John

and I spoke or were in each other's company. I really don't and it doesn't matter. What matters is that I am so honored to have known him.

When an exotic spider, that crept into his touring van in the Northeast in 2003 bit John, it could have been fatal for a lesser man with less spiritual conviction and his leg sheer grit.



was suspended for nearly 6 months to make sure the poison could not reach his heart or brain. It drove him nuts not to be out on the American highways traveling to his next engagement. At the same time, at age 42, I'd endured a heart attack on a day where, that night, I was to co-host the American Cancer Society's grand gala at the Waldorf Astoria hotel in New York with Walter Cronkite! John learned from Bill Rauscher that I too was laid up.

Days after I came home from the hospital, the phone rang in our living room in New York. My wife answered. "Ben, it's for you" An called to me. I took the phone. The voice on the other end said, "Am I speaking to the world's greatest magician, Ben Robinson?"

I replied, "Yes, this is Ben, John. But I have the honor of addressing the world's greatest magician Mr. Calvert—how are you doing???" We both laughed. The laughter made us both feel better. He taught me to let nothing stand in my way; not even a heart attack.

I last saw John as we were both invited to appear by Dick Brooks and Dorothy Dietrich at their Houdini Museum (Scranton, PA), Halloween, 2010. John was now 99, and had suffered a very debilitating stroke in March of the previous year. He'd recovered by staying with Ray and Ann Goulet in Boston for about 3 months, when the stroke hit. I was worried about all four of them because Ray had told me when they all woke, they went to the hospital to see John and none of them were eating very much. An and I immediately sent a gargantuan basket of fruits, dry goods, and smoked salmon that they could all nosh on at whatever hour.

Finally, amidst the fans, well-wishers, press and hosts constantly asking John to turn this way and that for photos, he turned to me and whispered, "They want to know my secret. I just refuse to die."

John Calvert may have left Earth, but he has not died. His spirit, smile and yes, true grit, will live as long there are humans on Earth to recount the TRUE tales of this most remarkable man.

COMPETITION

Each issue we will be offering a chance for readers to win prizes. Each correct answer we receive will be in the draw to win one of the prizes below. This competition will finish on NOVEMBER 5th 2013 and winners will be notified by e-mail and via our FACEBOOK page -www.facebook.com/VanishMagazine



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- 1 - Name the two American magicians who are featured in this issues cover story and went to North Korea
- 2 - Who is the performer that Nick Lewin reviews this issue?
- 3 - What is the name of the brick and mortar shop featured in the article by Nickle Van Wormer
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THE BUSINESS ISN'T WHAT IS USED TO BE

I have lost count of the times that I have heard that phrase. It is usually followed by stories about a performers Nirvana. A place and time where gigs grew on trees, agents were honest, and we were all treated like stars. It is often uttered when a group of performers are discussing the good old days and is followed by thoughtful nods of agreement by the rest of the crew. Either that or it falls from the lips of a performer who has been around the block a few times and is not getting the gigs that he thinks he deserves. The truth is that they are all correct. The business is not what it used to be, nothing is, times change and sometimes we have to race to keep up. I learned my craft as a busker and I have even heard it from other street entertainers. I went on to work in comedy clubs where those words have been passed around like a creed even though many comedy clubs have come and gone.

As the business changes performers are left with two options. Either change our acts to suit the audience that we have available to us, or go where the audience that we used to have has gone. The former takes a great deal of work on re-invention and risk taking, doing something new, exploring new ideas, new venues. The latter probably means working on cruise ships or retirement communities. Over the last few years I have done a bit of both.

When I started working as a professional magician and street entertainer I had a group of peers, many of whom are still in the game. Some specialized in close-up, some moved into comedy, a couple tried their hands at management and promoting, one or two are still street entertainers. One of them was a young Eddie Izzard who went on to wear a dress, appear in several films and generally become rich and famous.

30 years ago my motley group who met in Covent Garden in London were at the cutting edge of magic and performing. We were not the greatest thing around but we were doing our own thing. We built our 'thing' on the backs of the many who have come before us. We were experimenting and

FROM THE DESK OF KEITH FIELDS

developing and trying new stuff almost daily. We ended up going in different directions but learned enough to keep us in the business for over three decades.

Many talented entertainers dropped out and got proper jobs and who can blame them. They ended up with security, paid vacations, health care, and pensions. Some of them continued to perform when they got the chance, others gave up the dream completely, or dared to dream something different.

There was no career structure for our young group of magicians jugglers and comedians starting out on a path to fame and fortune. And the path that was beaten by the previous generation had been built over or fallen into disrepair. The variety halls, clubs and holiday camps where our forebears did their apprenticeships no longer existed, it was not there for us to follow. We had to make our own way and our way was the street.

So what of the future? The future belongs to those who are prepared to take risks and prepared to fail. Those who try new things regardless of the cost to their bank balances or their egos. Those who will work to find new venues in which to perform. As we get older and more experienced we hopefully learn a thing or two and failures end up as occasional blips rather than a trend. But the business is not what it used to be which means that even us experienced old dogs need to wake up and learn to take risks again if we are to succeed.

Magicians from my generation did not have the internet, youtube, dvd's (we only just had VHS videos!) but we learned, practiced and grew. Are these things an advantage? Not when viewed against a backdrop of a changing industry that rewards management more than it rewards talent.

In this crazy business that we call show we have to be continually moving forward. Stopping is not an option. We are on a steep hill and if we lose momentum we will soon be rolling backwards. And this is true whether you are a family entertainer, a close-upper, a cabaret guy, a professional or an occasional performer.

We are artists who need to perform to survive. And we will do so whatever the business becomes. It is not what it used to be. It is always changing and the only way to survive is to try stay ahead of the game and change with it.



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"Just wanted to tell you how much I enjoy reading Vanish Magazine. It's got a great international feel! You've had me hooked since the first issue and I always look forward to the next issue. You guys are definitely covering new territory. Congratulations and keep up the great work!"

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Kevin James

It is a crime that this magazine is free. This is better laid out and better content than many of the paid magazines out there. There is no reason anyone who has an interest in magic on any level is not reading this. In this day of age of "everything comes with a price," this is unbelievable."

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R & D

BIZZARO

"If I ever decide to add up all the money I have spent on I might just cry..."

As an artist/performer there is almost nothing more satisfying than making your own props and magic effects. It's even better when people like them or they work right... especially the first time out.

That is of course in a perfect magical world. There are those rare times that happens, but usually there is copious amounts of time, energy and money spent trying to perfect a prop. It can take a lot out of you.

If I ever decide to add up all of the money I have spent trying to create something unique I might just cry. I can see why so many performers are willing to just take what is handed to them already "worked out". It usually requires a one-time only expenditure of funds and it works right out of the box (for the most part anyway). It's much more convenient to just follow the herd and be a good little consumer. For the rest of us, there the craft store.

If you are like me and opt to make your own stuff or merely re-facade a pre-existing effect then you not only have to buy the supplies you also need the tools. The worst part is realizing you need a part or tool that you don't already have and then have to make that late night Wal-Mart run. (For those of you who are anti-Wal-Mart I would like to add that if a mom and pop store was open at 3 in the morning when I needed a meat cleaver I would just go there OK?) Hammers, glue guns, needle nose pliers, spray paint, various adhesives; these are all things you need to make the magic happen as it were. That is of course just the tip of the iceberg. Sometimes you need fabric or wood or metal or Plexiglas or Doritos (don't ask) to make what you have envisioned in your cranium.

Recently I started working on a new ending to one of my pre-existing routines. It involves duct tape. Did you know that not all rolls of duct tape are cut equal? Me either. I found this out the hard way and started taking a ruler to the store to find the right size I need. I had to buy a whole roll to get less than the foot of tape needed. I had to buy multiple colors to find what worked best against other colors and didn't clash or blend in. When all was said and done... let's just say that if anyone reading this needs colored duct tape soon I got you covered.

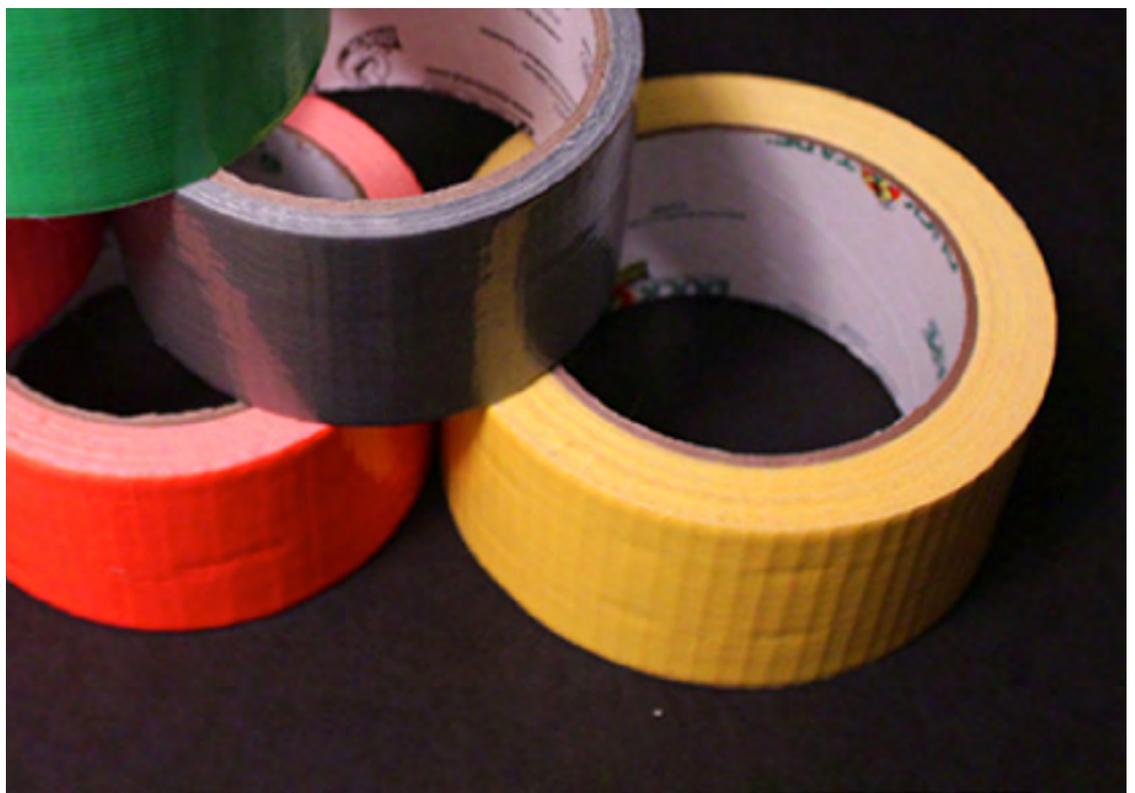
Personally I like the process of making stuff no matter how frustrating or long it takes. The aforementioned tape thing I had brewing in my head for two years and had to

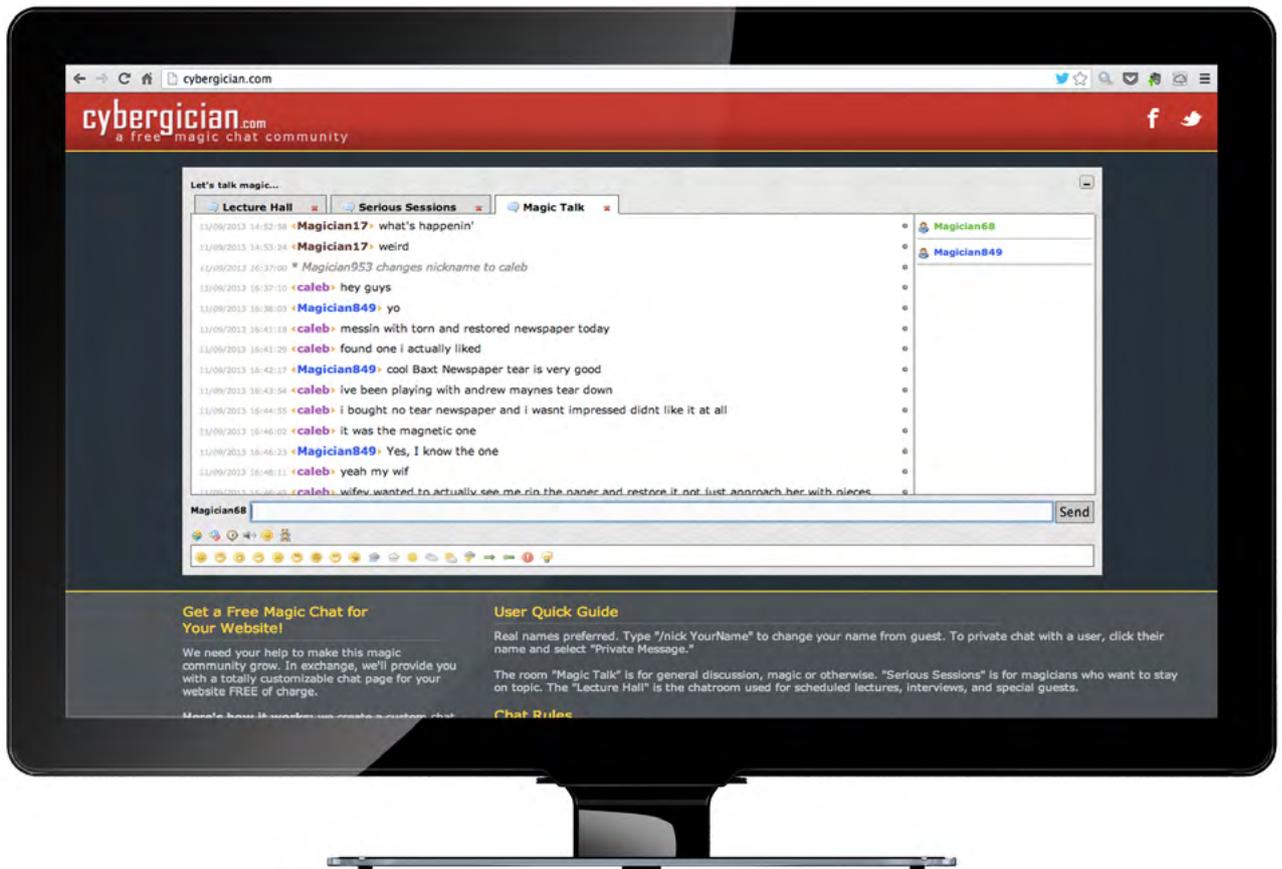
look into multiple different avenues to get what I wanted. I'm a big believer in get what you want out of your magic. Even if it takes you years and years to get a prop or effect where you want it, never give up. I have a card trick called "Punchline" that I spent 8 years on to get a proper handling and name before I was happy with it. Every so often I would pull it out and mess with it and just put it away until next time. If you think you need a workshop to make something properly you are mistaken. My workbench is usually my stovetop or kitchen counter. (I advise getting a cutting mat if you go this route. Xacto blades and security deposits don't mix) If you need to make something do it right then and there and wherever you can find room.

Of course there are those of you who might not be too handy, have no time to be, or are just damned lazy. For those people there are builders out there who specialize in making unique stuff *koff*www.bizarrobydesign.com*koff*. However I encourage all of you to try it yourself first and see what you are capable of. Don't give up at the first sign of trouble. Keep going until you have glued your hands to your head and can't work anymore. If you get frustrated, put it aside and come back later. In the end you will have a product that is more "you" and looks like something no one has ever seen (which could be both good or bad depending). You never know what you're capable of until you try... Just don't do the math afterward.



... recently I started working on a new ending to one of my pre-existing routines.





Cybergician belongs to you

By Aaron Smith

There are thousands of separate magic sites on the Internet. A new website aims to link them together. And that website belongs to you.

Years ago, there was a popular online magic forum called Magic Talk, owned by Bryan Dean. In addition to the threaded discussion forum he also hosted a magic chat. It had a handful of regulars, some of who were big names in the magic world. Simon Lovell, Kevin James, Randy Wakeman, Wesley James, Kozmo Koz, and Morgan Strebler to name a few.

After a while, the forum died down and the chat became its own entity. I kept it going for about five years, funding the server and maintaining the software. As a founding member of Magic Broadcast with my friends Ryan Pilling and Gerald Kirchner, I adapted the chat into the official Broadcast chat, and it grew to nearly a thousand users.

Magic Broadcast, as you can imagine, was a tremendous amount of work and cost a significant amount of money. Eventually—reluctantly—we let it go. The chat soon went away too.

But that was a big problem for me. The chat was family. When a member of the chat was sick, we called that person, sent them gifts, and kept their spirits high. We helped young magicians with their magic studies and their school homework. A few of the kids that started out in the chat as teenagers went on to do big things—you know several of them by name today. Of course, not all of us got along—we bickered like mad—but we made up over time and have a bond that is quite strong.

Each group was like a fraternity—magic alumni who stuck together no matter what. I want the next generation of magicians to have the same opportunity. The chance to build relationships with magicians they may never meet; the ability to learn from fellow magicians regardless of geographical restrictions; access to knowledge handed down from teacher to student as the information is earned through mutual respect.

Introducing Cybergician! The FREE online magic community.

Why is it called a “FREE” magic community? It’s free because there is no advertising on the main site, it costs nothing to use, and expressing your opinion is strongly encouraged. But there is an added feature you might find interesting and it is also free.

Any magic shop, group, community, or organization can link to the chat through their own custom page. Simply request a custom page, and I will build it for you free of any charge or future obligation. The page will look like your own website, but everyone, regardless of how they access Cybergician, is in the same chat room.

Your visitors see only your logo, banners, and advertisements, which you are free to update every month. If you don’t need a custom page for yourself, you can join and support the participating site of your choice. Perhaps

you are loyal to a magic shop, group, or community. Encourage them to link to their own custom chat.

VANISH Magazine—eager to adopt emerging technology—has already thrown its support behind the Cybergician concept. Visit <http://cybergician.com/vanish> and immediately start chatting with fellow magicians within the VANISH template.

This is a powerful tool for magicians, but how powerful depends on you. It doesn’t cost you a dime, just your time. And for the reasons I mentioned earlier, nobody is “too good” for it. I don’t care how famous you are or how many products you have on the market, or in contrast, how new you are to magic. There is a magician who may happen into the chat one day that can learn from you or benefit from your friendship.

Open a browser window and go to cybergician.com/vanish. Have the chat open in the background. Hang out. It’s that easy. Together, we can build a better online magic community. One with purpose and direction.

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About the Author:

Aaron Smith is a magic creator, writer, illustrator, and owner of The Magic Depot, located at <http://www.themagicdepot.com>



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“
VANISH
Magazine
- eager
to adopt
emerging
technology
is now on
board.”



TEN LITTLE SECRETS

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

Part 3 - CRUISING

“Vaudeville isn’t dead ... It’s just moved out to sea”

I’m going through my 3rd age of performing on Cruise Ships. I cut my teeth in the early ‘80’s, working on the rust buckets that came out from Russia in the Australian summers and cruised the South Pacific. Cheap booze and raucous fun loving crowds were a great combination for the punchy stand-up style I was presenting at the time. 15 years later, Lynda and I focused on the very top end of the market, cruising on 5 Star Crystal & Silversea around the world. Over the last few years I’m exploring the possibilities once again, primarily taking select assignments on Princess & P&O to give me a break from corporate. Here are



**TIMOTHY
HYDE**

- I’d like to get in to cruising
- Understand the marketplace
- Be ready
- Be prepared
- Be flexible / Modular
- Be different
- Be aware
- Your realistic

some thoughts for those thinking about going to sea.

“I’d like to get into cruising”

This is something I hear all the time. The depth of my response to these people is directly related to the answer to the next question.

Have you invested the hundred dollars or so required to read the recommended books on the Market? The Cruise industry is constantly changing. Sure, parts are exactly the same as they were 30 years ago, but other aspects have changed quite dramatically. When I decided to get back into it again the first new book I read was the one from Vanish publisher Paul Romhany, “Entertaining on a Cruise

Ship." I also hear great things about the new Nick Lewis book "Cruise Ship Magic 101." A slightly older book is Fred Becker "Cruise Ship Magicians Handbook" that's also packed with solid advice. A small investment in money and time will get you up to speed very quickly and help avoid some of the many pitfalls that lie in wait.

Understand the Marketplace

Working on cruise ship #1 can be very different to working on cruise ship #2. People who haven't cruised tend to see the industry as just one market, where in reality there are many brands and styles of cruising each catering for different demographics. Each of these have different requirements. When planning your material, costuming, music etc, it's important to understand this.

Be Ready

Don't try and work the market until you are ready. If you launch yourself at the Cruise Lines and fail to make the grade, you can ruin the opportunity for yourself for a very long time. If you do poorly in the shows, fail to dress properly around the ship or in anyway antagonize the passengers or Cruise Staff, then you get a big black mark. A mark that could remain for years.

Be Prepared

Just like a boy scout you need to be ready for any eventual-ity. What will you do if one of your bags goes missing. Can you come up with a solid show without your props? What if the Cruise Director asks you to do another 25 minutes later in the cruise that you hadn't prepared for?

Be Flexible / Modular

It's great to have a standard show that is honed to perfec-tion, with great transitions, highs, lows and interesting dynamics, but the reality of ship board performing is that you need to be flexible. The 45 minutes that you love to do might need to be 55 on a different ship, or 2 split shows of 25 minutes. Princess are currently trialling a 30-35 minutes show structure. If you are working at the start or end of a cruise, some lines have a welcome aboard and/or farewell show that you might also be asked to be in that could take another 12 - 20 minutes of material each.

Be Different

What will you do if you turn up for a segment of a world cruise and you find that you will be the 6th magician that this particular audience has seen in the last few weeks? It happens all the time. They have already experienced - Note in orange, vanishing Bandana, torn & restored newspaper, linking rings & snowstorm or for the mental-ists - confabulation, magic square, book test, PK Touches and a design duplication! How much of your material is a straight off the magic shop shelf?

Be Aware

Some Cruise Ship theatres are state of the art brilliant,

with terrific light and sound and all the help you need. But many rooms are not that great for magic. The sight lines are killers with audience wrapped almost right around a thrust stage and at times high above you looking straight down. If it's rough, your props could topple and fall or just slide straight off the stage. At times it's hard to get people up to help and a rough sea could make it impossible to get anyone up at all.

Be Realistic

Is getting into cruising the right thing for your long term career plan?

This market can be a trap. The relatively easy work sched-ule and the life at sea cocooned from the "real world" all sounds great, but there are a couple of factors that should be considered. Firstly, there is a limit to the amount of money you can make. Cruise lines are actually now pay-ing less than they were 10-20 years ago. Secondly, do you have other "big plans" in your career and life that will be put on hold and probably shelved if you head out to sea. Performing at sea should fit into the bigger plan, not just be something you tick off your bucket list.

Get your Passport now and keep it up to date

If you are serious about the idea of working on Cruise Ships you will need a passport. Get it right now, don't wait till you are offered a contract. Not only will this be a posi-tive action step towards your goal, you may be surprised how many contracts are offered on a last minute basis.

Who is Timothy Hyde

Timothy Hyde has been a full time performer since 1977 and is widely acknowledged as one of Australia's busiest and most successful magicians. A wide ranging career has taken him through street performance, comedy clubs, theme parks, trade shows and casino seasons. He now works almost exclusively in the corporate sector, both speaking and enter-taining, with an occasional cruise ship assignment.

His online MagicCoach project, running since 1999, including a free newsletter, manuscripts and unique products can be found here <http://www.MagicCoach.com>



Tannens magic camp

A review by Alexander Boyce

"A Family" is my response to the question, "What is Tannen's Magic Camp?" That's the question I would like to answer. However, I'll address it a little more in depth.

From my point of view, a 17 year-old, and returning camper for 6 years, Tannen's Magic Camp means a lot to me. Tannen's Magic Camp (or TMC for short) doesn't have camp fires, a lake, or tents. It does have a lot of magic. It also takes place at the beautiful Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania. It's a gorgeous campus which looks a lot like Hogwarts. We stay in comfortable dorms and the food is excellent. TMC is like a week long seminar for young

magicians from all over the world. We spend all day learning and sharing what we all love, magic!

For 39 years, TMC has been teaching kids, teens, and young adults everything from the art of presentation, to business skills. With past guests like David Copperfield, Johnny Thompson and former campers, Academy Award winning actor Adrien Brody, the "Millionaire's Magician" Steve Cohen, Darren Romeo (the sole protege of Siegfried and Roy), and David Blaine, the camp has built a reputation of being very special. One of the greatest things about camp for me, is that it's different every year! New and differ-



For 39 years, TMC has been teaching kids, teens, and young adults everything from the art of presentation, to business skills.



Eric Jones sharing his skills



Students walking
to class at
Tannens Magic Camp

ent counselors and guests make it exciting. However this past year we missed the presence of a few of the “staples” of the TMC family. Counselors Scott Hitchcock, Derek Hughes, Michael Carbonaro, and John Cassidy were all dearly missed. Also, unless you’ve been living under a rock you’ll know David Oliver has recently had lung issues due to a rare dove triggered disease. Unfortunately, for the first time in 19 years David wasn’t able to join us, due to still being hospitalized at the time of camp. Fortunately, he has received a successful double lung transplant and is recovering very well.

TMC is a different experience for everyone. Each day, we split up for specialized classes, workshops, and jam sessions, then come together for meals, lectures and shows. I’d like to share with you few highlights of my 2013 TMC experience. Please keep in mind, that with 7 days of 24 hour magic, I’m sure that I’ll miss a lot of

great stuff in this article.

My class this year was incredible. Classes are the first activity in the morning and are split up by discipline (Stage, Parlor, Close Up) and skill level. I was lucky enough to be in Advanced Close Up this year, which was taught by Kostya Kimlat and Garrett Thomas. We focused on psychology, theory, improving magic, restaurant magic and so much more. What’s incredible about camp is that everyone is an open book for a whole week and all questions are answered. With teachers like Kimlat and Thomas, the answers we get are astounding. Kostya has an amazing arsenal of creative thoughts on everything and Garrett will make you think so deeply about your magic, that you will never think of magic the same way again.

Another highlight was my workshop: Kostya on Business. This first time, in depth workshop, took a deep look at Kostya’s SeeLiveMagic.com business,



Talking magic around the breakfast table

then turned around and focused on the student's businesses. I've seen dramatic results in my magic business since applying his techniques when I returned home, and it's felt so great.

The shows at camp are always amazing and the facilities at Bryn Mawr are beautiful. Most shows take place in the "Black Box" which is intimate, modern, and sleek performing space. A few shows take place in the Goodhart Theatre, a huge Gothic style proscenium theatre where the only downside is a lack of air conditioning in July and August. Some shows occur every year like Hiawatha's "Keep The Magic Alive" Show. This year we were treated to a special showing of the newly released documentary, "Magic Camp." It's a lot of fun and follows the 5 camper's journey through the camp, all the while documenting what camp is all about. The movie is so well done because Judd Ehrlich, the director, is a past camper. He stays true to the meaning of camp and because of his hard work he was awarded the Mark Nathan Sicher "Creative Dude" award. This is an award not given often and is awarded to those who revolutionize and in-

“

The movie is so well done because Judd Ehrlich, the director, is a past camper. He stays true to the meaning of camp ...

spire. Not only did we, as campers, get to watch the film together at a movie theater in town, but, that night the live show was the featured cast of "Magic Camp."

Frank Monaco MC'ed, Zach Ivins escaped from a snuggie, Reuben Moreland performed his famous dice routine and a new spin on the chop cup, Zoe Reiches did crazy things with ropes, Daniel Greenwolf showed why he is one of the world's best faire magicians and Reed Spool showed us why he won the Senior Stage competition in the movie. This show was so high caliber and amazing to see in such a small space.

Another one of the highlight shows was the



Thursday night show. This show started in the Black Box Theatre with performances by the Academy Members. The Academy is a new part of camp for campers, ages 18-25 who come to camp with an existing act to workshop on all week long and the improvements are drastic. The Academy show was stellar, and included Zach Ivins, who did a very different, quirky version of a ring to impossible location. Kayla Drescher was next, as the world's best bartender, and Charlie Ross presented a heart breaking rope routine for us. Then we all went outside and watched Michael Patrick's amazing close up magic, followed by Todd "Skippy" Seidenberg and Derek Wahdan juggling like crazy. It was very neat to watch a performance outdoors with the amazing architecture of the campus as our beautiful backdrop.

Afterwards, we were all ushered into the large theatre where we saw rock star magician "Hawk Ferguson" (aka, counselor Adam Rubin), some new and classic magic from Kostya Kimlat, the "Tannen's Camp Juggling Act" from Skippy, and then a performance by Darren Romeo. We were amazed by his voice, magic, and the way he lit up the stage. At the end of his set, Darren introduced the Blackstone Floating Lightbulb and explained the legacy that comes with it. TMC camp director Terri "Mama Magic" Cook joined him onstage and assisted with the routine. It was incredibly special.

The camp also has a very prestigious competition split up into four categories. Senior Stage, Junior Stage, Senior Close Up, and Junior Close Up. Junior is 14 years of age and under and Senior is 15 and above. The competition is awesome, because of the post performance critique from the guest judges. After the first round of competitions on day two of camp, competitors are given notes about their act, how to improve, what to change to make it better. Those who make it into the final competitions are announced that night. The finalists can work on their acts, based on their critiques during the week and compete again in the finals at the end of the week. It's a prestigious competition because the campers are so talented and hard working. I am fortunate enough to know how hard it is because I've won a few awards at TMC, including last year, when I won the Senior Stage Competition. The campers are all so talented and this year Mario Seki, Eli Tannenbaum, Cameron Style, and Ben Zabin won first place in the four categories. Ian Flinn was awarded the "Mario Gonzalez Camper Of The Year Award" because of his dedication to helping out younger campers and always lending a hand to counselors.

Tannen's Magic Camp was truly international this year. The new documentary and marketing by camp has enticed campers from all over the world. Campers came from all over the US and foreign countries like Australia, the UK, Honduras, and Canada. Every year is different, every year is special, and campers come away every

year with new friends who share their passion. As I have for the last six years, campers return to see the many of the same friends and our "family." Tannen's Magic Camp is just that, a family.



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This photo shows the artists who gathered in North Korea to perform for the "April Spring Friendship Art Festival in 1991 and included two magicians Hal Meyers and Mundaka Lee from the USA.



제9차 4월의 봄 쉐선예술축전 PYONGYANG OF KOREA

1991. 4. 15



“

*President
Kim Il Sung
greeted foreign
artists in the
“April Spring
Friendship
Art Festival
1991.”*

FIRST EVER unofficial magic gathering in DPRK

By Hal Meyers

The story you are about to read has never been told or printed in over twenty one years ...

Twenty One years before Dennis Rodman, eighteen years before Dale Salwak, eight years before Princess Tenko, heck four years before Kim Jong Il took over the country I, Dameon - aka Hal Meyers and my dear friend Mundaka Lee performed "magic" in The Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea - the DPRK - otherwise known as North Korea.

Here is the story of the "first ever unofficial international magic gathering in the DPRK"

... the year was 1991

Peter Samelson and I had a company called the "Magic Source". We performed both close-up and illusions, as well as our own "acts", for corporate events, trade-shows and industrials. In addition we frequently created customized effects for print ads, commercials and the

occasional film. We had a reputation for providing high quality creative work amongst the local "bookers", and since we both had solo and combined "routines" of various lengths we appealed to a wide range of clientele and were able to work numerous venues under almost any condition.

Early in February we received a call from Derek Dingle asking us if we'd be interested in meeting some representatives from an Asian country at their "mission" in New York City. They were looking for a couple of American magicians to perform at an event held in April. The "Friendship Arts Festival" committee, as it was called, had the mission representative contact Derek's business, "The Magic Agency", and he immediately thought of us. Either that or we were some where down a long list and others before us simply said, "pass". I guess we will never know for sure.

When we found out the Asian country was North Korea, we were a little hesitant, but curious. So we said "yes" to a meeting and agreed to visit the mission along with Derek. The day of the meeting we arrived at a sparsely furnished "mission" location, basically a few rooms similar to what you've seen recently on TV, drab green walls with dark wooden chairs. As you may or may not be aware, there was and is no official DPRK Embassy in the USA, nor is there a United States Embassy in North Korea even to

When we found out the Asian country was North Korea, we were a little hesitant ...

”



this day. At the meeting we were greeted by the head of North Korea's mission, Ho Jong, the Ambassador, Deputy Permanent Observer and his assistant. We brought along the usual self promotional materials, resumes, photos, videos and exchanged business cards, then sat down while they watched the tape and discussed the possibility of our attending their international event. They briefed us on the scope of the event, mentioning we would be performing under the "circus" category in the "Circus Arena" which held approximately 3000 people. There would be performers from all over the globe and the DPRK would consider it an honor if we were to attend, that is once the committee accepted us. They told us we would perform each day of the event and possibly a command performance for the "great Leader" Kim Il-Sung.

All seemed quite interesting to me, I was certainly up for going to a country most folks in the USA

would never get to see. And, how many professional magicians from the USA would ever step foot in the DPRK, probably not many.

Then ... the Ambassador dropped two final things, one: we would be performing for free - as - again, it is a great honor to be selected for this prestigious event, and two: we would have to pay our own round trip airfare from NY-Kennedy Airport to Beijing, along with associated hotels, meals, transport to and from the Beijing airport where we would take a "plane" to the DPRK. We were a bit shocked, we looked at Derek, smiled, then turned towards the mission representatives and thanked them for the invite, but we would have to pass under those conditions. We were both full time professional magical entertainers, and as you know, like "most" full time pros, we couldn't afford to layout that kind of money for the "honor of attending", nor would we agree to spend almost two weeks

abroad, especially if we had to pay our own way. It made no sense.

However, since there was no performance fee, and I can't believe we came up with this compromise, should they decide to pay all expenses; transportation, meals, any and all associated fees, vet costs - I had birds/doves - visas, etc., we would consider going ... you know, since it was a once in a lifetime opportunity. Oh, and because they were not paying any performance fees, we would be delighted to work five out of the total event days - each - so we would have an opportunity to attend some other presentations during the festival.

We figured by not agreeing to the "paying our own way" and by saying we would perform "only five of the days" the deal was off.

Wrong ...

A couple of days later we received



Left: Hal and Mundaka with their luggage. Mundaka performing magic on the flight.

a call from Derek, lo and behold the DPRK Friendship Arts Festival Committee had agreed to everything we asked for. So I guess we were going to North Korea after all.

During the weeks that followed I did a little research, practiced a lot (this American didn't want to drop), made a couple extra copies of my cue sheets, recorded a few extra cassette tapes and printed DAMEON labels for everything, alerted the proper authorities ... believe it or not I called the State Department to let them know I was going to North Korea, and asked if there was anything I could do for them. They said, "no thank you", ... I think I heard a faint voice in the background laughing, not sure. Anyway, I processed the necessary "bird papers" and alerted the port of entry VET so I could get my animals from the USA

to China and back home. There were no animal documents available to get my birds in and out of North Korea, but the "mission" folk knew I had doves so I was hoping they alerted their comrades back home. All was good.

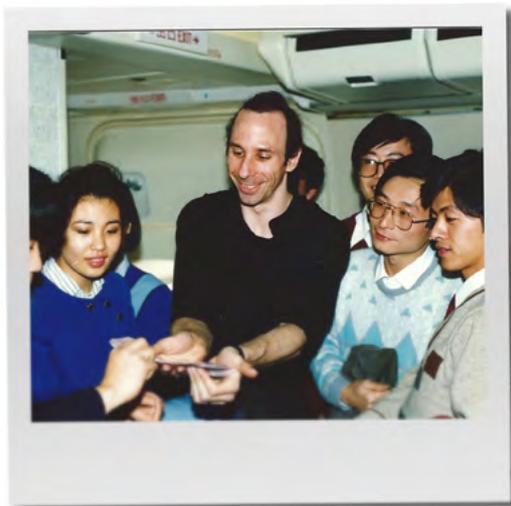
However ...

Peter, after giving the trip a long hard thought, decided it wasn't going to be in his best interest to perform in North Korea. Ninety nine percent of his routines were "scripted" requiring careful attention to translation, whereas I worked strictly to music. I know he really agonized over whether he should or should not go ... in the end he chose to gracefully bow out.

Okay, that left me with one of two choices, either go alone, which I was

prepared to do, or find someone else to take Peter's place. It would have to be another local magician with an "act", preferably one who works strictly to music. Then it hit Peter and me that our friend, Mundaka Lee, whom we worked with in the past in a show we created called "Spellbinders", would be a perfect choice. He had an excellent silent routine, different from mine, but also visually and musically magical. I called Mundaka and was delighted when he immediately accepted the opportunity. We contacted Derek and the head of the DPRK mission who had no problem with the substitution. Everything was good to go.

The day of the departure was set, Mundaka and I met Ambassador Ho-Jong and his associate at the airport. We received our tickets



Above: Hal performing on the flight

NYC Mission Ambassador at airport

to China and were told some Americans from San Francisco, a well known Korean Dance group, would be boarding the plane at the stop-over in California. They were asked to look for us on the plane and agreed to assist us along the way since they'd been to the DPRK several times in the past.

The flight from NY to San Francisco was eventless, perfect. We touched down and awaited the next part of our journey. I don't remember how we met them, or maybe they found us, but we were introduced to the Korean American dance troupe who immediately took us under their wings as though they'd known us forever. Honestly, it was a bit of a relief to know we would have a few friends along for the ride. And I must admit, I'd actually seen several of the girls before in an old Chuck Norris movie, which was confirmed for me by one of the dancers. During the flight when the dancers found out we performed

magic, they twisted our arms (yeah right) ... the result is we wound up doing some tricks for our new found friends which certainly made the flight go a bit faster.

Quite a few hours later we touched down in Beijing. Of course the first thing that happened, as our equipment was unloaded, my birds caused a stir with the Chinese officials. Luckily it was very late and they had no idea what to do. A couple of card tricks later, a signed paper and with a little help from our KA "friends" we left the airport, everything was intact and we arrived at our Beijing hotel.

The next morning, when we woke up it was a bit overcast but the scenery outside our window was very cool ... very grey, very Chinese. With several hours to hang out before departing for the DPRK we went downstairs, found our friends and left the hotel for a bite to eat. Returning a short time later we quickly

“ the scenery outside our window was very cool ... very grey and very Chinese.



View from hotel in China

NAME HAL A Meyers
 NATIONALITY USA PASSPORT NO. _____
 FROM/TO New York (USA) to Beijing to (N Korea)
 NUMBER OF ACCOMPANYING CHILDREN UNDER 16 0
 HAND BAGGAGE 1 Pcs. CHECKED BAGGAGE 4 Pcs.

Please read the NOTE carefully before you fill in this form

ITEM	ENTRY		EXIT	
	Description & Amount			
CHINESE & FOREIGN CURRENCIES	500.00 Travelers Cheques 100.00 USA Cash			
GOLD & SILVER ORNAMENTS	Wedding Band			
TRIP NECESSITIES	BRAND	PIECE	BRAND	PIECE
CAMERA	Nikon N-200	1 Lens 2 Reels	✓	
TAPE RECORDER				
VIDEO & MOVIE CAMERA				
OTHER ARTICLES DUE TO CUSTOMS PROCEDURES	8 Doves -			
GOODS & SAMPLES	Yes/No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes/No	<input type="checkbox"/>
RECORDED VIDEO TAPE	Yes/No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes/No	<input type="checkbox"/>
PRINTED MATTER	Yes/No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes/No	<input type="checkbox"/>
ANTIQUES	Yes/No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes/No	<input type="checkbox"/>

DURABLE CONSUMER GOODS (PRICE > RMB50.00) AND GIFTS (TOTAL PRICE > RMB50.00)			
DESCRIPTION	BRAND	PIECE	CUSTOMS REMARK

IN ADDITION, _____ PIECES OF UNACCOMPANIED BAGGAGE ARE TO BE IMPORTED THROUGH _____ WITHIN 3 MONTHS.

SIGNATURE: [Signature] DATE: 4/5/91

CUSTOMS REMARKS:


CUSTOMS ENDORSEMENT: _____

Baggage Declaration form

gathered our belongings as we made our way to the airport for the flight to North Korea.

Before I go any further, I travelled with one extended travelling salesman's fiber case 44" x 18" x 10" and one smaller anvil like case 30" x 24" x 14" - both on extra heavy casters - along with a full length garment bag to carry my performance garb and a separate - smaller - case for my everyday clothing. Oh, and a medium sized kennel that held the doves I required for my show (7 + an extra).

Mundaka, also had his luggage for clothing and a rather large, very heavy, case on wheels - 22" x 22" x 40" - to carry all his props, which included a magnificent sparkling urn held upright on golden outstretched dragon arms that Mundaka designed and constructed himself, completely rigged with the obligatory smoke and pyrotechnics devices.

The reason I brought up the luggage was to preface the next part of our journey. Once at the airport our luggage, cases and birds were taken by the flight personnel. As we walked from the departure waiting area to the plane, Mundaka and I looked at each other, it was a prop plane, very old, a little newer than the one's

found in Indiana Jones movies, but not by many years. Entering the small cabin was like stepping back in time. The interior was a dull brown color, the seats in rows of "twos" looked faded and worn. They did however have seat belts so I was slightly relieved.

We took our seats and at that moment Mundaka and I had concerns about them getting his case on the plane, we didn't know if it would fit in the cargo hold. However, they managed because it arrived in North Korea when we did. But let me get back to the flight. I don't remember the take off, but I do vividly remember the literature in the pocket on the seat in front of me. I reached for it just as we were taking off and at the instant my hand touched the paper a "march like" music permeated the cabin.

This music continued for the duration of the two hour flight. I opened the literature, more like a small newspaper and the very first thing I read was, "The Imperialist American Pigs ..." blah, blah blah. I grimaced and took a deep breath, then looked a little further in the paper and there was more of the same spread throughout. I showed it to Mundaka who was in a seat in front of me. We both looked at each other and smiled.

MUNDAKA WITH
JONG WHO LOOKED
AFTER HAL AND
MUNDAKA DURING
THEIR STAY IN
NORTH KOREA



Then ...

An attractive flight attendant, dressed like a stewardess from the late 1960's, complete with neck scarf walked directly over to me, smiled, and in very broken, extremely hard to understand English, asked if she could sit beside me. I nodded yes, and for the remainder of the flight she proceeded to practice her English. It was delightful. She was tremendously excited and I didn't have a clue what she was saying, but the flight seemed to go quickly. Before you knew it, we landed in Pyongyang, the capital of the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea.

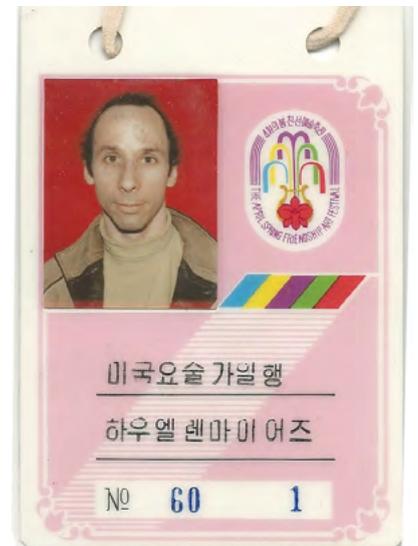
All was good ...

It was very dark on the tarmac when we exited the aircraft so we couldn't see much of the airport. At the moment our feet touched the ground we were greeted by a slender gentlemen of average height, wearing glasses and a dark jacket. He had a huge smile on his face and spoke English proficiently as he introduced himself; he was Jong, assigned to escort us as our personal guide for the duration of our stay in the DPRK. He then asked us an interesting question, at least to our ears, "which one of you is the American Delegation leader?" Mundaka and I looked at each other

and I explained to him that neither one of us was the leader, we were co-workers travelling together and performing individual "magic acts" at the circus arena. He looked at us, said he understood and then again asked, "who was the leader?" We quickly realized one of us needed to be the leader. Mundaka said, "Hal, you be the leader now and when you get tired I'll take over." It was settled. I was the leader.

Jong brought us over to the "greeting committee" standing in a line outside but close to the plane. A distinguished group of older gentlemen bundled up with thick dark coats and warm looking hats. They shook hands with everyone who exited the plane. Now that the "leader" thing was cleared up we were the last one's to shake their hands. And, in all honesty, they did not seem very pleased to see us, none of them smiled nor did they look directly at us ... after all ... we were in their minds, the "imperialist American pigs."

Jong smiled after we shook everyone's hands, he would do that a lot on this trip, and walked us over to our assigned car with driver, an older model, faded green-ish mercedes sedan, we got in. Jong asked us to wait a minute while he made sure our luggage was headed to the



Official badge for Hal

proper location. As it turned out we were going to the hotel housing the circus entertainers. Our official designation throughout the event. Jong got into the car with us and we headed to our hotel.

It was very dark when we arrived at the Pelonggang Hotel, bamboo scaffolding covered the front of the structure and lined the front entrance way and lobby corridor. We went to the front desk where Jong checked us in, then we were escorted to our rooms to drop off our luggage. We agreed to meet back in the lobby in a couple of minutes to get something to eat. As I entered my room I was surprised at how big it was, huge in fact, complete with a mini-kitchen, sitting/living room,



Pedonggang Hotel - "it ain't all glamor"

large bathroom. All in muted tones, with a mid 60's look and feel. My cases were brought up to my room, everything was still intact, no broken wheels or damaged surfaces ... yes!

I met Mundaka in the lobby along with Jong and we went to the dining hall. It was massive with what appeared to be several hundred eight foot diameter round tables situated throughout the room. Each table was covered with a brilliant white table cloth. We were the only ones there, a huge silence permeated the space. A waitress suddenly appeared and escorted us to a table. Then, much to our surprise someone brought over two plates covered by those metal Dove Pan/hospital-looking lids. We hadn't ordered anything yet. She raised the covers, and lo and behold there was a strange colored meat-like patty with an egg on top. Mundaka and I politely asked what it was ... her reply, "hamburger, Americans like hamburger". We looked at each other, as we would often do during this trip, and asked if there was a menu, because we would like to try some North Korean food. She seemed very excited and brought us kimchi and a few other local dishes with rice. We had a lovely meal, sans hamburg-

er with egg. After the meal we thanked our waitresses and left the hall. Jong was waiting for us in the lobby, he informed us the official event would commence tomorrow in the afternoon, however, prior to that we would bring our things to the Circus Arena, check out the space and have a rehearsal. Then he escorted us back to our respective hotel rooms.

The first night is over ...

A quick note: Please understand that what I'm recalling ... happened twenty three years ago. I ran this story by Peter and Mundaka for their input and to make sure it was accurate as well as to protect the innocent. However, as I'm writing this, images of the event are vividly flashing through my head. I will try to recreate my personal experience in as much detail as necessary for you to step into my "tails" so to speak. Yes, I read Dale Salwak's account of his recent DPRK visitations over the last few years, and I even contacted him to discuss North Korea a little bit. From what I've read about his visitations, our experiences were very different. I held back telling folks about this trip because I didn't feel the magic community, especially the "old timers" (one of whom I am now becoming) would "get it",



By sharing the universal language of the 'art of magic', we can create a tiny slice of happiness, wonder, peace and understanding

...



Hal & Mundaka in front of theatre



Inside the theatre

would understand why we would visit this country, why participate ... and in this aspect I believe Dale and I have the same thought. That by sharing the universal language of the "art of magic" we can create a tiny slice of happiness, wonder, peace and understanding in our world. I truly hope you enjoy this little bit of magical history. Oh, and please forgive me for not being able to recall all the "names" of all the performers in the pictures ... if you happen to know who some of these entertainers are ... don't hesitate to contact me at: hmeyers1@mac.com or Paul Romhany at "Van-ish" so we can properly credit them and possibly get in touch with them as well ... I'd love to say hello.

The next morning, I awoke, a good start to the day, dressed, checked over, fed and watered the birds, then took out a few props to practice a bit. I received a call from Jong saying we were to meet in the lobby in about forty five minutes, so I thought I'd walk over to Mundaka's room and we'd go down stairs together.

And that's when the fun began ...

As I approached Mundaka's room I noticed the carpet was torn off the hallway corridor floor, new rolls were lined up against the walls throughout the hallway. Obviously,

having seen the scaffolding the night before, the hotel was under some sort of re-construction. I knocked on Mundaka's door, heard a little shuffling about, and a moment later the door opened. I stood with my mouth agape, staring in utter amazement. Mundaka's room was about eight feet wide by twelve feet long, with a single bed and a chair along with a very tiny bathroom. Mundaka, too, had decided to practice, however, he had to turn his bed on end in order to open his case and remove his props. I was shocked and so was he when I told him about my room. I brought him over and his mouth dropped open too. We realized because I was the designated "leader" of our tiny American delegation I received much better treatment. It would have made for a funny scene in a comedy, but this wasn't a comedy and it wasn't right. We went downstairs and spoke with Jong about the situation. I think he realized, now, what we were talking about when we said neither one of us was the leader of our delegation. Jong apologized and understood we were upset by the way Mundaka was being treated. I had no problem having Mundaka move into my room which was big enough for the both of us. Jong said he would talk to the committee, explain the situation and try to fix things. He asked for our patience. We agreed.

Breakfast and then on to the Circus Theatre ...

I don't recall the meal we had, but I do remember walking down the sun-lit corridor to the banquet hall. There was more bamboo scaffolding, with a few workers scurrying about, lining both sides of the hallway. Behind the bamboo structures were a few sparsely laden display shelves with sliding glass doors. One section of shelving had pyramid stacked jars of freeze dried coffee, a few souvenirs, and some toiletries for sale. When we arrived at the dining hall we were greeted by the banquet room manager and escorted to a table. You remember the tables. Strangely, we were brought to the same table as the night before - go figure. We were the only one's at our table, and looking about the room, there were a small number of folks seated at other tables too. We smiled and nodded to a few folks sitting near us, both Mundaka and I - being nice guys, curious Americans, got up, shook a couple of hands, found out where people were from and what they did. They were from Cuba, Sweden, Russia, Bulgaria, Mongolia, and Norway, jugglers, acrobats, magicians - yes - magicians, how cool. Anyway, we finished our meal, went back to our rooms, packed our props and brought our things down

to the lobby to be transported to the Circus Theatre for our rehearsal.

Jong arranged for our "stuff" to be brought over to the Theatre as we got into our car, which took off when Jong returned. Everything you've seen on cable news; expansive wide streets, statues of Kim Il Sung, brightly colored banners and posters, huge Impressive buildings, very few people on the streets ... it was all there. We travelled down the main road to the Circus Theatre - a very impressive building from the outside. Almost Jetson-like in appearance. A modern structure that towered above us as we drove towards the main doors. We were greeted by some of the workers at the beautiful front entranceway and escorted inside. Upon entering the structure you couldn't help but marvel at the polished marble floors, tall columns and grand staircases. We were escorted into the theatre itself, a massive round arena with the capacity to hold three thousand spectators per per-

formance. A large proscenium stage whose apron was curved and separated from the first row of seats by a sixty foot diameter circus ring. The stage itself was about four feet off the arena floor, maybe eighty feet wide by at least sixty feet deep. As we walked down the stairs towards the stage we saw quite a few acrobats practicing intricate balancing, hula hooping, juggling, handstands and tumbling. As it turned out, this was one of the finest multi-award winning circus troupes from Beijing. We would later learn the entire group practiced and honed their skills every morning starting at 8am, a ritual they would follow everyday they were in North Korea.

We were introduced to the Circus Theatre manager, a stern looking gentleman with dark hair, black rimmed glasses and a smartly pressed suit. He smiled slightly, shook our hands and had someone take us, along with Jong, up to our dressing rooms. As we disappeared behind the shiny doors into the

backstage area, almost instantly we were brought into the reality of the DPRK. The back hidden area, was dark, cold, ugly, bare and in disrepair. The dressing room walls were made with an extremely coarse cement, almost dark brownish/black in color. We were each given a small dressing room on the second floor ... each room had a single light, tiny mirror and small table with a mini sink and cold water faucet. Ah, showbiz, at least something was familiar.

We unpacked and set up our props in anticipation of our rehearsals to take place in about an hour. I went first during rehearsal, which didn't take too long. Jong translated the cues. Basically, Dameon starts with his back to the audience, the lights and music come on simultaneously - the music never stops, and with the use of some follow spots and one special light cue at the end - it was pretty straight forward. Three props are on-stage at the beginning of the performance.



Opening meet and greet with Korean Dance Group

Stage Left, two point two meters from center stage, an Upper Torso Mannequin (for my version of the Knife-Thru-Coat), my container to hold and dump things was placed a little right of Center and my Vanishing Bird Cage, again two point two meters right of center, angled slightly. As I went through the routine I signalled which prop to take and when to remove them from the stage, so by the end of my 11 minute and one second routine the stage was cleared and ready for the next entertainer. I had things worked out so the stage hands presence would not be noticed. We went over my routine a few times with the music and stage hands. Luckily I did because in the knife through coat routine (set to music) I needed to run into the audience, politely borrow a coat, run back to and get on the stage, plunge the knife through the coat - coinciding with the beats of the music - then return the coat to it's owner and get back to the stage in time to continue with the next effect. I thanked the technicians, stage manager and stage hands with a "kam-sa-ham-ni-dah" for their efforts. I went back to my dressing room, re-set my props for the following day and waited for Mundaka to return from his rehearsal with props and music. All

went well.

After rehearsal, and meeting a few more entertainers from the circus group, we returned to the hotel to get ready for the opening banquet. Oh, Mundaka's room situation hadn't been resolved yet, but it was being discussed and they would have an answer very soon ... patience.

Back in the Lobby we met Jong who travelled with us to the great hall, a tremendous building, one of those you see in the DPRK clips frequently shown in the news. When you entered the building, again the marble floors and columns shone with a high polished brilliance, and there were many 30 foot by 20 foot images on the walls, pictures of brightly colored flowers, water, trees and the North Korean people, all of them with a similarity of style and function. As we were to find out, these "blessed images" were created by the Great Leaders son, Kim Jung Il whose talent knows no bounds and who graciously taught the people of the DPRK how and what to paint.

After looking at some of the works of art we were escorted into a large auditorium. Hundreds of delegates to the Friendship Arts Festival, every one dressed to the nine's and many in native costumes, were already seated for the opening presentations. We ran into our Korean American friends who were beautifully dressed in brightly colored

traditional Korean formal attire. Most of the event is a blur (as are some of the pictures we took), however, since I was the Leader of the American delegation I was brought on-stage, given a lovely DPRK Vase and acknowledgement, waved to the crowd and escorted back to my seat. Mundaka would have this honor at the closing ceremony. After the presentation of each delegates leader, everyone went into another tremendously large room for the opening banquet. We were, this time, seated with other circus entertainers, folks we would be working with. We were treated to a wonderful meal served by hundreds of waiters. At the conclusion everyone went outside, took some pictures and then headed back to the hotel for a good nights rest.

Performance #1 ...

The day of our first performance in North Korea was upon us. We decided to sleep in, but get up and head to the theatre at least four hours before the show to prepare both physically and mentally. You know, walk the stage, go over any questions the crew might have for us, have time to practice and double check everything. Jong met us in the lobby at the agreed upon time and our driver took us to the theatre. It's always exciting doing a first show in a new place. North Korea was certainly a country where we wanted to make a good first impression ... especially since we were Americans we wanted to

PHOTO SHOWS
HAL AND
MUNDAKA WITH
THE CUBAN
DELEGATION .



put our best foot forward. I don't recall all the acts on the show, but I do remember I was earlier in the line-up than Mundaka. There were at least three acts separating us. Everything was in order, I dressed in my tails, applied make-up. Triple checked all my props, loaded things in appropriate pockets, added lighter fluid to gimmicks, readied flash cotton and paper, checked my billiard balls, fanning bills (real bills used for productions), throw streamers, etc's ... lots of etc's. Then with Mundaka's help brought everything down to the stage with at least five to ten minutes to spare. The stage hands knew where everything went aided by stage markers. The lights dimmed, I entered the stage and took my place, down stage center, my back to the audience, I was working "in one" in front of the main curtain ... I heard the live announcer say my name, "Dameon", the audience applauded, and simultaneously as the light hit the back of my jacket music spread over the audience. I froze for an instant. Why? They were using Mundaka's cassette instead of my clearly marked Dameon tape.

Yes, you heard me correctly, they were playing Mundaka's music. I need to fill you in a bit before I continue. Very little throws me for a loop, I've performed my act thousands of times, I've had so many things go wrong over the years and I've just dealt with them when they happened, for the most part without anyone being the wiser. However, this was a little different. My music runs exactly eleven minutes and one second long. No Joke. Mundaka's music, which he wrote and recorded himself runs about seven-teen minutes. Therefore, my mind raced in several directions, simultaneously and at the same time. Instantly when the music started playing, Mundaka, who was back stage checking his props was desperately calling out for help, trying to tell someone they were playing the wrong music. I knew this was happening because I heard him through the curtain. Luckily for me he stayed downstairs after helping me with my props, getting ready when this happened. With that said, I knew at some point when they finally alerted the tech folk, they would remove Mundaka's tape and put mine in, starting from the beginning. So, I had to figure a way

I froze for an instant. Why? They were using Mundaka's cassette instead of my clearly marked Dameon tape.



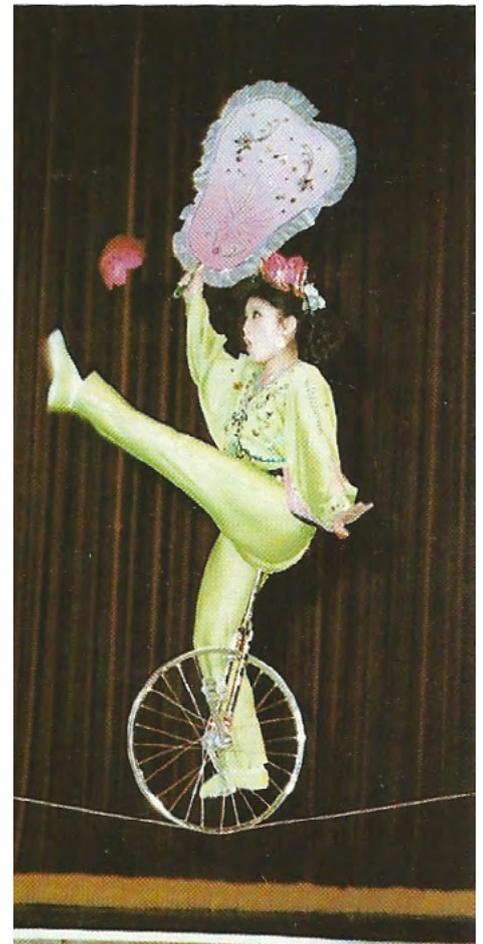
German Acrobats, Mundaka, Hal, Mongolian Magician in red dress and Swedish Juggler

to do as little as possible yet still be somewhat entertaining, taking up as much time as possible during Mundaka's music, while figuring a way to slow down enough until my music caught up with my place in the routine.

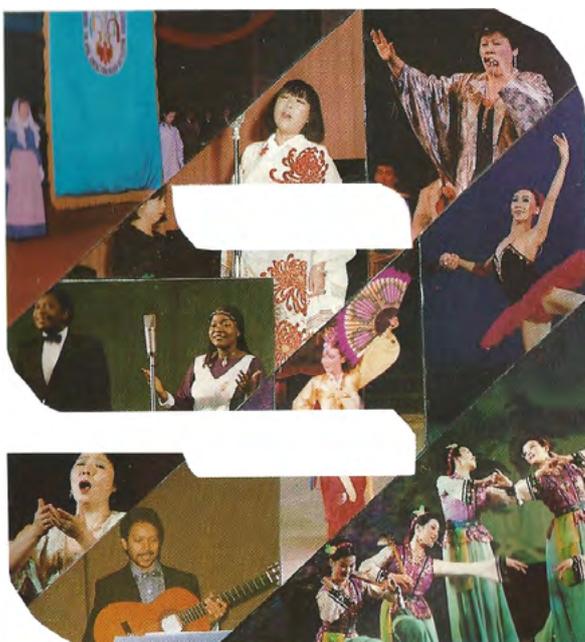
I slowly turned to the audience, I had a white rose in my left hand. I looked and moved stage right - robotically, like a mechanical man, following the rhythm of Mundaka's music. I think I went about twenty feet or more, pausing, staying in my robotic character and bowed to the audience closest to me. Then I moved about the same distance left of center and bowed to those folks. It was killing me, generally by this time I have completed three effects. I moved back to center, looked left and right and allowed the rose stems thorn to simulate pricking my finger breaking me out of my robotic posture. I pulled the flower from the stem retaining the petals in my right hand while I tossed the bare-stem into my container. My left hand lit on fire, I touched the white rose to my hand which disappeared in a bright burst turning into a flowing white silk followed by a dove's appearance. Normally I wouldn't "robot" for more than a few seconds. But I had to go very slow. Then I carefully removed my gloves moving about the stage glancing

and smiling at the audience. Another dove appeared. As I put both doves into the bird cage (stage right) they changed tapes. And as anticipated, mine started from the beginning. You get the drift. I slowed down the next sequence, a billiard ball routine that climaxed with the final ball turning into a throw streamer followed by another dove production. At the moment the streamer sprang into view, opening stage left, and prior to the third doves appearance ... my music caught up. Needless to say, once I was back in synch with my music, everything went fine, and I received a tremendous response.

I bowed at the conclusion of my routine and quickly exited the stage. Mundaka looked at me and couldn't believe it, neither could I. What a way to start out. Jong was waiting for me, he looked nervous as he was the one who Mundaka yelled for to fix the problem. I was furious to say the least, I handled it fine on stage, but the pressure of those few moments was intense, especially after spending time the day before rehearsing with props, costumes, cues ... everything. This should never have happened and I said those words to Jong in an elevated tone. At the same moment I started to raise my voice to Jong the manager of the Circus Theatre walked into the hallway. He had no idea what had happened, all he knew was that



Circus artists from North Korea





I was raising my voice to Jong. He came over, started wagging his finger at me then began shouting. Jong immediately stopped him, told him what happened and that the tech folks in the booth made a huge mistake. The managers face turned beet red and he instantly apologized. It was a tremendous embarrassment for him. He shook my hand and again apologized several more times. I asked Jong to please tell him I appreciated his concern. It was fine now and I was sure it wouldn't happen again. The manager insisted Mundaka and I have a special rehearsal the following day so this would not repeat itself. I agreed. Again, thanking him for his understanding and for the opportunity to have another rehearsal.

I went to my dressing room, quickly reset all my props, got ready for the next days rehearsal and the show that would follow. Put the birds back in their cage, fed them and quickly ran down to the stage to catch Mundaka's act. I also wanted to see a few of the other entertainers, and at the same time be ready for the entire cast bow at the conclusion of the show.

I was glad they realized they needed to rewind Mundaka's tape for his performance. Mundaka's act was full of pyrotechnics, smoke, terrific manipulation, linking rings, a long dancing fire staff, etc. They were blown away. Both Mundaka's and my on-stage personas were a little out of the ordinary for the people of North Korea. The two of us

had chiselled facial features, long dark hair and lots of make-up helping to create strong on-stage facial expressions. So when we each received great responses from the audience it felt good. Especially knowing the folks in attendance heard we were Americans, they announced it prior to our names, so we did okay for "Imperialist American Pigs," I mean magicians.

After the show Jong brought us back to the hotel, we were told the following day we would both be moved to a new accommodation. Very cool.

The new accommodation ...

The next morning, before we were to go to rehearsal we were given a new hotel room. Jong escorted us upstairs to one of the four suites on the top floor of the Pelonggang Hotel (same location, the circus hotel that is). We couldn't believe it. This was a huge suite with a wonderful balcony, a large living room, gigantic bedroom, very big bathroom and a nice kitchen area. Yes, there was only one bedroom and I insisted Mundaka take it because he'd spent several nights in that tiny room. I slept on a very comfortable couch for the remainder of our DPRK stay. We settled in, then Jong told us it was time to go to the theatre for our special rehearsal, followed by one of several mandatory "scheduled" activities/ tours. As we entered the Circus Theatre, this time

Both Mundaka's and my on-stage personas were a little out of the ordinary for the people of North Korea.



One of the many statues of their leader.

through a rear entrance, the Chinese acrobatic troupe had been practicing for several hours. The manager greeted us, and again apologized for the mishap, then we rehearsed a couple more times. Everything went well.

After the rehearsal Jong joined us on a tour bus along with the all the other circus entertainers and we were taken to see Kim Il Sung's birth place, a very small straw hut about ten by fifteen feet, perfectly kept in immaculate condition centrally located in a beautiful park setting. Then we visited a well known statue of Kim Il Sung, then a monument to the people of North Korea and the great leader Kim Il Sung. Everything was larger than life. So as not to repeat this scenario; as you can probably surmise from images you have seen recently concerning North Korea, there were additional trips on the days that followed including one to a school where we saw very young children playing the accordion with precision way beyond their years, doing amazing calligraphy, needle point like art, dancing and singing. It was as though each move, gesture and smile were programmed. Each child was beautifully dressed in brightly colored clothing as were there perfectly coiffed instructors, smiling broadly/proudly as each group of Friendship Arts attendees filed by.

These trips were amazing to say the least. Orchestrated to the nth degree to show off North Korea's "best of the best" ... it made sense.

We went back to the theatre, performed another show, both of us receiving enthusiastic responses. After the bows we were told to get changed quickly so we could join the others taking the bus back to the hotel. Jong informed us we no longer would have the car and driver to take us around and we would be taking the bus with everyone else, to and from the hotel for the remainder of our stay, so we had to make sure we were on time. Since we were performing three more shows we certainly had no complaints. And, worse case scenario, we could take a taxi for a few DPRK dollars. Actually, since we didn't need to get to the circus theatre six plus hours before the show, we asked Jong to arrange for a taxi to pick us up at the hotel for the remaining shows - we paid.

We returned to the hotel in time for dinner and went straight to the massive dining hall. Again, please allow me to step away from the story for a moment. By the third day we, being the friendly Americans, reached out to all the other circus entertainers, jugglers, acrobats, magicians and the entire Chinese acrobatic troupe. We were truly embracing the spirit of the words "Friendship Arts Festival" and attempted to spread that friendship to everyone we had contact with. With that in mind, we noticed, during meals everyone was separated by country, as I'd mentioned earlier. Well, we decided to invite all our circus friends to come sit with us at our table. It was wonderful. At first the waiters didn't know what to do, I

guess we broke the rules, however, eventually everyone understood we were merely eating together - in the spirit of -. There was no stopping it, especially when the other acts refused to sit alone at their table and joined us. We had an amazing juggler from Sweden and his lovely assistant, a magician and his wife from Norway, an unbelievable Cuban juggler along with his wife and a host of others. We eventually had a full table and even convinced others around us to do the same. We laughed, told stories, discussed the shows, compared notes. Now it was a real friendship festival.

One of the amazing things we learned was there was still tremendous "fear" in many parts of the world. Even some of the entertainers, though they laughed with us from afar and would walk over to listen, watch, tell stories, they stuck by the rules, eating at their assigned table. A lot of these folks had designated leaders or handlers who watched them to make sure they followed "orders". Oh well ... they were still terrific people with wonderful stories of how they learned their craft, telling us how their countries had "requirements/regulations" regarding performing under the title of "juggler" or "magician". You couldn't simply go out, buy a trick and two weeks later print a business card with "the worlds greatest so and so" and start charging people to watch you perform under rehearsed material. You had to get permission to study one of these arts, either under a master's tutelage or by attending a school. Then, when you were ready, having learned your craft, you went before committees and auditioned, getting a stamp of approval certifying you as a professional, if you passed, which then allowed you to earn a living entertaining and afforded you additional travel freedoms not inherent with other occupations. There was tremendous respect and commitment to your teachers and your chosen entertainment field. A real eye opener which made Mundaka and me truly appreciate what we had, realizing in order to perform at the level of these folks,



An outside shot of the Circus Theatre

on a consistent basis, you must never take your craft for granted. There was tremendous mutual respect amongst all the circus entertainers of which we were now proud to be considered official card carrying members.

These glorious meals with our new friends along and our recently acquired suite, gave us an idea to host a huge party for the entire circus family ... more on that later.

A quick side note ... A few strange things happened to us on more than one occasion. On the second or third day at the Pelonggang hotel Mundaka and I were walking from the entranceway to the dining hall when we heard a large crash, it seems the scaffolding fell to the ground right after we passed by. We don't know if anyone was hurt as Jong kept us moving towards the dining area. After that we decided to stay far away from the structures lining the lobby hallway and front entrance.

A similar thing happened while visiting a department store. I don't know exactly what transpired, but people were paying more attention to us than whatever they were supposed to be doing. We assumed someone may have fallen on the escalator as we descended and a minor commotion occurred as we walked off the moving steps, however, Jong simply kept us headed towards the front door.

... and ...

I use the term "escorted" throughout this piece, and I hope you notice that no matter where we went, Jong was with us. As a matter of fact, we never went anywhere without him. And almost any time we opened our hotel door he was not far away. He was after all assigned to watch us ... very closely. He seemed to magically appear

as we were about to leave our suite to go down to the lobby heading towards the dining room or to get a ride to the theatre for the show. He did his job well.

We performed each night in front of packed houses to very responsive audiences. Again, we were doing five performances each for the festival because we were hoping to catch some other shows in various performance venues around the city. After my fourth show I exited the stage - stage right, as usual - and as I entered the hallway Jong was standing there with an older gentleman. It turns out he was the "Grand Master Magician" of North Korea, head of the Magic Theatre ... which we had not heard of ... and wish we could have seen while there, but I guess time would not permit us to venture out to wherever it was. He turned to Jong, then back to me, and as Jong translated, he was extremely complimentary, commenting on my entire act and especially my manipulative skills. I wish we could have spent more time together. A few days later Mundaka and I would have the opportunity to watch the Master Magician's two sons perform magic on the Circus Theater stage.

I'm not sure which night it was, but at the conclusion of one of our shows, ALL the participants attending the Friendship Arts Festival - singers, musicians, actors, dancers and circus folks were taken by buses to the humongous central square in Pyong Yang, similar to Tiananmen Square in Beijing, where you've seen numerous rally's and events on television. When we got off the buses we were escorted a short distance to a literal sea of dancers. Tens of thousands of North Koreans all dancing to I guess traditional Korean music that flooded the massive space, pouring out of huge "MASH" like speakers mounted high atop tall poles at each corner of the square. All the female dancers were wearing traditional brightly colored costumes in dazzling reds, greens and yellows while the men wore dark jackets, ties, pants and bright white shirts. Every dance step was perfect, each movement in synch with everyone else. It seemed like a square dance without the "caller". We watched from the outskirts and were dazzled by the pure scope of the synchronistic display. At one point we turned to Jong and asked him how long the dance would go on, to which he replied, "it will end at nine o'clock". We watched more and turned to talk with some of our circus colleagues

when all at once a siren like sound permeated the air. The music stopped. We looked up, then turned toward the dance ensemble ... and they were gone. Let me say that again, THEY WERE GONE. We looked at our watches and it was nine o'clock, I was astonished. I'd just witnessed one of the greatest feats of magic I'd ever seen. The square was empty ... I had no idea where the folks went.

The next thing I remember was walking back to the bus, Mundaka and I got separated. Jong and I made it back first. I took my seat waiting for Mundaka to arrive. A couple of minutes later the bus driver closed the door and started to pull away. No Mundaka. I jumped to my feet and moved towards the front shouting over the engine noise to stop the bus because Mundaka hadn't arrived. They did stop, opened the door and a few moments later Mundaka showed up. He appeared shaken as he entered the bus. The door closed, and as we were driving back to the hotel he told me what happened. As he was returning to the bus, Mundaka was a step or two behind the rest of us. A group of men, whom he was to find out were from the PLO, approached and stopped him, then one of them said, "we understand you are from America" to which Mundaka replied, "yes, that's right". Then they proceeded to say, "we don't care for your government". Mundaka, thinking quickly on his feet, replied he was glad to be an American, who was a professional entertainer and because of his travels abroad considered himself to also be a citizen of the world, who respected other cultures and believed in everyone's right to freedom of expression, religious choice and the ability to live one's life. He had come to the DPRK to participate in and celebrate the ideals of the Friendship Arts Festival. After he finished talking to them and listening to what they had to say, they thanked him and hoped he would communicate "their concerns" to his people back home. He graciously left them and rapidly made his way back to the waiting bus.

The next day, Jong took us to the only hotel that had the ability to call or send a message back home. As we approached the door of the hotel a gentleman turned to Mundaka and with a large grin on his face said, "hello". Mundaka then introduced me to one of those men he met the night before. We shook hands, then we went inside. We sent a telegram back to our families in the USA, and to this day I remember every carefully crafted

word we wrote, the telegram was short and sweet. "We're fine. Haven't had so much fun since George Orwells - Love, The Boys". After writing the initial draft of this article I found the original form we filled out stored in an envelope marked, "North Korea".

Now let me explain ...

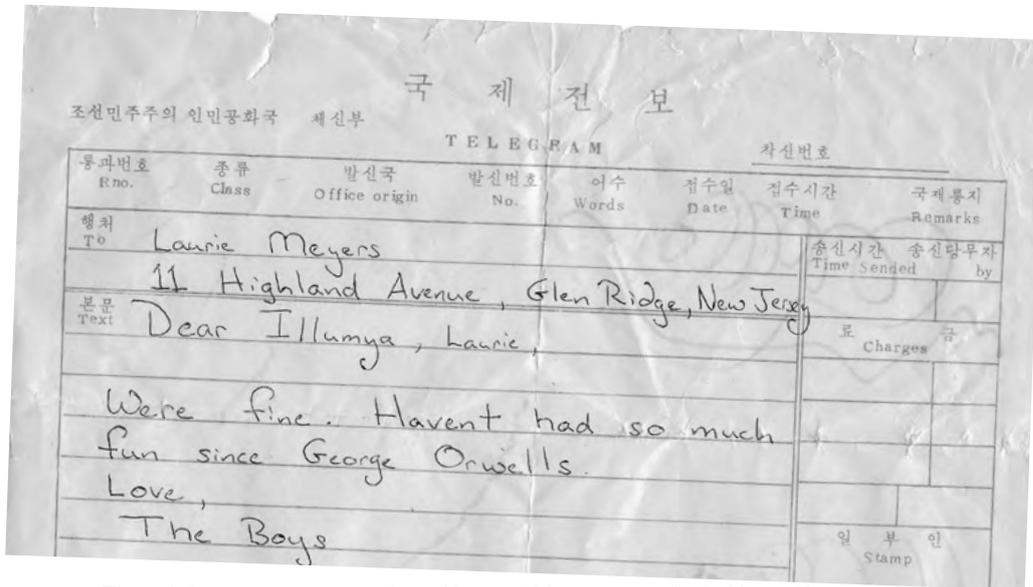
This certainly was a new experience for us, I'd been to many countries around the world, always knowing if I were to ever need assistance I could contact an American Embassy for help. I was never really isolated from a certain degree of "protection". I usually had lots of friends around me, colleagues from shows I was working and other magicians from the countries I worked in, so I always had a "comfort zone" so to speak. I'd performed with other entertainers who had survived, left, or escaped suppressed societies and I'd heard numerous stories from these artists. I'd been to China several times prior to the DPRK, but

I'd never had the feeling of being under constant surveillance, being handled, manipulated as I felt we were in North Korea. Every time we opened our door Jong was nearby, every place we visited had to be arranged, permission granted and Jong was there. This experience certainly made me appreciate being an American citizen a whole lot more and Mundaka felt the same way.

After we sent our telegram, which did make it to the USA. Mundaka and I had pre-arranged with Jong to see a DPRK Museum. As it turned out, we were the only one's to visit the peoples museum from the entire Friendship Arts attendees. Jong took us to this enormous statue-sque building, not unlike our own museums, and we were ushered inside and greeted by a beautifully dressed tour guide. I'm sorry if I keep bringing up the DPRK dress, but for each tour, each event, every "official" moment we were met by incredibly colourfully dressed guides with perfectly coiffed hair and make-up.

Never seen before photos taken by Hal during their visit. The top two middle photos show Kim Il Sung birthplace.





The original telegram sent from Hal and Mundaka while in North Korea

Their greetings, their tone, their mannerisms were beautifully succinct, practiced to the nth degree.

Our guide began the tour. As we moved down the expansive corridors we saw numerous artefacts and paintings, things we assumed were discovered over the years and carefully preserved. However, it turns out, all but a few of the original items were supposedly destroyed in the war with the Americans and most everything on display was a replica.

At one point during the tour we saw an amazing series of dragon/serpent paintings which caught our attention, we asked if we could take some photos. They said yes and so we took a few. Those were the only images we were allowed to take in the museum.

It's funny, I am trying to figure out what should, or should not be mentioned in this - true story - because I certainly don't want to put anyone down or cause an international situation. However, during the tour we were shown a display of a small Neanderthal Hut with people dressed in animal skins sitting around a fire and were told by our guide the very first human beings were discovered in North Korea. Fire and the first explosives were created in the DPRK. And the first pottery ever formed by man

was made in North Korea. I would imagine you get the drift. Everything our guide said was spoken with tremendous pride at North Korea's accomplishments and its central position in the history of the world. Each display showed an undisputed

“Fire and the first explosives were created in the DPRK.”

truth. We listened intently, looked at the exhibits, nodded and politely smiled during the tour.

Out of the blue our guide pointed to one exhibit she said was not a replica. It was in fact a few pieces of intricate, delicate pottery, exquisitely preserved from Korea's ancient past. Interestingly, right next to it was a cast iron cannon with five inch diameter spherical projectiles, which our guide explained was the world's first example of artillery, and which we were sure had to be original since they were made from thick cast iron. Again, we were told the canon and projectiles were replicas. This cer-

tainly made us wonder how the pottery survived.

Then ...

We came upon a raised, thick table, about four feet square, three feet high, covered in a green material representing grass with a few model railroad type trees placed on the surface. There was also a small wooden water wheel next to a dark blue river along with a few small huts about one and a half inches long by an inch wide and an inch tall placed on the terrain. In an approximate two foot diameter circle were twelve, three inch flower like objects, evenly spaced in this circular pattern, each with a two inch tall domed center. Standing where we were it resembled a clock model of some sort. One of the domed centers was popped open and looked like a daisy. Sticking out of the center of this opened dome was a twelve to fifteen inch tall two inch diameter, beautifully carved and painted slender figurine.

We assumed it was something out of North Korean folklore. We mentioned to our guide and Jong how wonderful this model was and that it looked like an ingenious “clock”. Our guide confirmed we were correct, however, it was a model of an actual time piece built into a field in the countryside, operated by having water diverted into and out of each chamber throughout the day. The figurines would raise and lower according to their respective time, and of course the actual device had been destroyed by the Americans during the Korean war. When the realization of what we were told hit us, we looked at each other, turned back to the guide and I clarified, this was a scale model of an actual functioning jumbo clock built into a field. The huts are models of actual farm huts in the area. Our guide confirmed everything. At that moment we turned and asked Jong if it would be possible to see the site



of this amazing time piece, whose ruins must certainly still be evident.

Unfortunately, the answer was no, nothing remained. There were no pictures of the actual clock, nor any remnants of the statues, tubes, underground chambers, anything left to indicate it's existence. Both of us merely nodded in wonderment. We finished the tour, thanked our guide, thanked Jong for arranging and taking us to the museum.

Upon returning to our hotel we started trying to figure out the actual dimensions of the clock, based on the hut. The hut we knew stood about eight feet tall, as was Kim Il Sung's hut we had just visited, and therefore in relation to the slim statue that came out of the ground, this would make the statue ninety six to one hundred and twenty feet tall. Okay, then it would need to be long enough so when it rose out of the ground a substantial portion, let's say an additional length of twenty five to fifty percent would have to remain below ground level to keep the unit stable, and therefore if we worked it out at twenty five percent, the figurine would be a minimum of One hundred and twenty feet tall (at 96 feet above ground). The chamber would have to be slightly deeper because the statue was recessed, and it would have to be water tight, lined with concrete or metal to hold the water from escaping. The system would need enough water pressure sent to and from each chamber to



move these wooden structures up and down on a (forgive the pun) timely basis, continuously ... it's possible

Since our five shows a piece had been concluded the night before our museum trip, we returned to our hotel and got ready to go out to see the first of several other performances being held around Pyongyang. I don't recall the order of the various shows we saw and I can't remember what entertainment was in each performance so I will give an overview of our DPRK theatrical experience. However, I will save the best for last.

One of the classic Korean Operatic productions Jong took us to was in a magnificent theatre. Again, huge, expansive and packed with thousands of spectators. The proscenium curtain was immense with a colossal image of Kim Il Sung in the foreground waving to his people in a field, smiling as they worked while looking at their great leader. A rainbow emanated from his feet arching into the sky as white doves flew out of the rainbow. The colors were stunning, just like most of the pictures we had seen, with bright flowers, mountains, lakes and rivers. Mundaka remarked to Jong how beautiful the back drop was and that he really liked the artwork. Jong was surprised and asked, "you like our Korean art?" Mundaka replied, "yes, this is beautiful", to which Jong replied, "Oh, I thought you Americans liked abstract art", Mundaka told him some Americans

Some of the acts from the Circus artists

“

... I thought you Americans liked abstract art.

”



*Performers from the Arts Festival - bottom right is a shot of Dameon in action
Top middle - North Korean Magicians with Mundaka and Hal*

like abstract art and many appreciate numerous styles. Jong then said, "well, we Koreans, we do not like abstract art." "Why is that?" Mundaka asked? And Jong replied, "because, as our dear beloved leader president Kim Il Sung says ... abstract art provides too many opportunities for wrong interpretation." Then Mundaka asked, "how do you know what the correct interpretation is?" To which Jong replied, "anything which our dear beloved leader, president Kim Il Sung says is good for the Korean people, this is the correct interpretation." ...

I am so glad we asked to see other shows, it truly opened our eyes. There were enchanting dance performances from several nations all wearing magnificent costumes, choreographed to the sounds of their home lands, and oft times accompanied by live musicians or orchestras

playing exotic melodies. At one of the theaters we were lucky enough to catch our Korean American dance troupe friends, whose wonderfully graceful movements flowed effortlessly across the stage floor. There were operatic numbers with casts of several hundred singers, dancers and actors all on-stage at the same time, with expansive sets, curtains and projections that created animated scenes ... all of which moved on and off the stage with unbelievable fluidity.

There were musicians playing familiar and oft times strange looking instruments with fantastic tones emanating and reverberating around the room, and yes, there were accordions too. There were choruses of several hundred folks standing behind sprawling orchestras, their harmonious voices raised while singing songs of praise and

loyalty to Kim Il Sung. It turns out this festival was actually a birthday celebration for Kim Il Sung.

We were captivated by the sights and sounds presented before the attendees, the spectacle was amazing and I suppose if you were indoctrinated into the DPRK societal beliefs you would be further entranced by all you saw. There was one moment in particular where I had to catch my breath ... I remember a beautiful woman standing on the stage singing, and as she sang others joined her. Then all of a sudden there was a humongous image/projection/curtain covering the entire stage showing a North Korean Soldier tearing an American Flag in half. Wow, that clearly sent a message. And really kept things in perspective. To this very day it is hard to get that one picture out of my head. It was incredibly uncom-

fortable to say the least and kind of put a damper on the entire Friendship Arts concept for both of us. However, since we were still in the country for a few more days we had to almost pretend, act like it never happened. But it had.

Then ...

A day or so after our last show at the circus theatre we were going back to watch one final performance from our fellow "circus-in-ians" (just made that word up ... I think I'll use it). We arrived early and Jong got us terrific seats in the center section of the arena, a little below and to the left of a special boxed off seating area. Jong told us tonight was very special as the Great Leader, Kim Il Sung, would be attending this show. What we also learned is that all of the three thousand guests were carefully selected and it was an honor of the highest order to be in attendance at this particular performance. We thought we understood what that meant, we equated it with being in a crowd seeing a US president or a sports figure, or favorite musician. However, I would have to say if you multiplied your genuine enthusiasm and love for any of your "heros" by a factor of one thousand you might come close to the rapture these people felt when in the presence of Kim Il Sung. Here's how things went. Everyone was seated, I have to assume a national anthem was playing and an announcement was made because everyone jumped to their feet as Kim Il Sung made his appearance. He was no more than thirty feet from us and we had a perfect view of him. The people, privileged workers, young and old alike, high ranking military, very old men and women - retired military, veterans of the Korean war, with medals all over their uniforms, all around us, started shouting, and crying, then bawling. There was even more shouting and wailing, increasing in volume, and as Mundaka observed ... many were shaking uncontrollably as they cried tears of pure ecstatic transcendent

joy, as they stood in Kim Il Sung's shadow. They were, in the words of one of the tiny books I brought back from North Korea, "in the presence of god", "Kim Il Sung is god", "god is Kim Il Sung". Finally after what appeared to be ten minutes or longer Kim Il Sung sat down, the crowd was seated and the crying slowly subsided. Again, it was very strange to us, something we'd never experienced before and something we'll never forget.

It's one thing to see the people of North Korea on television showing their grief as the camera rolls by, and we certainly question their motives, is it real, why would they go to this length to genuflect in public ... as we recently saw after the death of Kim Jung Il, the great leaders son. However, it has a stronger impact to be in the midst of these people whose entire existence is based on every breath, gesture, thought and word uttered by their "god" Kim Il Sung. It was the most extraordinary example of 100% crowd control we have ever experienced first hand.

The lights dimmed and the circus show began, however, this show was to be a greatly extended version and include not only our fellow performers, but feature the DPRK's own circus stars. What a show, everyone did an outstanding performance. We'd never seen any of the other acts from the front, what a blast to say the least. A couple of the jugglers we'd mentioned were using these zig-zagged eight foot tall unicycles, juggling balls, torches, jumping rope, moving about the stage with incredible speed and accuracy while blindfolded, and our Cuban friend, Raúl Pérez Martínez, blew our minds when he juggled nine rings atop his unicycle. There were other jugglers amongst the group too whose skill and presentation defied logic - all true professionals, all of them our friends.

The Chinese acrobats were a world renowned award winning troupe, whose images many of us had

seen gracing tour posters during their appearances in the USA. Their masterful execution of each stunt was astounding, their grace and power was remarkable, and what made it even more special for us was knowing that each and every one of them worked at least six to eight hours or more a day to perfect their art. Every time we entered the arena to prepare for the nights show they were there practicing, perfecting, enhancing their already honed material. They were truly brilliant artists, and a lot of fun to hang out with too, terrific people whose allegiance to their craft was amazing, along with the ability to "occasionally" let down their hair to have a good time - when permitted.

Interspersed between the acrobats were the magicians from Bulgaria, Mongolia, Finland and Russia (please forgive me if I left out anyone). Our Bulgarian friend did a wonderful comedic-deadpan routine with cigarette manipulation as his centerpiece. The Mongolian Magician, female, was at one time, if I recall correctly, a renowned acrobat, solo trapeze performer, who years earlier got off the trapeze and began performing magic effects. She had a lovely red traditional Mongolian costume and performed gorgeous silk effects. Our Norwegian/Finnish friend, Kari Salmi {?} and his wife did several illusions that elicited terrific reactions from the crowd. However, my favorite act of all the magicians I saw was our Russian counterpart, Nikolay Kontsov. He comes out wearing a silver suit with a red bow tie - very classy, terrific smile ... working "in one". I don't remember the opening, but I will never forget the body of his routine. Nikolay walks off the stage to the center of the ring, removes two large white silks from his breast pocket and proceeds to perform "Slydini's Knotted Silks" ... for three thousand people. He tied the first knot pulling it tightly, then he gingerly wrapped the dangling ends lightly around two outstretched fingers. He removed the



A young boy doing DPRK calligraphy



Hal and Mundaka with magician Kar Salmi and his wife

bundle and tossed it high into air. As the silks descended they unravelled, and he caught the ends, one in each hand, then he merely separated his hands and the silks came undone. The crowd broke into applause. He smiled and then went directly into the crowd, stage left (audiences right), so that everyone would be able to see what was going on. He never spoke, politely gestured for a woman to stand, tied a knot in the silk, then had her tie a knot on top. Then he had her pull it tight. Again he wrapped the loose ends around his fingers creating a small bundle. He had her blow on the silk bundle then tossed it really high into the air (sorry, had to use the word "really" - because it was "really" high). When the silks came down he separated the ends and the knots melted

apart ... again. Louder applause. He moved to another person and repeated everything with the addition of several more knots tied by a couple more people, pulled even tighter. And during the process getting ever increasing laughter from the crowd with mere pauses, looks and gestures. The final time, after numerous knots were tied and tightly pulled, he wrapped and tossed the bundle ... when the silks descended and magically separated the audience of three thousand onlookers laughed out loud and erupted with tremendous applause. Nikolay thoroughly entertained for over ten minutes, three thousand people, with the Slydini Silk routine. Bravo.

Then, I believe the DPRK Magicians

appeared ... the son's of the Master Magician. They presented several illusions including a zig-zag with a surprise production of four girls from the empty box. One or both of the brothers did a beautiful job with jumbo card productions and jumbo split fans. I don't recall what else they did, but they too received a very loud enthusiastic response. Again, I wish we'd had an opportunity to visit their Magic Theater, unfortunately that never came about. We did get to meet them at one point after the performance, however, our time together was very short. Mundaka and I were enjoying every moment of this show, the artists were awe inspiring. And then ... just when we'd thought we'd seen it all, the arena dimmed and way up towards the ceiling colorful



*Top Photo: arena filled with water
Bottom: Circus acts parade on stage*

lights turned on as the DPRK national circus troupe was announced. Acrobats began swinging on four trapeze bars we never knew were there, even though I know we'd looked up towards the ceiling on our first day in the arena. During the routine the trapeze "flyers," being held by the hands of the catchers, were let go, we freaked for a second, then realized they were on bungee cords, we still freaked as they got seriously close to touching the arena floor. As we watched them fall to the ground we also ... for the first time ... saw that the arena floor was missing and a huge pool of water occupied the space we'd walked so many times. The girls bounced up and then on their way down released their cords and dove straight

into the sparkling lit pool of blue water. We'd never seen anything like that before and were totally taken by surprise. The entire arena erupted with gasps and then huge applause. It turns out the arena floor was actually a carousel with three to four different surfaces, one being a pool, another ice, one solid and I think one had sawdust (?).

I can't recall the other routines performed by the DPRK Circus Troupe, but I do remember what we saw was astounding. Everything performed to perfection. The strange thing is we never even knew they were there at the Circus Arena. We never saw them rehearse. We never even heard of a DPRK Circus Troupe. And we had no idea the circular



Above is a business card from magician Nikolay Kontsov

floor we worked on for days moved beneath us. It was eye opening to say the least.

After the show we were ushered by Jong to the main lobby's grand staircase. We saw all of our "circus brethren" whom we complimented. We were the only one's to have seen anything outside the show and to have seen the other performers as well from the front. Now, no one told us what was to happen next. We were asked to line up on the stairs for an official circus group photo. Oh nooooo! We weren't really dressed for the occasion, at least I wasn't. I was wearing a tan leather jacket, with a Mickey Mouse sweatshirt underneath, you have to look real close at the group pic-

ture which will definitely be in the article. I figured "the mouse" was colorful and a nice way to promote the spirit of friendship (yeah, right). And the big surprise was Kim Il Sung standing amongst the group, dead center in the front. I don't think Mundaka and I were more than ten feet away from him. The best part is everyone from the circus group, acrobats, jugglers and of course magicians were all there, and since I can't recall everyone's name I am hoping that folks around the globe will look at the picture and help us to identify anyone they may know.

A day or so before our departure we were able to convince most of the entire circus group to come to our room for a huge party, sort of the "first ever unofficial international magic gathering in the DPRK".

Of course, prior to the party we had to go shopping for "stuff", sodas, beer, cookies, whatever. So we asked Jong to take us out to purchase some things. We took a taxi to a large department store not too far from the hotel. The first thing I recall is the same light green/blue color interior as most rooms we encountered. As we entered the store our mere presence immediately created a stir. Now granted, there were not a lot of people shopping, however, those that were in the store looked at us as though we were some sort of foreign devils. We went around to several of the counters to see what they had in their displays and noticed a good percentage of the stores shelves had very little in the way of goods. The girls behind the counters were pristine in their appearance. They all wore similar outfits, dark colored mid length dresses with shoulder straps and a bright white shirt underneath the straps. The supervisors wore something similar with a jacket. As we went from counter to counter the crowds got larger. At one point I spotted some rubber balls. I was always on the lookout for hollow rubber balls that might be good for my manipulation routine, and these

were pretty light weight and cost less than \$.10 (ten cents) per ball ... I think I purchased a dozen. We saw instruments for sale, some toys, fabric, a few household items, but not very much. Then, we spotted what we were looking for, candy, cookies, soda and beer. We figured that if most of the magi, jugglers and acrobats showed up, including some from the Chinese Acrobatic Circus, we would have about 25 people. So we purchased accordingly and I think the total cost was under ten dollars for everything. I believe the crowd was astounded by what was purchased. It really wasn't a lot for the size crowd we hoped for, but we practically cleared out the shelves in that section of the store.

We decided to walk back to the hotel, it was a nice afternoon and there was almost no one on the street. I recall vividly as we walked and talked to Jong that we started to sing the "Sloop John B" - in two part harmony. If you know the song, then you will also remember the chorus line, "I wanna go home" ... Jong laughed all the way to the hotel and never got that we really did want to go home.

I should mention that Jong asked us all sorts of questions about America, our lives, our likes, our dislikes. It was very interesting to say the least to have him show such fascination with the American culture. I don't know if those were his questions, or he was told what to ask us. And we in turn asked him some questions. Most of his answers were prefaced by "the great leader said ..." or "the son of the great leader says we should ..." So it was impossible to find out his likes, his dislikes, his thoughts. It just seemed Jong and others we met were content to echo the doctrine they were taught from birth. And, we were both curious how he learned to speak and understand english. It turns out he studied in Cuba of all places, go figure.

Both of us brought books for the flight to and from China and the DPRK and Jong asked us about those as well, curious as to what we were reading, what kind of books they were. Who wrote them? Did all Americans read them? Mundaka as usual was reading his Bible, and Jong's question gave him the opportunity to share his faith in Jesus Christ, which was then, and is even more so now, the primary passion of his life. Jong listened to what Mundaka had to say, as though hearing these things for the first time. For Mundaka this was his most significant moment in North Korea.

When we got returned to the Pelonggang Hotel we went up to our rooms to get everything ready for the party. We found some plates and glasses in our kitchen along with a couple of platters. We opened up all of the pastries we'd purchased. I don't recall too much except the cookies were not quite what we expected, more like brittle

crackers, kind of tasteless. But, it wasn't the taste that mattered, it was all about the get together. Everyone we expected, and then some additional circus folks showed up. We were delighted that several of the Chinese acrobats were able to attend. We talked, ate, laughed, drank DPRK Beer (at least that's what I think we drank) and then ... all of the magicians wound up voluntarily doing a little closeup magic for everyone. Most folks sat on the floor around a small table. We had a close-up pad, some cards, coins, thin cookies, napkins, silks ... a smorgasbord of magical delights. And hence, we had the first ever unofficial international magic gathering in the DPRK. This little gathering, and we wish the North Korean magicians had been able to attend as well, represented the universal language of magic at it's best. Every magician there was different, each had a speciality with varying levels of ability, all brought something magical to the table. Everyone par-

ticipated and was truly appreciated by all.

It was a very, very special evening for us and I hope for everyone there.

After the party, the following day we started packing for our trip home. At least we thought we'd be leaving in a day or two. The grand closing ceremony and a huge feast was being presented that night, as all the Friendship Arts Festival attendees gathered in the first great hall we visited at the beginning of the event. This time, as agreed upon, Mundaka was the leader. He was given a vase with flowers and some other items of thanks. We were both, along with all our circus brethren, presented with a very nicely bound document declaring our participation in the 1991 Friendship Arts event as we walked across the enormous stage. We took lots of photos of our friends (a great many out of focus, hey, we were magicians - not photographers), and



Photos from the "first ever un-official international magic gathering in the DPRK".

exchanged lots of hugs and well wishes for everyone's safe journey home.

After the feast we returned to our hotel ... then ... spent several days trying to exit the DPRK.

There simply weren't enough flights out. I remember we went to the airport a couple of times and finally we made it to the exit towards the plane. Jong shook our hands, gave us a hug and smiled as we left North Korea on our way, first to China and then to the USA.

Just a quick note ...

Upon reaching China we found out we were going to be staying there for several days as well, again, not enough flights out. Our North Korean Beijing handler met us at the airport, got us to a hotel and told us he would let us know when we would be leaving, he thought in a day or so. Therefore, we went to the great wall of China, which if you've been there is pretty spectacular. By the time we finished the Great Wall trip we had just enough time to climb a hill overlooking the forbidden city. I'd been to the Forbidden City before, but had not climbed this hill. Magnificent is the word. It was mind boggling to see the structure from up above.

The following day we went to the Forbidden City and spent the entire day walking from the front gates to the Emperor's garden at the rear. There were so many areas to visit in the city, each one more spectacular than the previous. And after you walked forward to the many grand halls there were side rooms and corridors filled with incredible treasures.

When we returned to our hotel we were informed that the following day we would be leaving China, heading for home.

I don't recall the flight, but I do remember we both kissed the ground when we touched down in New York. It's not that we didn't appreciate what we'd experienced in the DPRK, it was an amazing journey. We realized how fortunate we were to be Americans, to have the freedoms we take for granted on a daily basis.

As we got up and walked through the gate to our waiting families ... I looked around to see if Jong was somewhere nearby ... smiling.



*Closing ceremony where Hal and Mundaka meet officials and presented with an award for their services.
Bottom photo - Mundaka, Jong and Hal with award and vase.*

This story is true, written by Hal Meyers (aka Dameon) with input, guidance, and clarification from his dear friend Mundaka Lee, who remembered in great detail several pivotal moments of their North Korean adventure. Hal would also like to thank some of his close magic friends, including Peter Samelson, Charlie Del Rosso, Bob Fitch, Mike King, Leland Faulkner and Paul Romhany, all who enthusiastically read the numerous re-writes and offered magical suggestions.

... and an additional thank you to a very special friend ... who shall remain a mystery, why, because ... for his insight and suggestions.

[TO SEE MORE PHOTOS FROM THE TRIP CLICK HERE](#)

ABOUT HAL MEYERS:

Hal Meyers - Hal had two passions as a "kid" from New Jersey; one, sleight of hand magic and two, acoustic music. Hal was drawn to the likes of Simon and Garfunkel, Harry Chapin, Don McClean, the Beatles, CSNY and especially Pete Seeger. He taught himself a finger picking style of guitar and sang lot's of tunes. He practiced both magic and guitar night and day for years. In college magic took a short hiatus and guitar came to the forefront along with a newly acquired instrument, the banjo. He was hooked, but wasn't in to "bluegrass" so had a hard time finding the "right" stuff to play. Upon graduating from college he toured the globe for over 20 years performing, "MAGIC" in shows and reviews. In 2003 he moved to Maine where he met the "Men o' Nevah" and they let him sit in on a few jam sessions, then asked if he'd like to play with the group. It took two seconds to respond. Hal plays banjo, sings and attempts to harmonize.

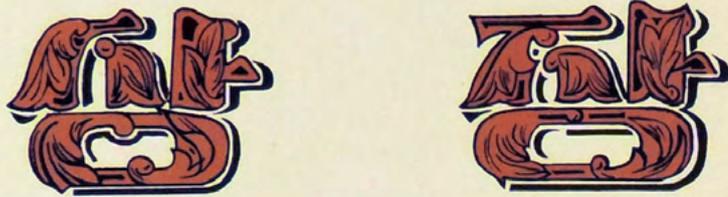


Hal Meyers



Mundaka Lee

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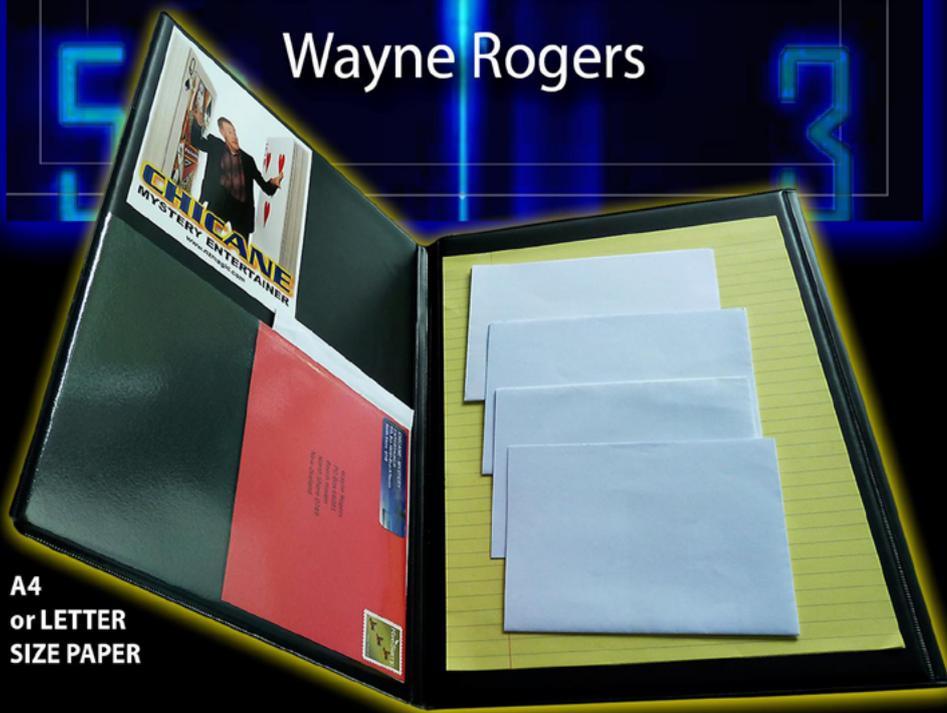
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STEVE
SPILL

“BACK IN 5TH
GRADE I WAS A
REGULAR AT A
SECRET MAGIC
STORE IN
HOLLYWOOD”



THE LEGEND OF CARDINI LIVES ON

STEVE SPILL

Back in fifth grade I was a regular at a secret magic store in Hollywood. Not a street level store with a sign, it was hidden upstairs in an office building. I'm talking about Joe Berg's Magic Shop circa 1965. That's where the late great Harry Blackstone Senior fooled me with a card trick, and where I first heard of Cardini, the superstar vaudeville magician.

The store's owner, Joe Berg, was a pudgy little man who was a very clever inventor of magic tricks, but the world's worst businessman. People wanted to buy stuff, but...

"I'm sorry, that's not for sale."

"No, this just doesn't fit your personality."

"...beyond your skill level!"

"...isn't for you..."

I wanted a lit cigarette dropper... a device that hung under

your coat and secretly fed lit cigarettes into your hand. It was a rusted used prop, covered in dust, but Joe wouldn't sell it to me because he thought I was too young to play with lit cigarettes. Herewith is the exchange that led to this fond remembrance.

Joe said, "No, no, no Steve. No can do! Ten year old boys don't smoke cigarettes. It's all wrong for you. Forget it. Go with this Appearing Bouquet of Feather Flowers..."

"I'm not a girl. I don't want feather flowers," I think I said, "I want the lit cigarette dropper." After a few minutes of pleading, it was apparent Joe wouldn't change his mind, but I had a plan...

Every once in a while Joe had to take his wife to the doctor or for some other reason couldn't be at the store. And then Joe's son,

Ronnie Berg, was in charge. Ronnie would sell anything to anyone at any time. After what seemed like a million visits, one day I walked in and Ronnie was minding the store. Here now is a close-to-verbatim conversation I had with the man who introduced me to the brilliant work of Cardini.

Ronnie said, "...perfect for you. When a young boy smokes it makes him look more mature and sophisticated, like a man of the world! And this lit cigarette dropper is in a class by itself! It's a handcrafted masterpiece created by an English artisan for Cardini. Cardini! The highest paid ever, superstar vaudeville magician. It's the only one of its type in existence."

I had no idea who Cardini was, but I was very excited, I thought... Cardini owned this and he was a superstar! He touched it and then I touched it. Soon I'd be the highest paid ever superstar of magic. Then Ronnie told me...

"The late great Cardini was friends with my father, and on his deathbed, Cardini gave Joe this treasure. I wish we had another one so you could get a spare. But this is the one and only one on the face of the Earth."

And then to make sure I heard it, Ronnie told me again who Cardini was, repeated the deathbed story, and then made the sale. I was trembling! I possessed Cardini's Very Own Personal Lit Cigarette Dropper! Cardini, the former vaudeville superstar! I thought, it's like in the movies!

Twenty-five years later at a Magic Castle swap meet I saw another lit cigarette dropper, identical in every way to the one I owned. And the guy said... "There's a great story that goes with that..."



Joe Berg photo courtesy Stevens Magic Emporium



On his deathbed, Cardini gave Joe Berg this lit cigarette dropper. There's not another one like it ... Cardini must have been awfully busy on his deathbed.

Let me guess, on his deathbed, Cardini gave Joe Berg this lit cigarette dropper. There's not another one like it. We both cracked up when I told him I got the same Ronnie Berg story. That Cardini must have been awfully busy on his deathbed.

What's even funnier and more significant to me is the fact that Ronnie gave me the deathbed story in 1965, but Cardini didn't actually pass away until 1973. When I think about it now, that's a fact that contributes to the elevation of this incident to an enduring, practical, and valuable magical lesson on how to lie to someone's face.

The one and only time I used the cigarette dropper was at a teenage girl's party. The girls were all several years older than me and I was excitedly looking forward to impressing them by making lit cigarettes appear at my fingertips.

Inside the dropper was a little battery with a glow plug that kept cigarettes burning so that when you made one appear you could instantly puff on it and real smoke would come out. I had the dropper

hidden under an open vest above my waistband.

My left hand provided the perfect misdirection as my right hand secretly reached for a lit cigarette. At the same fraction of an instant, with a deep breath I sucked in my stomach, as a result, a space opened at the top of my trousers, the gimmick jiggled, I fumbled, and the red-hot burning cherry of a lit cigarette fell down my pants and lodged itself in my underwear.

My privates were burning, I was uncomfortably wiggling around, and smoke was coming out of my pants. I was embarrassed, but fortunately the girls laughed and seemed to think my smoking pants and wiggly little dance were all part of the act. I had never had a more attentive or appreciative audience in my young career.

Until then, I had no idea that I could survive such a major gaffe. I survived, but the fact is, later I suffered with a big bubbly blister that stung when it popped. I guess Joe was right. I was too young to play with lit cigarettes. But the legend of Cardini lives on.



"My privates were burning, I was uncomfortable wiggling around, and smoke was coming out of my pants."



1

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RAY ANDERSON & ESTHER'S FOLLIES

Ray Anderson and 'Esther's Follies'

Nick Lewin says Ray Anderson is one of the funniest performers he's seen.

A MASTER CLASS IN SHOWBIZ

I recently enjoyed a magical revue so much that I am counting the minutes until I get to see it again, and I seldom feel that way about a show. Welcome to the world of Ray Anderson and 'Esther's Follies.'

As a fully paid-up, card-carrying magician I have always obeyed the first commandment of magic and never reveal a secret. I just hate to do it—so I don't. In this month's column I am going to flat out break this code. I am going to give away one of the best-kept secrets

in magic. Well it may not be a strict secret but it is such a great show that I just have to spread the word.

In the heart of beautiful 6th Street in Austin, Texas is a historic little theatre located at number 521. It is the Cactus Theatre and the home of 'Esther's Follies,' which in my opinion is one of the smartest, funniest and coolest revue shows to be found anywhere. Featured in the show is Ray Anderson who has my vote as the funniest comedy illusionists in the world. I love the revue show and I love Anderson's contribution. Most of all—I'm just crazy about the organic manner they have been combined together. Let me begin by talking about the show and then I will

tell you a little more about Ray.

In the 30s and 40s the Cactus Theatre was owned by legendary vaudeville performer Richard 'Skinny' Pryor, but the 'Esther's Follies' band of entertainers started to create a legend in the Spring of 1977 when Michael Shelton and Shannon Sedwick leased the property. Thirty-five years later it is a Texas classic and continues going from strength to strength. 'Esther's started as an experimental and rather bohemian collection of performances and sketches and has achieved a commercial gloss that in no way negates those original elements.

The name, décor and theme of the show are reflections of the great swimming and movie star Esther Williams. The show is a collection of political skits, sketches, singing, dancing, comedy and magic; that packs so much entertainment into 90 minutes that it is almost a feat of magic itself. It is as timeless as vaudeville and as topical as the morning news. The uniquely exotic theatre holds 280 audience members and is almost always filled to capacity. This is quite an achievement for a show that relies almost entirely on word of mouth rather than advertising or promotion to fill the house.

Each night, the entertainment spills right out from the showroom and onto bustling 6th Street. The rear wall of the stage has two large windows that reveal all the action going on in front of the theatre. Every single inch of the theatre is also utilized to present a good-natured show that has the audience howling from start to finish. There are more surprises packed into the staging of this show than I would have believed possible.

The team of players present their entertainment at such a whirlwind pace that you have to really focus to fully grasp what a talented bunch they are. I can't speak highly enough about their individual and collective skills. Original owner Shannon Sedwick is still performing in the show and is a joy to behold. She sets the tone of versatility and talent that is the keynote of the troupe. I must give a special shout out to Ray's lead assistant Ellana Kelter whose radiant presence and animated facial expressions add immeasurably to the show.

The featured entertainer in the show is Ray Anderson, who has spent thirty years in the





The theatre was jam packed when we visited so book up those tickets in advance ...



show, polishing his illusion, comedy, manipulative and audience participation into one of the most carefully constructed performances in the magic world. There isn't a dull moment when Anderson is onstage. He has hit the point where there isn't a wasted word or glance in his presentation; everything has a reason and a pay-off.

Performing immaculate and inventive large-scale illusions, or parodying the genre, it is truly an object lesson in performing skills to watch as Anderson does his thing---Ray quite simply 'owns' the stage. When Anderson brings two assistants

onstage to participate in his show, it is a primer in show biz savvy to see how they are treated as guest stars and become a major factor in the fabric of the show. The look of delight on their faces as they return to their seats in the audience says it all.

Anderson was born in Victoria, Texas just two hours from Austin and started his magical journey at the age of 8 when he received his first magic boxed set. Within four years he was staging shows in his home. Ray recalls that his first exposure to magic was as a very young child when driving with his family; using

her magical abilities his sister could cause the traffic signals to change color by snapping her fingers. Eventually he realized she was looking at the other side of the traffic signals to anticipate the light change; by then he was hooked!

Like many youngsters in that era, Anderson became a firm fan of fellow Texan Mark Wilson and his television appearances. He still remembers his delight watching the young Greg Wilson performing a billiard ball routine alongside his parents. Ray continued practicing his magic and mastering his future

craft. As a left-hander he had to battle with the 'righty concentric' world of magic instructions. It was a battle he was to ultimately win with style.

The great Sid Caesar and Imogene Coca were important influences on the young Ray Anderson, and he was influenced in the development of his performing by the great sketch comedy that he watched on television. This gave an interesting slant to his skills as a magician that is still very evident in his show.

Anderson began performing both close-up and stand-up magic on a regular basis within Texas and it was obvious where his future career lay. He attended the University of Texas in Austin and studied theatre arts. It was during this time, about 1982, that he first attended a performance of 'Esther's Follies' to watch his friend Mario Lorenz perform.

One night Ray traveled to the little theatre, in the 'bad side of town,' and was shocked to discover a long line of patrons waiting in the alley to enter the theatre! After the show he met the co-founders of the show Michael Shelton and Shannon Sedwick and pitched his services. Two weeks later he was making his debut in the show.

In a perfect world he would have wowed everyone with this initial performance and become an instant smash in the show. However, on his first appearance he didn't bring down the house and received a 'don't call us, we'll call you...' from Michael and Shannon. This rejection didn't work for Ray, who went to work on customizing and re-plotting his show especially for the venue. He created a 'cigarette in dress' illusion that utilized those unique windows onstage that looked out onto 6th Street. When he returned to appear in the show a second time, he was a huge success and his synergistic relationship with 'Esther's...' had formally begun.

For three years Anderson appeared in the revue as Special Guest before heading to Pittsburgh and focusing on his comedy skills. However, when he returned to Austin for family visits he always fitted in a guest shot in 'Esther's...' and never lost his connection with the show. Twenty-two years ago Ray realized that he would rather live in Austin than anywhere else and returned there to begin one of the great runs in magic.

Due to their uniquely visual nature Anderson started to develop a series of illusions especially designed for his showroom home. Over the years he has presented over 30 different illusions as part of his 'Esther's...' repertoire. He is currently featuring a spectacular 'shadow

box' style illusion (designed by Mark Kalin), a 'stretching the girl,' 'assistant's revenge,' 'fountain levitation,' and a hysterical 'shooting a dog thru the window' that has to be seen to be believed. Every one of these effects has got original and personal touches that only come from non-stop performing and thinking about those performances.

The spirit of improvisational and experimental entertainment that was the basis of the original 'Esther's Follies' has found a perfect partner in the carefully crafted and presented magic of Ray Anderson. Watching the show will inspire and motivate any magician who sits in the audience and I highly recommend anyone interested in performing comedy illusions to hold off until they observe the way Anderson was mastered the art form.

If you are visiting Austin it is a no brainer for any magician to catch this show as there is a huge amount to learn from it. If you are in the mood to laugh and learn--then fly into Austin and catch this show regardless of where you live. It is worth the journey. I have been playing Vegas since the '70s and living here for nearly 20 years and this show was more fun and superior to any magic/revue that I have seen in Sin City.

If you chance to find yourself in Austin (not many finer cities to be in) then contact the box office at <http://www.esthersfollies.com> and line up your tickets. The show plays five times a week with one show on Thursday and two shows on Friday and Saturday. The theatre was jam packed when we visited so book up those tickets in advance—you won't be sorry!

PHOTO OF
ESTHERS FOLLIES



MENTALISM:

AN ADVENTURE IN MYSTICISM

Part Three in a Series by P. Craig Browning

THE BASICS...just what are the basics one should know if they are going to call themselves a "Mentalist"?

99% of the time a novice will be pointed to Corinda and the Annemann texts and in some instances the Karl Fulves self-working books, and while these are very important guides, they really don't answer the question outside of saying "start here". But let's look at what skills most empower the serious student of Mentalism.

Reading Skills . . . and do note that I didn't say "Cold Reading" in that said concept has been bastardized in the past 15-20 years, moved a long way from where it stood for generations. Nonetheless, being able to deliver solid Readings is the #1 Must when it comes to proper Mentalism, even for those that don't think they'll ever do a Reading.
Why?

Because it's what the public expects from us; it's what deals with their favorite topic – themselves!

Even for those working outside the Metaphysical environs, being able to deliver a decent Reading is something you will find to be practical and so, this must be the #1 skill we need to focus on.

Ideomotor Skills . . . which actually do go well beyond Muscle Reading, Pendulums, Dowsing & Table Tipping. This is one of the most priceless skills you can cultivate in that it lends to you an amazing sense of improvisational opportunity. What we forget is that this skill includes learning about Body Language and "tells" in people – all the natural subconscious tics and motions that give us feedback that 99.9% of laymen are blind to and oblivious of how it can be exploited.

Starting with standard Muscle Reading and Pendulum work one can evolve quite quickly if he/she focuses and honestly wants to become a circumstantially aware psychic, for lack of a better term. After all, Psychics are "sensitive" to their environment, picking up on and discerning those finer energies that most people ignore or don't notice... right?

While it is a very in depth course of study, one can easily adapt legitimate techniques to their basic understanding of the ideomotor situation by investing into the FACS system or taking workshops on body language, NLP theory, and as I've mentioned, the study of classic "tells" found in gambling and street hustles.

The more aware we become when it comes to this arena the less dependent we need to be when it comes to having physical things to work with, not that such a practice is a bad thing, only that our ability to work without such items goes further to creating a reputation as a Miracle Worker.

The Memory Arsenal . . . as I call it, is the next most important skill set we need to cultivate and includes everything from a basic mnemonic type skill to codes, branching anagrams, psychological & demographic based "forces" and more! Again, I'm looking at the idea of purity and our ability to work "prop free". The fact that we are able to deliver Psychic-like phenomena

at the drop of the proverbial hat is what distinguishes us from the typical trickster that believes his ability of doing a poorly executed Center Tear and using a memorized script for Readings is all one needs for being a "Mentalist" pardon my candor, but let's face some facts here.

In all truth you need little other than these 3 chief skills to become an effective Mystic/Mentalist. If you study the act structure of most of the more successful Mental acts over the past century + you will find that the bulk of their performance relied on little other than these three areas followed by;

Billet Work . . . and when I say this I don't just mean the act of swapping one paper for another and coping a read, but rather everything to do with little bits of paper/business cards in that the Billet Work of today is far more spansive than our forefathers ever imagined. It is my belief that every honest student of Mentalism knows a minimum of 6 billet switches, 6 different ways by which to cop the read and of course that handful of "nuance" factors;

- The One Ahead/Behind Technique
- Peeks & Tears

~The One Ahead/Behind Principles are requisite when it comes to various demonstra-

tions of precognition and divination, the Q&A being one very important example in that it is arguably the single most powerful routine a Mentalist can do; a skill that has literally started religions and then some. That's not something you can say about the majority of magical effects, though many have had a supporting role in such things.

~ Peeks & Tears are relatively new to the craft, the pro-generator being the famed Center Tear followed many years later by Millard Longman's famed Acidus Novus peek. One would be reasonably safe in saying that Peeks didn't become a part of billet work until the early and mid-1980s which happens to correspond to the various tear methods out there, like PINK, The Perfect Center Tear and Docc Hilford's Dance of Shiva.

The majority of people that read about these systems tend to forget that they are TECHNIQUES and not effects. Obviously this takes us back to my comment about magician's that see the Center Tear as the "beat all" of the craft when in truth very, very few ever realize the real power of the technique because they are busy drawing crystal balls, TV or Movie Screens, etc. so as to justify the writing. I'll be doing an article some time down the road that deals with this particular method so I'll not rant too much at this point, but the fact of the matter is, the Center Tear is a terrible piece of business in the hands of most. If however, you

ever saw it used in the manner those evil Spiritualist used it, you would find yourself more than willing to believe, given the psychological disconnects they take time to create.

This is the problem with most tears however and to some degree, peeks; too many restrictions which makes the process a bit hokey – illogical. But as I said, this is something we'll be exploring in a future issue. For the moment we need to just focus on the fact that we all need to know at least two good tears, and when it comes to peeks I strongly encourage you to know the basics behind Acidus Novus and if you cannot find a legal copy of Obsidian Oblique, learn Millard's Acidus Globus. Sadly, Obsidian Oblique was a very limited release that has seen a horrific level of pirating over the years. I really discourage people from using the method unless they obtain a legit copy of the manuscript and use Acidus Globus if you cannot find one. The point being that both gives you a full peek of the entire slip vs. a partial peek of one small area. There's a great deal more we need to discuss when it comes to "The Basics" but I trust that I've given you all some serious food for thought. We'll have more to cuss and discuss in the next issue.

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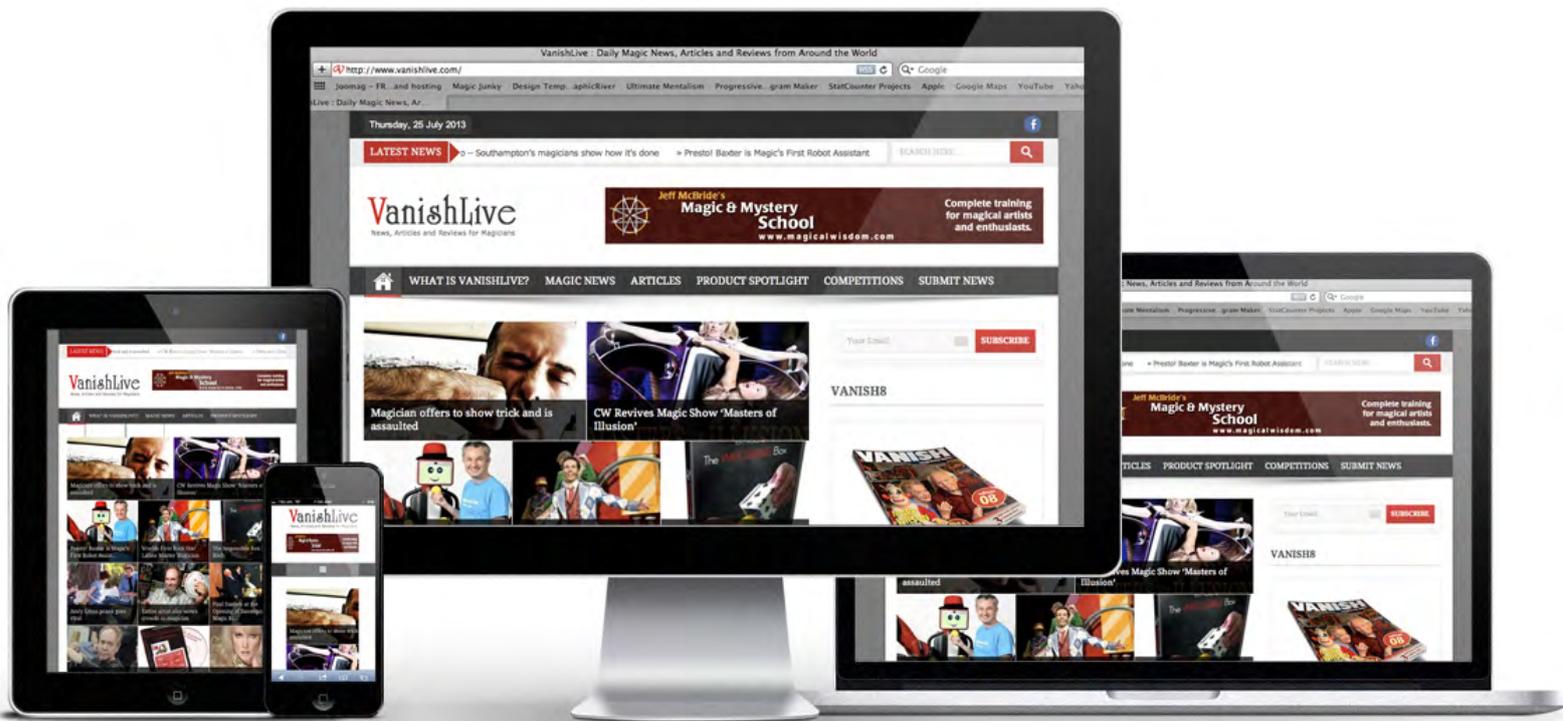
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Paul Romhany and Mick Peck are both professional magicians who set up the website for those who wanted to get VANISH MAGAZINE on a daily basis. Paul is editor and creator of VANISH MAGAZINE and VanishLIVE is under the VANISH umbrella.

Mick is based out of Auckland, New Zealand and is also editor of Inside Entertainment Magazine as well as curator of Vanishlive.com.



OUR EXPERTISE

We offer the same excellent articles by professional performers who write for VANISH Magazine including; Bizzaro, Jeff McBride, Eugene Burger, Chipper Lowell, Lee Alex, Banachek, Paul Romhany, Wayne Rogers, Richard Webster, Charles Bach to name a few.

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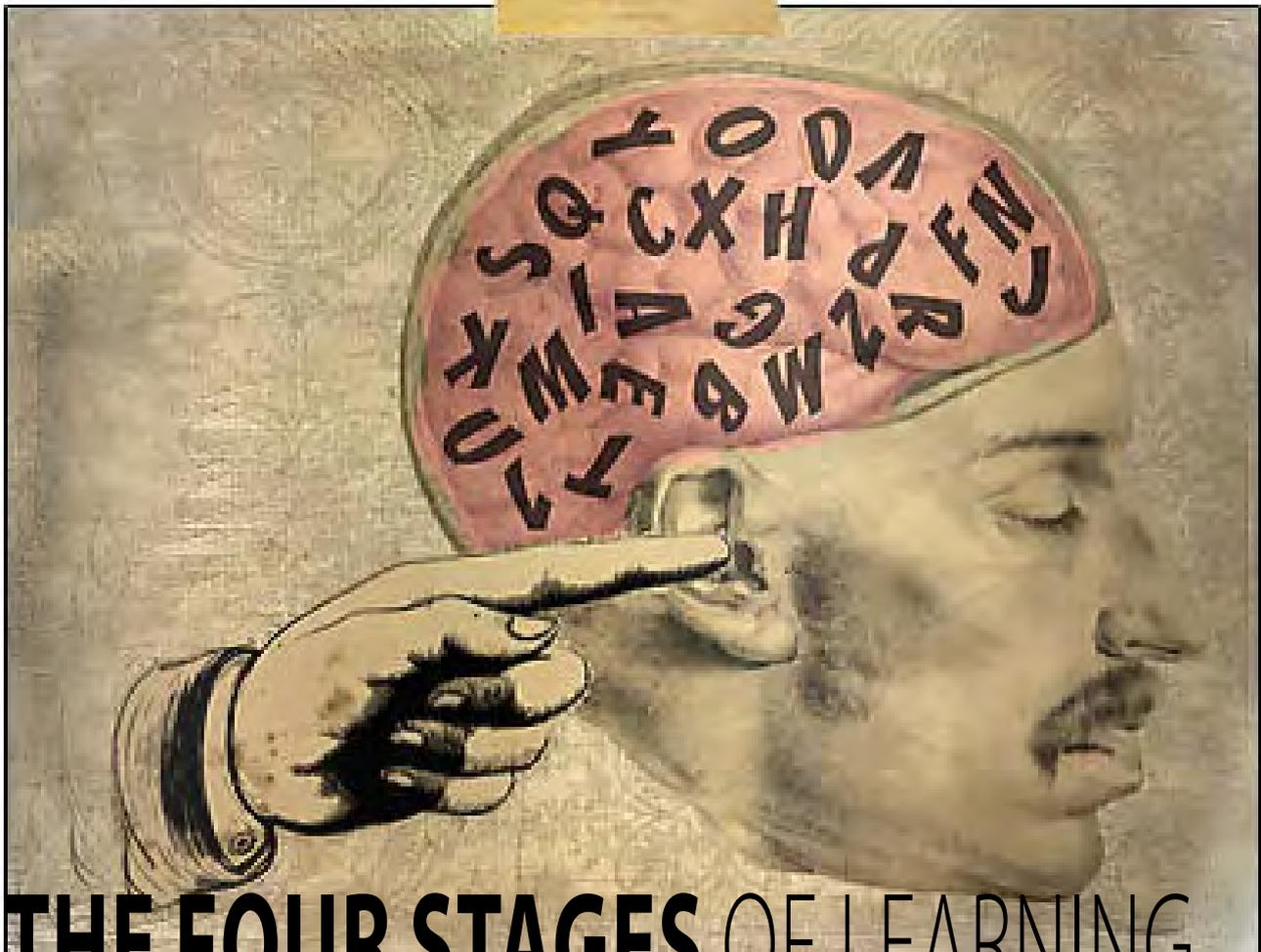
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THE FOUR STAGES OF LEARNING

MICK PECK

"If you're aware of the four stages of learning, it's much easier to take control of them.."

The Four Stages of Learning, or the Conscious Competence Model, is a psychological theory developed in the 1970s. The concept is that we each go through a series of four stages when learning a new skill.

The good news—and why I think this is relevant and of interest to Vanish readers—is that if you're aware of and understand the four stages of learning, it's much easier to take control of them! If you know where you are on your path to mastery you can hopefully save yourself some frustration and make your learning more enjoyable and, with any luck, easier.

Think of some examples from your

own life as you go through the list.

Stage 1: Unconscious Incompetence

Typically learners display excitement, enthusiasm and even over-confidence because they don't know that they don't know. An example would be a guitarist who has learnt a few simple chords and suddenly thinks he's God's Gift to the Guitar. He might, for instance, know nothing about feel or rhythm, but at this first stage of learning he doesn't know that he doesn't know! A kid might wander into a magic shop, buy a bunch of tricks, and then rush off to get a business card printed saying "experienced magician available for all occasions".

We've all seen the god-awful auditions on American Idol and their shock-horror at being told that they don't have good voices.

In my younger years I was involved with martial arts, and it was always the newbies that would be out in the carpark after the lesson trying to do flips and show off with flying kicks, despite only coming to one or two classes. The expression "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing" describes the Unconscious Incompetence stage perfectly.

Stage 2: Conscious Incompetence

In the second stage the learner knows that they don't know. They recognize that they are out of their comfort zone and that the skill may be more difficult than they originally anticipated. In other words, they start to see themselves as the rest of the world sees them. It's in this stage that the learner may become frustrated or want to give up. For teachers, it's important to build confidence with continued mentoring and coaching in this stage.

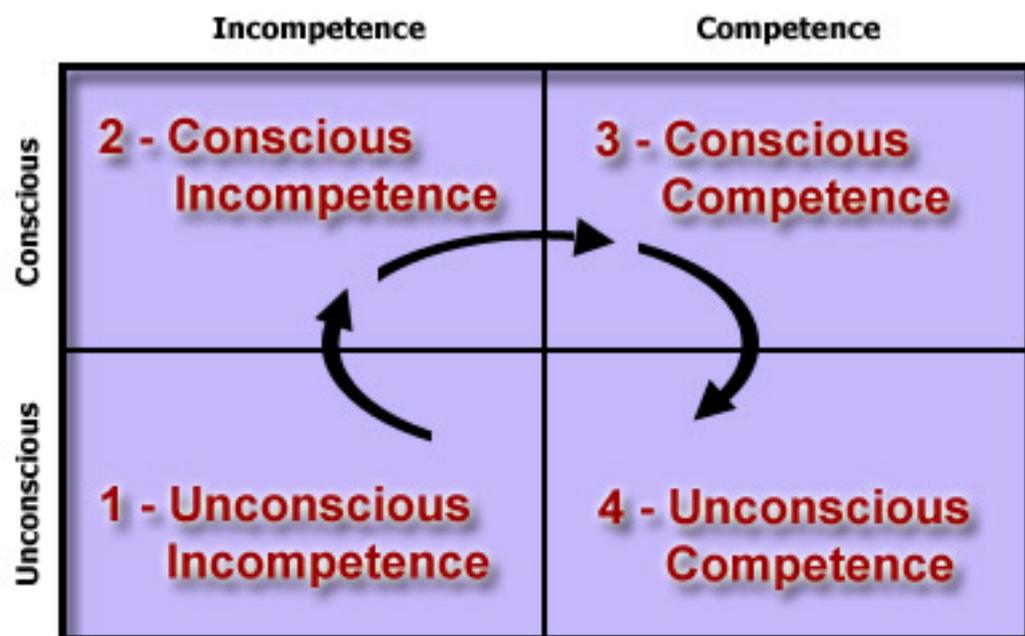
Making mistakes is integral to the learning process in the Conscious Incompetence stage. No learning of a skill can happen without passing through this initial frustration, because if you're not clear on exactly what it is that you want to achieve, you won't be able to work towards it.

Stage 3: Conscious Competence

The learner knows that they know. An example would be a child tying their laces who has to carefully concentrate on what they're doing so that they don't make errors. In time, through experience, the task becomes less challenging. Another example would be playing a piece of music and having to concentrate on what chord changes are coming up, or acting in a play and having to think ahead so you remember the next line. Because the task is serviceable at this level, many people chose to stop learning at the Conscious Competence stage.

Stage 4: Unconscious Competence

In this stage of learning, learners don't know that they know. The task becomes so automatic that they don't even accept that they're doing anything special or something that once challenged them. Everyday examples would be riding a bike or driving a car, things that are done automatically without thinking—let alone appreciating—that they once were challenging. The masters of their craft have reached the level of Unconscious Competence—picture B.B. King playing a blues solo, or Robin Williams being able to go off on an unrehearsed tangent and make people laugh. Ironically it's at this stage that onlookers often think "oh, they're just a natural" or "they were born with it". No, they put in tens of thousands of hours to achieve Unconscious Competence!



Conscious Competence Learning Matrix

It's in this final stage where the learner may experience the most growth, because they feel creative, intuitive, and are able to think outside of the box. However, it is also at this stage where major mistakes can occur because there is a greater tendency to take risks, shortcuts, and get lazy. If you're stuck in a creative rut, you're probably in stage four. We also tend to undervalue our efforts in this stage because it's easy to forget about all of the hard work it took to get here! This is why it's critical to occasionally take stock of our own skills and talents. See what other people see in you and accept your own skills as they really are.

We are constantly moving throughout the four stages of learning at any given time in our lives. We may be in stage four of one aspect of our career, but stage one at another. Realistically recognising the stages that we are in can help us make informed choices.

The Conscious Competence Model helps us in several ways – it gives us reassurance in the early stages, and helps us avoid complacency in the final ones. It's also an invaluable teaching tool as it allows us to see where others are on their own journey through learning.

Good luck on your path.

- Mick Peck, Auckland, New Zealand
<http://www.MickPeckMagic.com>



FRANKLY DISILLUSIONED REVIEW

"This would definitely have to be one of the best books about somebody's career in magic I have read in a very long time. This is a true account of the good, bad and ugly of show business from a husband and wife who have entertained around the world.

There were stories in here that made me question how they could carry on in this business, but Dean's passion for magic just kept pushing them to the next job. Having been in the business myself full time over 25 years I can relate to all the moments of horror and the good times they had.

They both became well known after their appearance on Britains Got Talent, but not for the right reasons. In here you will finally read their account and how they were treated and lessons we can all learn about putting ourselves forward for these type of shows.

It was so refreshing to read something that explained exactly how this business is, warts and all. Far too often we only get to hear all the glamour, which gives the wrong impression of what we as magicians go through. This is one book I would like to see do well not only with magicians but also the public. It would be a real eye opener for them as to what artists go through to do something they have spent a lifetime working on. This is an easy read and once you start you won't want to put it down. It's the perfect book to read on your Kindle or iPad, but is also now available as a paperback. When I finished reading this I was compelled to write to Dean and thank him for sharing his stories. If you are new to magic then this is A MUST READ to find out what life can be like if you one day choose to become a full time professional.

As Dean says, it isn't all glamour. The professionals out there who have their own experiences will LOVE this book because you will relate to what they went through. There are stories in here that really made my hair stand on end and I wondered how I would react if I were in the position.

From stories about working cruise ships to strip night clubs and television shows this book covers it all."

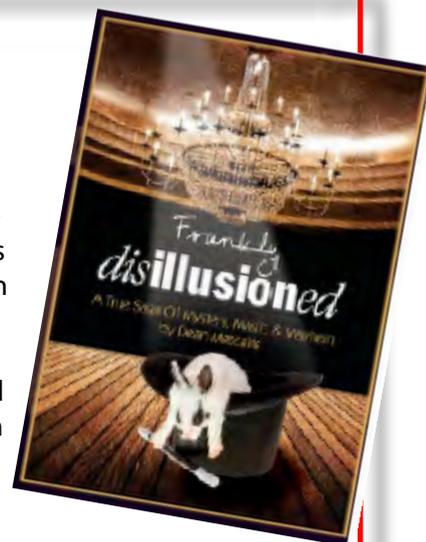
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JOEY PIPIA

An actor who doesn't listen says his 'next line' without having a truthful reaction to the line just spoken to him.

LISTEN UP

Listening is important in life, and should be part of your magic arsenal. Listening? Yes, listening to your audience, and listening to your onstage helpers. This article will show three examples from working pros who've reminded me that listening is key to great performance.

An actor who doesn't listen says his "next line" without having a truthful reaction to the line just spoken to him. When this happens, the performance is dry and lifeless. When a magician says his "next line" or does his "next trick" without listening, the moment can be just as dry, just as lifeless. Listen, though, and your performance

comes alive.

Not Just Clowning Around

I've had the pleasure to work along side Avner, the famous physical comedy artist. Avner won an OBIE when he was Off-Broadway. His show features physical comedy and magic. If you ever get a chance to see his work, do it. I had an experience with him that I'd like to share. It's embarrassing to a certain extent, as it reveals an example of me not listening to my audience. Several years ago, Avner and I were on the same bill at a festival, and this interchange has been with me ever since. I try to remind myself of the lesson I learned. I was performing my version of the Anderson Newspaper Tear with the

flash restoration.

After the restoration the audience burst into applause, cheering. The routine, though, says you're supposed to page through the paper to "show" that it's unprepared. So, I always gestured to the audience to hold their applause until I paged through the paper. Then I let them applaud.

To be fair, the applause at the "end" was never as loud or enthusiastic as that first burst. Anyway, this time after I came off, Avner said kindly, "can I speak to you about your performance?" I said, "yes, of course". What he told me then has shaped much of what I've done on stage since.

He told me that I was "not listening to the audience." I explained that as I understood the effect, the trick wasn't over until I paged through the restored newspaper. Avner suggested that the effect was over when the audience said so. In fact, he added, it was over when they burst into applause. The very next time I performed, I finished the Anderson when the audience burst into applause the first time, and I've not changed it since.

Listening to the audience. This is advice that you rarely hear.

Oh God!

The legendary George Burns said that in the old vaudeville days, you knew you were funny when the audience laughed. He continued by saying that the smart performer kept the stuff that made the audience laugh and took out the stuff which they didn't.

In those days he said, you performed up to 8 times a day, so by the end of even just a week, you knew. But you knew only if you listened to the audience.

Not Changing Your Mind

I'm a fan of Chan Canasta the famous mental entertainer. His 1960 BBC TV Special is a perfect example of how great listening can build an intimate and powerful performance, and take advantage of opportunities that would otherwise be missed.

There is charming by-play between Chan and his guest panel on this program, and at

one point, he is challenged about whether or not people ever change their minds. Chan answers that if he wants them to, people change their minds.

There is some laughter from the panel and Chan, not missing a beat requests the person who asked the question to come up and help with the next experiment. Chan's careful observation of this person during the performance – while on live TV mind you – is unnerving. Chan doesn't pick this person at random, but instead is tuned in, listening if you will, in such a deep way that the helper doesn't stand a chance.

The 1960 BBC TV clip is rare footage of a real pro. The program is broken into three parts online. The effect, which Canasta calls "An Experiment In Remote Control" occurs in the middle of the second part and continues through the beginning of the third. You can start watching the clips here: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C_8l8EV703o

There is an old cliché about listening that I've saved until the end of this article so you wouldn't be tempted to run off thinking I was feeding you "day-olds". If you've never heard it, then consider it new. If you have, then I ask you to think about it again, as it could change not just your magic, but your entire life.

The saying goes, "you should listen twice as much as you speak." Because it's only natural; after all, you have two ears, but only one mouth.

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

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



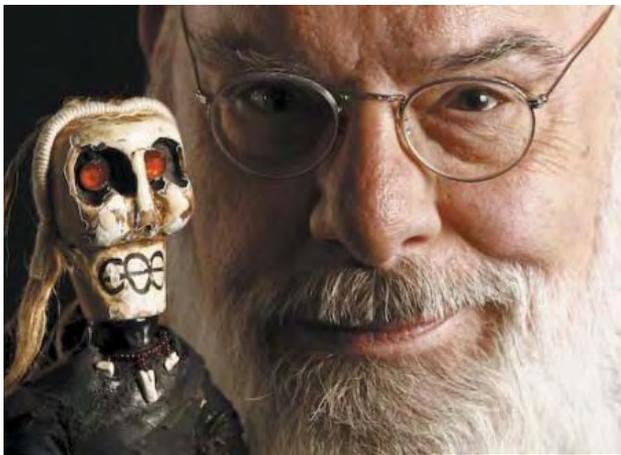
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Jeff McBride's Magic & Mystery School

SOMETHING GAINED, SOMETHING LOST



Eugene Burger

filled with pinball games and endless novelties, but there was also a “Pro Shop” on the second floor that was open by appointment and filled with larger pieces of magical apparatus. Both Ed Marlo and Don Alan worked there for a time.

The other magic shop that was readily accessible was the National Magic Company located on the mezzanine level of the Palmer House Hotel. It was toward the back and not easily found unless you were looking for it. The whitened windows, as I remember, gave the casual tourist no clue to the wonders that lay within.

The three shops that were located high up in commercial buildings were Ireland's, Abbott's, and Joe Berg's Magic Studio. I would spend untold hours in each of them.

After my discovery of magic shops in the Yellow Pages, the first shop I visited was Joe Berg's. Okito worked for him in those days, the 1950s, and so the shelves were filled with his beautiful, magical mysteries.

I remember many visits to Joe Berg's Magic Studio. As I look back on those visits, I see a definite pattern—and it is this pattern that I want to talk about with you here.

I would go into Joe's shop with my list and the cash I had saved or cajoled from my parents. Joe would take my list and read it carefully. Then he would say things like, “Well, this first item isn't really going to work for you. Yes, you could do the second one, but the third and fourth would be difficult for you now.”

Invariably, he would recommend that I purchase magic

Until I was about ten or twelve years old, my relationship with magic was almost exclusively through mail orders with the Johnson Smith Company in Texas. The exception was a small tobacco shop located at the Logan Square elevated train station in Chicago that had an even smaller magic counter. Here, once a week, as I travelled to the Loop for my accordion lesson, I would stop at this little shop and purchase a magic trick to make my accordion lesson bearable.

Then, around twelve years old, I had a revelation; three magic words changed my life forever: “The Yellow Pages”!

Before that moment, I had never thought of looking into the telephone book and seeing what might be listed under “magic.” What I found under “magicians' supplies” was truly exciting: there were five magic shops in the Chicago Loop alone!

Three of them, located high up in buildings, were definitely destination shops; you had to know about them to find them. The other two were different—more accessible. The Treasure Chest, on Randolph, was a street-level store

books to read and props that could be used in different ways with different tricks, such as Card Boxes or Change Bags.

And so I would leave Joe Berg's shop almost always spending much less money than I had planned to spend. But also, I would leave with something even more important. I would leave with a sense of guidance, inspiration, and the realization that Joe was not simply interested in selling me magic tricks; he was interested in helping Eugene become a magician.

I am sad that so many brick-and-mortar magic stores are closing. Magic is losing something. You and I are losing something!

On one hand, of course, we are gaining some great things: the excitement of late-night impulse buying, the ease and convenience of ordering, and the lower prices that the Internet offers.

On the other hand, we are losing the personal touch. We are losing the gifts of inspiration and guidance.

As I have said in many lectures, one of the last things on this planet that I would like to purchase sight unseen would be a magic trick. This is why I love having magic stores in my community. Sometimes the most deceptive thing about a magic trick is the ad that is trying to sell it to us.

My experience at Joe Berg's Magic Studio was very different.



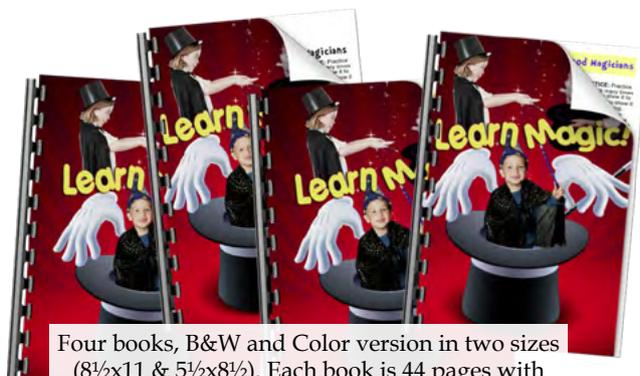
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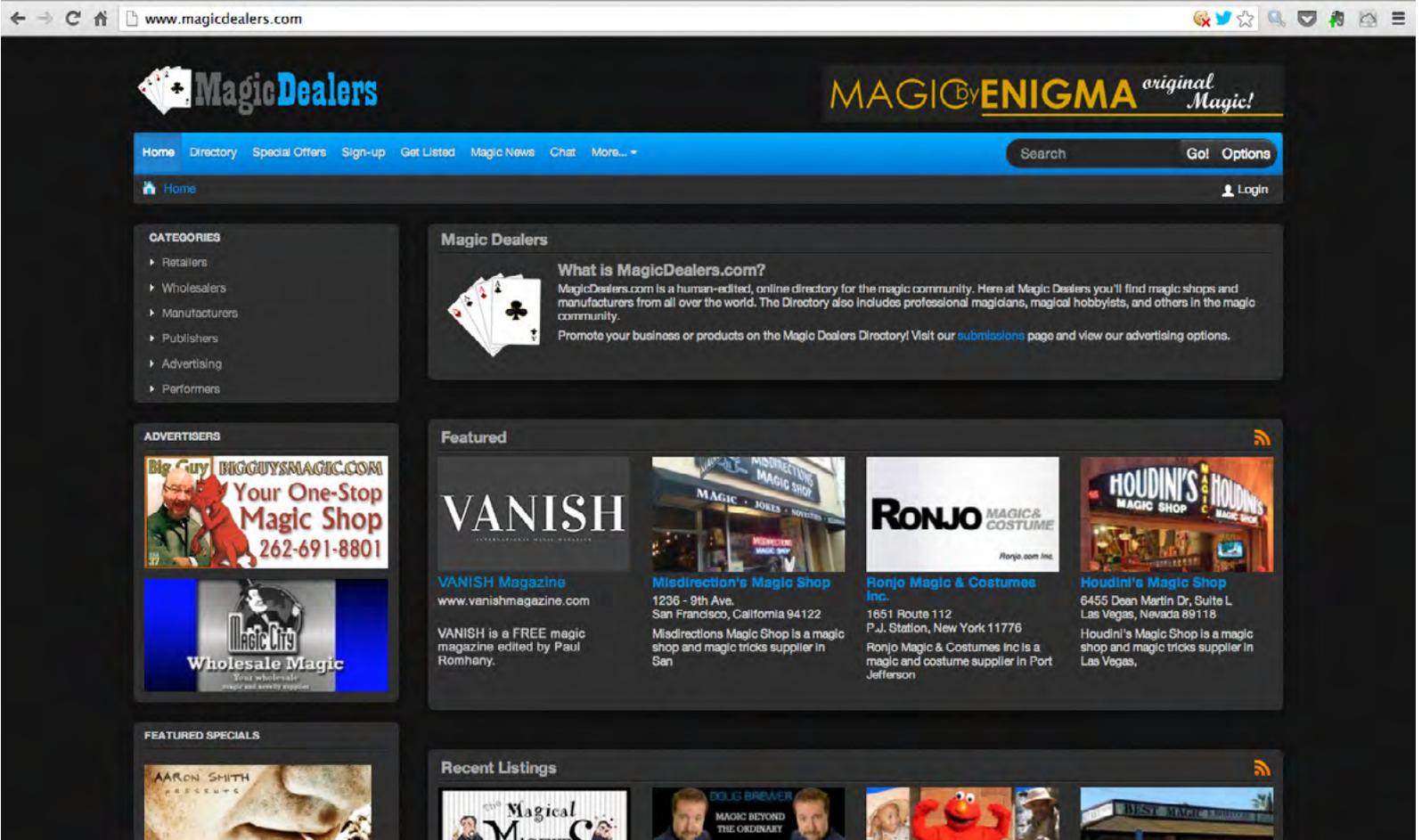


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On Location at MagicDealers.com

Interview by Aaron Smith

Gerald Kirchner, CEO of one of the largest magic distributors in the world, made it his mission to find potential customers and deliver them to magic stores. The result is a website that is quickly becoming popular among magic suppliers.

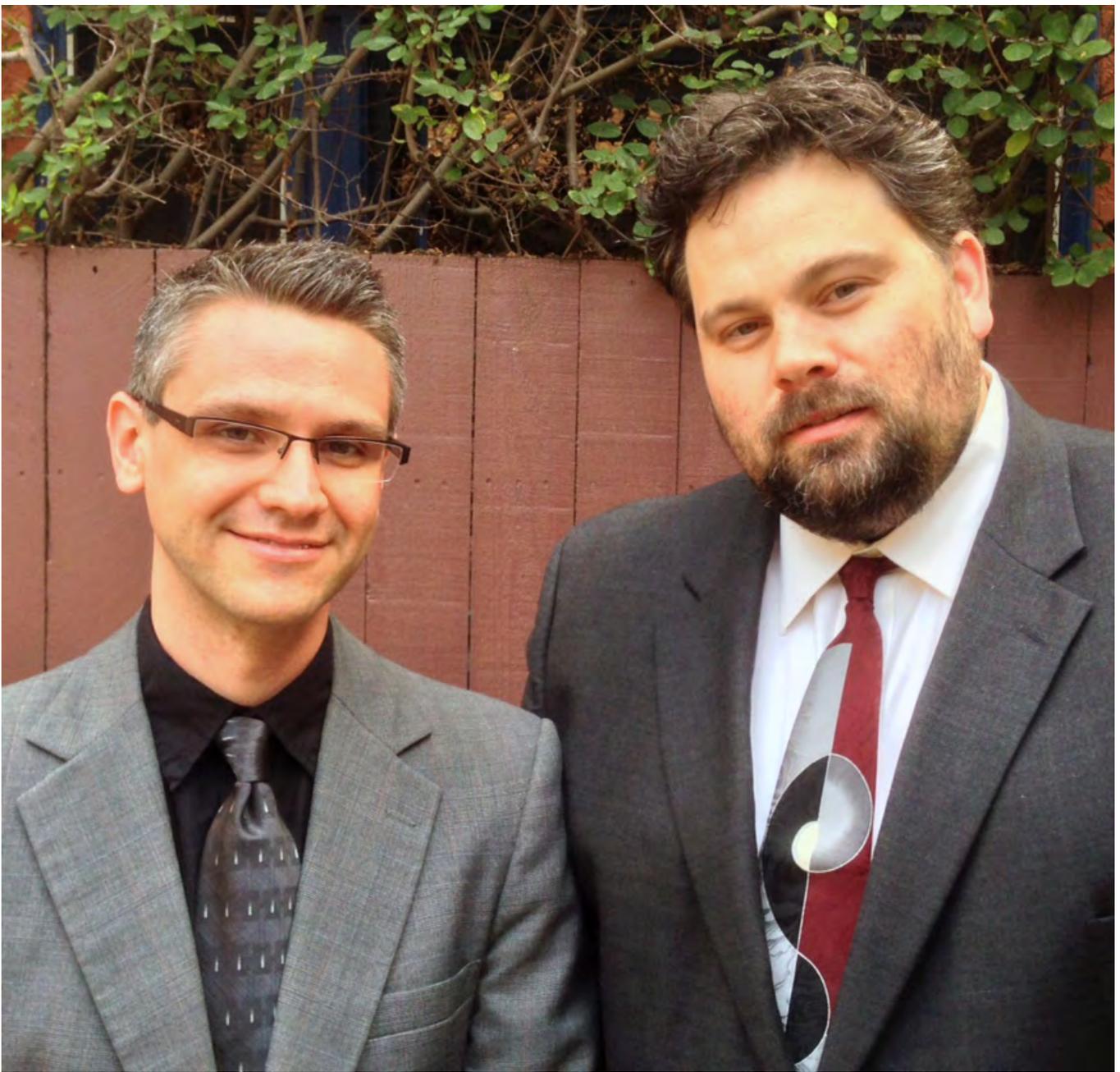
"I go to bed each night thinking about magic shops," Gerald said. "These places are owned and operated by people who work hard to deliver magic to every inch of the Earth. I wake up in the morning and imagine ways to make life better for that community."

Gerald isn't alone. There is a growing number of magic store owners who understand the value of networking. Those of us in the magic business—my fellow dealers, wholesalers, and manufacturers—are a family of distant relatives. Gerald's new directory, MagicDealers.com, is like a family reunion, or an ongoing dealers room from your favorite convention.

I visited Gerald at his office at Magic City—wholesalemagic.com—two massive warehouses filled from top to bottom with millions of dollars worth of magic books, DVD's, the latest tricks and classic staple magic. It's aisle after aisle of the world's best magic.

Hanging on the wall behind his desk are Gerald's favorite tricks—items he produced in his twenty-one years at Magic City—now celebrating their 40th year in the magic business.

I said, "Gerald it's like the most creative magicians in the world exploded in your office. There are cool toys and



Aaron and Gerald on their way to the Magic Castle

magic everywhere.”

“Yes, there’s a lot of history in this room,” Gerald said. “My dad, Chuck Kirchner, sat in this chair for over thirty years. He helped mold the magic business as we know it today.”

“I hate to reveal this to you,” I said, “but after listing my site in the MagicDealers directory, it quickly became my number one magic-related traffic source.”

Gerald explained, “That’s not a surprise. I hear that from many of the certified dealers listed in the directory. The website gets a tremendous amount of targeted traffic and we aim it at magic stores who want new customers.”

“How do you deliver results so quickly? What makes people click my link?”

“It doesn’t always work that quickly,” Gerald said. “But I try

to ensure it happens eventually. Every dollar that comes into the directory is spent in advertising our members. We run Facebook and Twitter campaigns for our dealer pages, plus we tap a few traffic sources I don’t want to make public.”

“Pretend I’ve never heard of MagicDealers.com. What is it?”

Gerald took a sip of his coffee and said, “MagicDealers is the world’s fastest growing magic directory. We don’t have every dealer listed yet, but we’re working hard to find them and deliver them a whole new customer base.”

Aaron Smith: *Why should people list their site in the directory?*

Gerald Kirchner: Everyone can use new customers, readers, or clients. The directory funnels those prospects to its

members. Traffic pours into our site from search engines, social media platforms, and our proprietary sources. Our goal is to deliver actual, paying customers; people looking to buy magic tricks right now.

AS: Who can join MagicDealers.com?

GK: The site is for anybody with magic-related services they want to promote. Performers, dealers, manufacturers, magic magazines and news sites, really anyone in the community. The best part is, you don't even need a website. You can use MagicDealers as your website.

AS: How much does it cost to become a member?

GK: Right now, you can have a lifetime listing in the directory for \$99. It's a one-time fee. That price may go up next year. Additional tools, such as promotional sales throughout the website and key features hidden within your listing, are available for premium members for just \$99 per year. Premium members also get a discount from the Acme Magic Banner Exchange, only \$25 per month for full rotation. Acme has now served over thirteen million banners on magic websites, so it's a tremendous offer.

AS: A hundred dollars for a lifetime listing is a good deal. How does a magic shop or magician get listed in the directory?

GK: It's easy. Go to the website, magicdealers.com, and click "Get Listed." Fill out the form with your information and submit it for certification.

AS: You mentioned certification again. How are magic dealers in the directory certified?

GK: We verify the information provided by every dealer. I don't have a way of guaranteeing it at this point, but we make sure the store is legitimate as best as possible. Honestly, not every magic store makes it through. I have to be able to go to your site or visit your establishment and know that you are an actual store. Sometimes it's obvious the site isn't real. If they claim to have every product distributed by Magic City for instance, but haven't ever bought from us, I know they're not real. Sometimes I have to call around and check references. I do what I can without being overly-demanding for information.

AS: But what if I'm traveling and don't want to navigate the site to find a dealer?

GK: There are two mobile options to access our complete list of magic dealers in real-time. You can download the "Magic Dealers" app from the App Store on any IOS device, such as your iPhone or iPad, or from Google Play for any Android device. Our app had over 400 downloads in the first week. It's very popular.

AS: That's a lot of downloads for a directory app. Congratulations. Other than the app and website, how can I find out about new stores on MagicDealers.com?

GK: You can follow us @magicdealers1 on Twitter and like our Facebook page at facebook.com/magicdealers — we keep both sites up-to-date with the newest additions to the MagicDealers family.

AS: I noticed that MagicDealers.com is sort of it's own little world. Sites within a site.

GK: Just like Facebook and Twitter, MagicDealers is a form of social media that shouldn't be ignored. Google, Bing, and Yahoo rely heavily on directories like ours for content and current information. My advice to magic stores, creators, and performers is to get listed in the directory right now. Don't wait. Join now. Keep your listing updated with all of your current promotions. You have a whole new place from which to draw traffic. To get customers. To make sales.

AS: One last question. Is that a Klingon Bat'leth on your desk?

GK: [smiling] Yes. Yes it is. I use it as a letter opener.

About the Author: Aaron Smith is a magic creator, writer, illustrator, and owner of The Magic Depot, located at <http://www.themagicdepot.com>



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QUESTIONS WITH CHARLOTTE PENDRAGON

FROM *Full Circle Magic*

The following questions were asked by members of FCM during an online interview with Charlotte. We would like to thank all those who took part and to FCM team who are working with us at VANISH to release these interviews.

Charlotte, what inspires you to keep going with magic shows and creating effects after rising to such fame and accomplishment?

I think it is 'passion' which keeps the creative fire alive in man. I love magic and performing arts... so I love to create...and perform. Life wouldn't be the same without it. My Dad used to tell me, follow your passion and you'll never have to work a day in your life. I feel like I've never really worked for a living; I earn a living by doing what is 'fun' for me. My Dad was very special and I was lucky to have had a man like that in my life. He was elderly when I was born, so it was like having a father and grandfather in one.

CHARLOTTE PENDRAGON



What made you decide to go into "stage illusions" as opposed to other genres?

I was introduced to stage illusions for several reasons. First, when first introduced to magic by my ex husband...Jonathan, I was a dancer and swimmer and also competed in springboard diving while at UC Irvine. JP at the time was interested in stunt work... so it was a natural for me because of my athletic abilities and JP's athletic abilities to take our magic

at the time in the direction of stage illusions. It must be noted, my first performance of magic was not grand illusions...but I performed with JP as a street performer at the Renaissance Fairs here in California. My performance at the time consisted of assisting JP on stage and doing a few theatrics myself. What I'm good at is staging magic, and suggesting magic to match the performer. I would like to cover this aspect in my seminar. I will also feature a section on 'technique'...and how important it is to perfect those

techniques on stage.

So you and JP just naturally progressed into bigger shows from fairs??

Following the Renaissance Fairs, I began performing at the Magic Castle; perfecting my craft at the famous Magic Castle Monday night auditions. The Magic Castle auditions proved to be very valuable because each and every week, I was able to learn from a master like Peter Pitt, who taught me the private

workings of his dancing cane.

That leads to our next question. What is your favorite magical effect?

Let me think ...I have so many faves...so let me narrow that one down. One of my favorite magic effects is levitation; performed well, the audience can be taken into a dream state.

To date, what do you think is the best illusion you've developed?

Along with John Gaughn, Jim Steinmeyer and JP, I was part of the team that developed 'Interlude' and I had the bruises to prove it! Today, what I am excited about is my new 'twist' on the old 'Rabbit out of the Hat' trick, which I'll be performing next week for the first time! That took some work!

What would you say is the best way for magicians to market themselves to obtain work?

I am hosting a 'Magic Master Seminar' in Vegas soon. One of my lectures will be covering the grounds of how to book yourself as a magician... opening up opportunities not thought of by most magicians. There are so many venues magicians can be performing, but so many of them never work these venues because they are trying to obtain the highest goal in their magic career...either a show in Las Vegas or their own TV Special. Those are lofty goals for most people... Provide yourself with opportunities, and recognize there are more ways to skin a chicken than one!

Your seminar will teach marketability? Can you elaborate?

Unlike other performing arts like music, there still remains a strong presence in our society of a middle class magician. Because of this, there are performing opportunities, I would like to discuss in my seminar. Once you discover those opportunities are available to you, then there are ways to explode them. To often beginning magi-

"PUBLICITY

GOES HAND IN HAND

WITH MARKETABILITY"

cians...and some seasoned ones will establish a goal for their careers that are almost impossible to obtain. In my seminar, I will teach you how to identify and create performance opportunities. Also, publicity goes hand in hand with marketability. In my seminar, I explain the necessity of a good press release, and how to write one up...in this modern world of computers.

As you have reached # 1 in your field, what are you striving for now? What is the ultimate goal?

I've reached numero uno? I don't feel like I'm number one at all...I feel like I have a massive amount of work to accomplish, including my new version of metamorphosis (never done before) which I'm presenting next week. To answer your other question, my goals today are to perfect my performance... to make it flawlessly as possible. I had to start over... from scratch. Precision and personality is what makes a magic effect great. So, I'm working very hard these days on making my delivery of magic on stage to be as flawless as possible. The Japanese have an abstract thought that Westerners can't usually grasp. That is Shibu and it's the highest perfection you can reach. Anymore in art beyond that is too much, anything less is not enough. YOU as the artist, have to learn that fine balance.

Charlotte, I'm mainly into performing magic for families and children, but am thinking about branching out. What would you say is the first step to take towards getting into stage illusions?

First you must determine which illusions are going to be received

well by family type shows. Which illusion you chose to perform, depends widely on who you are. For instance, if you are athletic...then by all means, there is no better illusion that packs fairly small, and plays bigger than the 'Metamorphosis.' If you are not particularly athletic, there are other choices...including a 'Zig Zag' or 'Modern Art,' which EVERYONE enjoys. Please do not "poo poo" older illusions like the Zig Zag... if done well, audiences LOVE it!

You hold the record for the fastest 'Metamorphosis' change; but what would you say is your biggest achievement in magic?

My biggest achievement in magic was the 'Metamorphosis.' The reason I say this... is before JP and I performed it, the fastest was Doug Henning or Siegfried and Roy, both excellent 'Metamorphosis.' What people don't realize is that we 'shaved' off 2 or 3 seconds. .25 seconds was what the experts at the Guinness Book of World Records recorded our time. . .
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_wmHQ0s7cgU

Charlotte, I'm athletic and would love to perform 'Metamorphosis,' but don't know where I can buy it and go about learning it? Your performance was amazingly by the way, so fast!

On the Pendragon's DVD set by 'L and L Publishing'...there is a section on our trap part and how to built it. There are no blueprints, but it will show you how the trap should eventually end up. Randy and Pedro Ambrosio built my new table for the stage and also my new 'Metamorphosis' illusion.

Can you tell us more about your new 'Metamorphosis?'

The performance of my new metamorphosis will be revealed this weekend during the premiere of my new show, 'World of Illusion.' It really isn't a metamorphosis per se. I actually call it the 'Dematerializer' because I vanish in less than a sec-

ond in front of the audiences very eyes. In other words, I simply vanish myself and reappear out the trunk. The music is really hot for it as well, named 'It's All an Illusion'...and is a perfect ending to my show.

Were you nervous that day when you did the Chain Escape in the water?

YES! The reason I was nervous was not because of the water. I've been exposed to water my whole life as a swimmer. In fact I was a lifeguard at one time...and taught life saving, but I hate heights and was so afraid of how high the boat. It was HIGH! I hated the jump part...it was like jumping off a really high diving board!

Do you think that the art of magic affects the way you think about simple things in your day-to-day life? If so, in what way?

Interesting question. Yes, I do think magic profoundly affects my daily life. Here is why, each day as I watch Cable News...I recognize that the media or pundits 'perform a lot of equivoques.

It is my opinion that the presentations on TV news gives you a so-called 'choice', but guess what? We all picked the same card. So, I recognize magic techniques performed by the media and politicians all the time! When you are in magic as a hobby or as a career...you recognize these dual messages. You are seemingly given choices...and yet you vote for the choice "they"

want you to make. If you are a member of the magic community, you can usually recognize phony marketing choices presented to the public.

How do you select who builds your effects and why?

Randy and my sweet friend Pedro Ambrosio built them, because my budget dictated so. Randy and Pedro are also highly creative people and wanted to be a team on my magic projects, so their work was chosen on passion as well. Today, I like to build my own magic... but if you must use a magic builder or designer, chose one that exhibits great craftsmanship. Of all the illusions I have ever owned... those that stood the test of time (as far as being workhorse) were made by Les Smith from Owens Magic Supreme. Our 'Impalement' is stilling be performed today...30 years after we purchased it!!! I also manufacture my own 'Metamorphosis' illusion. I've sold two over the past several years, as I've had a high price tag on it. I'm in the process of re-pricing it and making it more accessible. Ken Hartley owns and performs one of them! It is amazing...being able to build. One of my best friends in the entire world is the sculptor, Linda Lindsay, who I grew up with here in my hometown. She now lives in Canada and is one of the world's best face sculptors...or bust sculptors. Her work is amazing. I asked her how she did it???? She said that she deconstructs the process...and then works reconstructing in her mind, how the bust should be done.

I think creating magic is similar to sculpting, because you do have to sculpt and build... and you have to start with deconstructing an illusion, then reconstructing it, so it is exactly what you want.

What inspirations outside of magic do you bring to your magic?

It is important to have inspiration outside of the magic community. For me, I have so many friends who are not in magic...but have other creative inspiring careers...I also learn from them! Randy is a musician...and I gain new looks at my magic just listening to his music



Charlotte as a body builder



and actually watching him construct songs. For instance, Randy wrote a song for my dancing cane, which is all percussion...very different. I was listening to him play with his music one day and heard him experimenting with various percussion instruments. Okay, I thought, 'This wouldn't be a bad piece for the dancing cane.' So, I staged the entire piece, because I kept my mind 'open' and had an opportunity. I also wanted to mention something about the value of rehearsing. The Beatles began their career performing about 10 shows a day in Hamburg Germany. They became so good at what they did...because of the number of performances...that their precision help propel them to worldwide fame forever! That is how valuable practice is... and every magician should take note of learning what The Beatles learned early on in their career.

How do you go about choosing music for your shows and what do you look for in that music?

Today, I create my stage magic a little differently than in the past. My goal right now is to have a fully copyrighted show...which I own all of my music. The music, is written by Randy for my show. So, I'll come up a magic effect...say the floating Wonder Ball of mine. The first step is just to basically stage it and then write the music to the choreography, rather than get the music and then stage the show. This method of staging a show has enabled me to have a lot more flexibility when it comes to puzzling over how to create an effect.

What would you consider to be your main goal in creating the new show?

My main goal for creating my new show... would be to have a well-constructed show...and fully perfected. By a "well-constructed" show, I mean that a show, like a story, should have a beginning, middle and ending.

Could you tell us a bit more about your upcoming show?

My new show has taken about 4 years to really construct. From start to forever finishing...lol. Actually, the show is finished in the sense that I feel confident to perform the whole show and knowing my goal of entertaining the audience will be reached. I call it 'World of Illusion.' All the music is original, and written, composed... by Randy Lessley. Over the last 4 years we've choreographed the show while writing music to that choreography at the same time. It was a chore, but what a worthwhile endeavor. Randy appears a few times as himself and also with his new puppet friends...'Randy and the Ragrunts.' I think what

I'm more astounded about than anybody is that in my show, I have only 2 big illusions. So, I developed an entire new show...and have been performing stage magic...some all my own, and definitely all my own interpretation of the magic I do perform.

Charlotte, you are such legend. It has been a great honor for us at Full Circle Magic that you graciously shared with us your experience and wisdom! Wow!

Edited by Laura Eisele and David W. Kidd



A magic moment with Charlotte



Magic and Music

**Do you use music with your magic?
And if you do, do you control your own music?**



As a quick sidebar to this question, my primary health care physician constantly asks me "What instrument do you play?" Whenever I try to explain that I'm a magician... I guess to her they sound like the same word!

Back on topic. Almost from the very beginning of my professional career I have incorporated music into my performances. Music adds layer and texture to a show. It heightens a sense of emotion, whether comedic or dramatic. Additionally, performing silently, without scripted lines, to music adds even more texture and variety. Recently, I was privileged to be

booked at a high-end fundraiser for a new library that was being built. It was an evening of variety entertainment: sword swallowers, a juggler, ballet, musicians and little ol' me. It had been a long time since I was part of the hustle-bustle of a group of people preparing for a performance backstage. (Usually I'm a solo performer, the only performer at a school, or corporate holiday party.)

I arrived in plenty of time for my set up, which basically consisted of setting my briefcase table on the stage and picking up my Steve Spill Mind Reading Goose: Since I was part of an ensemble and knowing that transitions between acts could be problematic, I packed light. I did a quick mic check with the sound tech and then

got out of his way. As I watched the other entertainers fretting over sound cues for their music, I was jarred out of my misguided belief that “everyone runs their own music.”

I had been running my own music since the beginning of my career and simply did not know any other way of performing.

I can remember back in my early birthday party days, in the late 90s, when I had no idea of exactly how to incorporate music into my act from a technological standpoint: I would simply switch CDs depending on which track and CD I needed. I actually subjected my audiences to several moments of waiting for a CD to be read and then advanced to the appropriate track. I simply would stare at the CD player’s read out, not interacting with my audience at all! It’s truly amazing to think I considered myself a “professional” in those days!

After that, I had a cassette that was timed out perfectly that would start and stop with appropriate ‘dead space’ and worked well enough as a low tech solution...as long as my timing was perfect! (That meant no ad-libs, no spontaneous reactions, in short, no fun!)

For a couple of years, the music in my shows was run by a girl I was dating – at the appropriate time in the show, I would just look at her and she would pop the next cassette in (cassettes that were cued at the right spot were faster than waiting for a CD to load!)

Years later, I embraced technology and for the last 10 years or so used a remote control device of some sort. The most reliable and high tech one that I have ever used is the Ultimate Controller by a company called Happie Amp. You can read about their amazing device at www.happieamp.com. In a nutshell, the device consists of two parts: one, an ipod-sized device built espe-

cially for folks like you and me. It allows you to keep tons of playlists, hundreds of songs, and a bright numbered display so you can easily see which track you are on. The music is controlled by a remote on your waist. The buttons for track play, advance, volume and more are textured so users can tell simply by feel which button is which. Best of all, unlike an ipod, you can switch music and rearrange playlists in the device itself without being hooked up to your computer.

I’ve used the Ultimate Controller for nearly two years now, through about 400 shows and it always performs flawlessly. I’ll probably buy a second one soon as a back up! Additionally, I know that Kerry Pollock has designed several devices over the years. I used to use one a long time ago that served me very well, especially in my Stage Hypnosis shows which used a ton of music and sound effects. It was called the Virtual Soundman and though bulky by today’s standards, it functioned beautifully. As I understand it, Kerry had offered other products, too.

This certainly is not intended to serve as an article on every one-person show music control device option but more as a launching point.

The whole point of this discussion is to motivate you to control your own music, especially if you are a one-person show. In my realm, bookers hate being handed a list of technical requirements for your show. People such as HR directors, PTA moms, and college activity directors really have far too much to worry about and don’t want to coddle to an entertainer. While I know cruise ships and other venues may be the exception, the reality is that the majority of magicians are like myself: out in the real world, performing in venues where a complete light and sound crew does not exist.

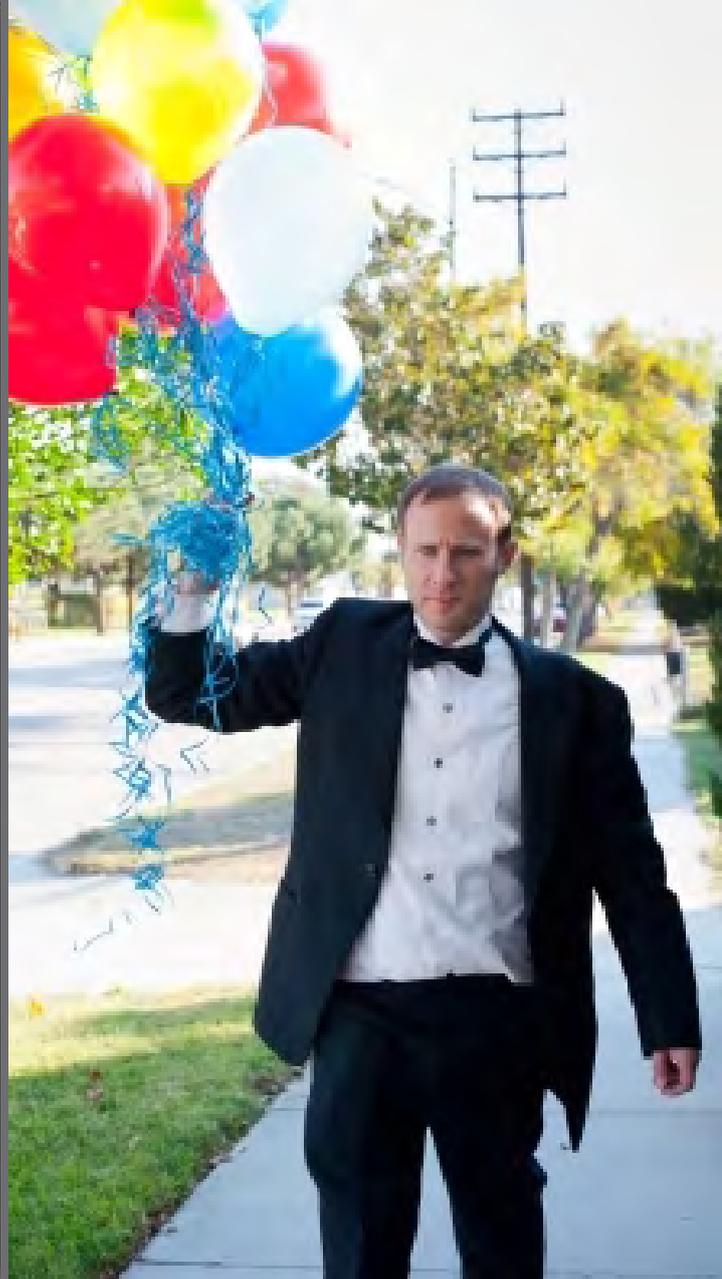
I mention all of this because in my experience, well-meaning sound crews make mistakes. They are not familiar with my specific show and cues. There are several times a year where I fly to an event and while I can indeed carry my Ultimate Controller with me (it fits in my pocket), I nonetheless need to hook it into the venue’s own PA system.

At more than one event, the DJ would lower my music levels at odd times so when I triggered my unit to play a song, no sound would come out. Those drove me nuts during sound checks. I would repeatedly tell the person, “Look, I control my music with this little device here, and I can even control volume, so just leave the volume right here.” Then I would run through my tracks and no sound...again. I’d ask, “What happened?” The answer: “Well, when there’s no music being played, I just lower the volume until you need it.” I would get so angry because he just couldn’t get it and there was no need at all for him to even know my cues. After much debate, he’d eventually ‘get it’ and the show itself would go just fine...as long as he kept his hands off the volume! (And this happened to me repeatedly!) Oh, and that multi-person gig I mentioned at the beginning of this article? The beleaguered sound tech messed up two of the juggler’s sound cues...in just a ten minute act.

Meanwhile, I am constantly told by clients how easy I am to work with and how my professional my programs are.

Trust me...unless you’re on a cruise ship or similar situation, find a method to control your own music!





desperate acts of magic

A fun movie
for magicians
to enjoy.

Reviewed by
Nick Lewin

'Desperate Acts of Magic.' A fun movie for magicians to enjoy.

It is always nice to watch new trends affecting the status quo in magic, and the new indie movie 'Desperate Acts of Magic' falls right into that category. It is a fun feature length movie about magic and magicians. There are magicians who can make movies as well as do shows—yay.

By the list of donors in the closing credits I am assuming that the

movie was eased into being by a 'Kickstart' style of fund raising. This is a nice way to expand the ability of talent to realize the full potential that is contained in our creative community. In my opinion it makes more sense to use this resource for a movie than a one-off show.

There are some funny moments in 'Desperate Acts...' that I really enjoyed and laughed at. However the movie doesn't go for a series of one-liners or desperately easy targets, but instead does have the

approach and feel of a traditional indie movie. It has a nice storyline, likeable characters and there is very little dead air involved in progressing the storyline along its arc. This isn't the case and doesn't happen often enough in mainstream mega movies.

'Desperate Acts...' is currently being promoted by its production company, Gold Cap Films, at various magical events in the magic world and its official release on DVD is September 10th. I picked up a copy at the recent PCAM Convention and paid \$20, it even included a signed poster. As a magic lover and a movie buff I was excited to support the release of the film; I was even happier that I enjoyed it as much as I did.

The movie is a thinly disguised re-tread of the life of its writer, co-director, co-producer and co-editor Joe Tyler Gold. Gold has been busy acquiring a nice reputation for his work in the world of movies and has been adding some great press reaction from 'Desperate Acts...' Along with co-producer Tammy Caplan,

these are definitely two names to watch for in the future, all the hallmarks for continuing success are present in this movie.

The movie follows the journey of Jason Kant (Joe Gold) as he trades in his job as a computer programmer for life as a professional magician. He falls in love with a savvy street magician Stacy Dietz (Valerie Dillman) and with the help of his mentor Steve Kramer (Jonathan Levit) tries to make his dream a reality. Somehow winning the International Magic Contest in a San Diego magic convention is the first step in this process, and that is where the movie heads thematically and geographically. The journey even includes a brief trip 'South of the Border' down Mexico way.

All three of the movie's key players do an excellent job in the movie and I also really enjoyed the performances of Sascha Alexander, William Salyers and Stephen Wastell. A special shout out to John Getz as 'Don Tarzia' who I happily recognized from his role in the Coen Brothers



great neo-noir, Round Rock based thriller 'Blood Simple.' The entire featured cast did a great job on a project that obviously didn't run to superstar budgets. I for one am bored with the effects of cash in creative projects, give me a fresh vision over big bucks any day of the week.

As a magician I was just as excited by the many guest appearances of magicians that are scattered throughout the movie, they will keep you alert and interested in the proceedings. I won't give the game away too much but there are lots of our favorite LA magical characters on display throughout the production and you will enjoy spotting them.

The movie is fast moving and fun, however the take away-- that the magic world is sexist and magic clubs curiously out of date, are no great revelations to anyone; it is a very pleasant trip. It is great to see such an ambitious (don't be fooled by 'DAoM's' low key ap-

proach, it was a decidedly ambitious undertaking) release from within the magic world.

If you want to be a part of this project it is too late to get your name on the donor's list after the credits roll. However if you visit the website at <http://www.desperateactsofmagic.com> you can pick up a DVD of the movie and show your support in this very practical manner, I think you will be very pleased you did so. There is even a director's commentary version of the movie that I suspect will be filled with the kind of details and incidents that I am longing to hear about the movie, I will be playing it next but I wanted to write this review solely based on the movie.



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//

"Criticism, like rain, should be gentle enough to nourish a man's growth without destroying his roots.

-Frank A. Clark

Sooner or later we find ourselves on the giving or receiving end of criticism. What we do with that critique as a performer or how we approach giving others comments can have a positive or negative impact on our act and career.

Let's take a look at how we can benefit most from constructive criticism, filter out destructive criticism and how to approach giving comments to others. Most importantly, remember it's not about ego; it's about the end result.

"To avoid criticism, do nothing, say nothing, and be nothing."

-Elbert Hubbard

Magic competitions have been around forever and are a great way to create a "deadline" and get that act polished and ready to show to your peers. And, most importantly, receive feedback that will improve your routine. Magicians love to share their opinions. When they see something that inspires them, they want to talk about it.

If you don't put yourself out there and be seen, you will never

achieve anything of value. You must risk failure to get the rewards of success. All of us have had props fail, jokes fail, new ideas fail, auditions fail, and more. Each failure had the ability to break our confidence and make us give up or to make us stronger, more experienced, and determined. I certainly hope you'll choose the second option and get back on the horse.

With the popularity of shows like America's Got Talent, The Voice, American Idol, So You Think You Can Dance, there are plenty of opportunities to see a so-called panel of "experts" watching and evaluating numerous performers. We, the viewer can see how they give criticism of various performances and witness the reactions of the artists to what is said.

If the judges are truly experts in their field, the experience can truly help the growth of the performer and still inspire them to do better or achieve more. Some television judges, however, are focused on ratings and creating more press for themselves than actually making better performing artists out of the competitors. It's our right to decide whether to take the advice given or go our own direction.

"I like criticism. It makes you strong."
-LeBron James

Taking criticism is a skill that can be learned with practice. As performers, we are personally and emotionally attached to the work we create and as such are deeply affected by positive or negative comments we receive. For the inexperienced performer, a handful of gushing reviews will boost the ego, while a few undesirable observations will send him/her home crying.

I remember when I was 16 and dancing with the Gateway Ballet Company in St. Louis. We were doing the Nutcracker with weeks of rehearsals and dozens of performances. After each run-through and show, the entire cast was assembled. The ballet master would give specific notes to the dancers. When a note was given directly to

a person, they would respond afterward with, "Thank you, Miss Norma." (The name of the Ballet Master) How awesome was that. The level of respect shown to the director and the ability to listen and apply the notes immediately was a wonderful lesson.

Some criticism is asked for, some is simply offered. Both can be valuable. But, the criticism must be filtered to separate the constructive from destructive.

Destructive criticism is given with the intent of weakening your resolve and confidence. It can sometimes be given by a competitor or jealous rival and is usually hurtful or detrimental to the improvement of your product. Someone may say, "You should do this." or "You look stupid doing that." The commenter will not give a reason why or even a way to make it better. It is just negative criticism. Ignore it, and move on.

Always consider the source of criticism. Is this someone you respect? Is it someone whose work you admire? Is it someone who really is experienced and knows what they are talking about?

If comments are solicited, be prepared to listen. If you only expect to receive heaps of praise and hear how great you are, you are wasting the time of both parties. Many professionals pay big money to consultants for honest appraisals of their work. I myself have hired magic consultants, Don Wayne and Mark Parker, for candid advice on specifics when creating new routines. They helped me to get to a place that I could not reach alone. Money well spent.

If you are getting great advice for free from people you trust and respect, keep your ears open and your mouth shut. If you have to, bite your tongue. It's not easy to be told what someone else thinks of your work, but it can make you better and get your brain thinking in ways you never imagined.

Don't try to defend your choices. No

excuses are necessary. They just saw your act and this is their evaluation of what they saw. You can't change what they think now.

Just listen, write down, or record what is said. Sometimes we only take in information when we are truly "ready" for it. That may mean taking some time to understand what the speaker meant and how to apply it to our performance. And, remember to always say 'thank you' for the critique.

Jeff McBride worked on his card act for years in the clubs of New York City. I remember hearing how he often asked others for comments after the show. He respected the magicians as knowledgeable and experienced enough to offer insight that he may not have considered. As a result, the act progressed faster. It's great to see how he now returns the favor by giving great advice to other performers through his lectures, online and private teaching.

Advice or critique that is not asked for should be treated the same way. Filter out the destructive and listen to the valuable bits that you can employ. This person who came to you with unsolicited comments was really compelled to do so because there was something worthy in your performance of discussion. That's a good thing.

A good critique should also be specific. Consider the following conversation at magic convention somewhere on the planet:

Mr. A - "How was the opening act?"

Mr. B - "It sucked."

Mr. A - "What sucked about it?"

Mr. B - "Everything?"

You can't do anything with that critique. The person is unable to go into specific details that could improve the performance.

Mr. A - "How was the opening act?"
Mr. B - "It sucked."
Mr. A - "What sucked about it?"
Mr. B - "The lighting was too dark, the props were painted poorly, the concealment was obvious, the costumes were wrinkled and shoes scuffed, the timing of the music was late. But, he did have a hot assistant."

Now, we have some details that can be worked on. All of these things could be improved over a couple rehearsals to make a better performance.

Another set of eyes viewing your work is a valuable thing to have. If a magician approaches you with comments, they will have the ability to communicate in a vocabulary that is easily understood. Non-magicians, without even knowing methods, can still spot awkwardness, uncomfortable, or unnatural moments. However, they may not be able to communicate details without some help from you. Ask questions to understand the areas that need fixing.

There is one more way to receive feedback with getting solicited or unsolicited remarks. That is to listen to your audience. When you are comfortable with your act and can feel the audience response, it will tell you what is working and what is not.

For a great example of listening to the audience, watch The Comedian by Jerry Seinfeld. The film is about the testing and building of an entirely new act. Fame and years of experience put Seinfeld in a starting block far ahead of the guys who are just building their first pieces of material. But, the process is the same. You "listen" to the audience response and learn what is good and what needs work. The film also follows another comedian who has talent, but also carries around an ego that gets in the way of his growth and success.

"The worst sound you can ever hear on-stage is the sound of sucking."

Now, it's your turn to give your notes to others. By remembering how personal it can be to receive, take the time to approach criticism with care. Here are a few things to keep in mind:

When you are not asked, but stirred to give a comment to a performer use a soft approach. Try, "I enjoyed your performance very much. May I offer one thought?" They will not be offended and will be willing to hear what you have to say.

Relate everything to them and how it applies to their act. If you want to use an example, make it hypothetical or relate it to something besides magic.

A spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down. Give a

compliment before giving critical comments. "That was a beautiful production of the rhesus monkey and banana. Perhaps the banana could be produced before the monkey since his appearance is more dramatic."

Make your comment a question and make the other person part of the dialogue that leads to a better result. "Would it be possible to steal the load from X?"; "Do you think this could happen when you do that?"; "Have you tried a...?"

As I said in the beginning, it's not about ego; it's about the end result. Please be honest and offer advice that makes us better magical artists and performers. Empty praise does nothing to advance our art. It's true, honest criticism that allows us to grow and take magic into the future.

And since I perform on cruise lines often, let me share something about critiques. I see written criticism by guests at the end of each cruise. The cruise lines often rate the acts individually and a lot of weight is given when re-booking. But, you can't take it too seriously. The highest rated act for the week was a violin player that missed the ship and never performed.



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WHAT 10 YEARS IN RETAIL TAUGHT ME ABOUT SHOW BUSINESS

PETER MENNIE

A little over a decade ago, I left a ten year stint working as a clerk, on the floor, for a huge, national retail chain. I was full time, mostly days and took the job because I knew I could do it well and because it allowed me to still perform in the evenings while enjoying married life. Plus, as it turned out, my wife got hired at the same store in the Customer Service department. We both left the store within a year of each other because the company was heading towards a 'self-service' format and we were both focused on a 'customer service' experience. As anyone who has been there knows, most of the time you are a 'pee-on' or a mushroom (kept in the dark and fed a lot of crap) and have very little say in the policies and procedures relating to the products and services but if you open your eyes and ears, you can learn a LOT about customers and their wants and needs.

Here's what I learned and how I applied it to my magic career.

Customer Service

"What Can You Do For Me?"

This is what makes a store really successful. Service. In the retail sector, customers will go out of their way to get better service. They will spend more money and travel further if the experience they receive is more valuable to them.

This is what the smaller, independent stores realized when the big-box stores started showing up. Nation-

wide chains succeed by competing on price but they lack the necessary customer service (can you ever find a Wal-Mart employee when you need them?). Why? Simple! They cut prices so low that they can't afford the labour costs of having enough staff to satisfy their customers. Frustrating isn't it?

Smaller, boutique stores offer the same product (quite often better made products) as the national chains yet can afford to hire better informed employees and have them available to service their customers – simply because they charge more.



PETER MENNIE

How does this apply to the magic world? Well, when a client hires a magician, they are purchasing a magic show. A time filler. The specifics of the 'show' don't matter. In the eyes of the client and the audience, it's just 'tricks'. That's the product and the product is assumed to be of a certain quality otherwise it would be offered for 'sale'.

The Customer Service is the 'how' the show is presented. It's the comedy, the drama and the audience participation. It's the professionalism of the performer/client relationship. It's your ability to satisfy the client's wants and needs through your 'show'. It's how you make your show valuable to your client. Basically, the service part is the 'you' part.

If your client wanted only the trick, then they'd buy it themselves or hunt for the cheapest performer out there – the one that arrives with no knowledge, professionalism, stage presence or ability to perform. In other words, the performer who has the best customer service (performance and business acumen) behind the tricks (the product) will most likely earn the client.

Value

"You get what you pay for"

Value has different meanings to different people. In the retail sector, value items are generally lower priced and/or sub-standard in quality. Stores that focus on value items are thriving. Just look around and count the number of dollar stores in your town. I would even put Wal-Mart into this category as well because they are constantly cutting prices in order to increase sales. Good for them and good for the dollar stores. However, in the entertainment business, this kind of value is a bad thing. Here's why:

"The customer service is the 'how' the show is presented. It's the comedy, the drama and the audience participation. It's the professionalism of the performer/client relationship. It's your ability to satisfy the client's wants and needs through your 'show'!"



When you buy the \$1 item at the dollar store and it fails to live up to its intended use, what do you do with it? You throw it away. Why? Because it was only \$1! When you go to replace that item, likely you won't return to the dollar store out of frustration but rather to a higher-end store and purchase that item there. You should have gone to the higher priced store in the first place where you know the quality is better.

Now, because you paid more for the item, it has more value to you. This time around, if it fails, you won't throw it out, you will return it to the store and have it fixed, replaced, or refunded.

Entertainers who are the lowest priced option are just like the \$1 item at the dollar store. They have failed to realize that to compete on price they must sacrifice the quality of their performance in order to be at that level. It's also vicious cycle. Since they don't earn as much for their performances,

POINTS TO CONSIDER

- **Customer Service**
- **Value**
- **Pricing**
- **Delivery**
- **Competition**

"Entertainers who are the lowest priced option are just like the \$1 item at the dollar store. They have failed to realize that to compete on price they must sacrifice the quality of their performance ..."

they in turn can't afford to sustain a great performance. They may do more shows, but in the long run have less energy and ultimately less income.

Really? How come? Consider for argument sake, you charge \$100 for a Birthday:

- \$100 x 5 shows in one day (because you are in demand at that fee) = \$500
- \$100 in fixed expenses (gas, lunch, show expendables)
 - o Your net is \$400 before taxes.

Now, double your fee:

- \$200 x 3 shows (less shows because not as many want to hire you) = \$600
- \$75 in fixed expenses (less gas, less expendables, lunch)
 - o Your net is \$525 before taxes (and you are not as exhausted!)

Here's another viewpoint. Believe it or not, when you compete on price alone, you de-value (read: disrespect) what you have to offer to the marketplace and the marketplace devalues (disrespects) what you offer it! When you match your price to the demographic you are marketing to and back it up with a quality product, your clients will respect you and more importantly, value you and your service. Plus, when you charge more for your show, you want to perform up to that level and earn your fee. It's human nature.

You want your clients to value what you have to offer, you want to be valuable to them so that your performance is something the client cherishes or respects you for and the feeling it gives them. Then they will pay what they feel your show is worth.

Pricing

"What the market will bear."

Customers go into specific stores expecting the prices to be at a certain level and therefore they will most likely be expecting to purchase something. It's called 'shopping'. If all you have is \$10 in your pocket, you likely won't be shopping on Rodeo Drive and by the reverse, if you can afford to shop on Rodeo Drive, likely you wouldn't buy anything at the Dollarama. And just as each store has its own demographic customer base, so should you.

There are only two reasons why a client won't hire you. One: they don't actually have your fee available to them (it's not in the budget) or Two: what you offer doesn't match their needs at the time. Neither is the fault of your client. You, on the other hand, have a choice. Either alter your fee or change what you offer



PETER
PERFORMING
ON STAGE

to match their needs.

But watch out! Lowering your fee will immediately de-value your show in the mind of the client. They'll wonder why you didn't quote the lower fee first. It's much easier, and more valuable to the client, to add something to your presentation.

Note: Adding to your presentation does not always mean adding a trick or two to your show. Remember, your show is the product, you are the service, and you want to make your service more valuable. Adding an encore to the show makes the show longer and entertains the audience more. That's service. Supplying all the promotional materials to your client (free) is a service. Emceeding the show is a service.

Once you have set your price (one where you will be valuable enough to your client) then stick to it. Your clients will find you! They will 'walk into your store'. If they really want your service, they will find a way to hire you, at your price, because they value what you offer. It's as simple as that.

If you find that you are not getting hired enough at your current fee, then your marketing is off. There will always be clients at your level. Change the demograph-

ic you are marketing to. Change your approach. Become more valuable to your clients. Adding value is free. Remember being valuable is a feeling, not a price-point.

Delivery

This is a real pet-peeve of mine, both in retail and in entertainment. When I was in retail, the 'just-in-time' delivery mantra was coming into effect. Big companies stopped warehousing their products on-site in favour of delivering the item to the store at the same time it sold out. Some did it reasonably well, others did not. Items were put on back-order. You were given a rain-check. Why did these companies do this? Simple. Price. In order to compete on price, costs had to be reduced anywhere they could and delivery is cheaper than real estate (when you have to deliver to the store anyway).

But both the customer and the retailer lose out because the supply can't be replenished fast enough to keep up with the demand. So, what happens?

The customer shops elsewhere. They pay a little more (sometimes a lot more), in order to get what they want when they want it and generally continue to shop at the other store because they can get what they want when they need it. Let's put this in show business terms. If you are the cheapest option in your market, you may be able to satisfy the first three or four clients who want to hire you on any given day but after that you won't have any time left in the day to do more shows. Plus, by the time you get to the last show - if in fact you can get there on time, you'll be so exhausted that you won't be able to give your best to your audience. If, however you charge a higher fee, you may only get two shows that day, but the net return is the same or greater and you will give a higher

quality service (see the pricing example under 'Value'.

I am also a believer in 'free delivery'. By this I mean 'expenses included'. You can now easily look up online how long it will take to drive or fly and how much it will take to ship your props to the gig so include that expense in your price. If your performance is \$1000 and the plane ticket is \$1000 then quote \$2000. Clients want a simple answer. If they do ask for a breakdown, then you can explain it to them but keep in mind that, in retail, most stores who offer the cheapest price also tend to charge for delivery, among other things (like plastic bags). When you do secure the booking, then on-time delivery is a must. You must, as a professional return all correspondence in a timely manner, answer all questions and concerns and above all, be ready to do your performance at the agreed upon time. Nothing is more unprofessional to your client (and disrespectful to your audience) than starting late. If the ticket says your show starts at 8:00, then be ready to start your show at 8:00! (Justin Beiber should take note)

Competition

Competition is a great thing. Not just good, but GREAT! It forces competitors to hone their product down to the essentials of their market's wants and needs and the whole market is better for it. The service provided is better for it and the clients are happier because of competition.

BUT, it's not a race to see who gets that client first. Don't compete with your colleagues to get the work. Rather, allow the client to compare you to your col-

leagues and decide for themselves who is the better fit for their wants and needs. You want them to hire you because they feel, and then ultimately know you are the best choice.

And never compete on fees. This kind of competition will de-value you in the minds of your potential clients. Compete on what your clients are really looking for: Customer Service.

In show business, you really shouldn't have any competition. Competition occurs when two equally matched products or services try to reach the same consumer. As an entertainer, you shouldn't have an equal. You should be YOU! No one can be you as good as you. If, after informed comparison, your client chooses you - great! If they choose your colleague, great also! Your colleague will do a great job and when the time comes to hire again, they will hopefully consider hiring you. If not, then you were not the right fit for that client's needs in the first place.

Next time, I'll discuss Shopping In Person, Marketing, The In-store Experience, Get the Best Raw Materials - "You get what you pay for - Part 2"





Tony Chris Child's Play

Performing a Magic Show for Free

This month, I will discuss a topic that every magical entertainer will encounter in their performing career. This would be the issue of performing free magic shows for a charity, fundraising event, non-profit organization, or any other event who has no budget for an entertainer.

Years ago, a friend shared with me his attitude on donations. He rightfully pointed out that, though most donations are in the form of cash, this was not the only way to support a cause. He called it the Three T's: Time, Talent, and Treasury. "Treasury" means the standard cash or cheque. "Time" is volunteering. If you are an entertainer of any kind, you will be fielding requests to donate Talent.

If you have yet to be offered "exposure" as a form of payment, fear not. They will find you. If you have an online presence, or if you know people who know people, you will be asked to perform at a fundraising event. They will not ask what you charge, and will instead launch

into a sales pitch for their cause. Lives are changed, funds are needed research, lots of public support...and no budget.

Giving is important, as is giving back. Generally speaking, I choose to donate my talent. Some causes near and dear to you will stir you into supporting. I support certain community causes, autism causes, and cancer. My choices are due to reasons very personal to me, and isn't that what supporting a cause is all about?

I have been in business for over 20 years as a full time professional, and I receive 2-3 calls from these organizations every month. That makes an average of 30 phone calls a year – or more – from people asking me to perform at their function for free.

Now, there was a time when I never donated shows. The world seemed full of worthy charities that never have enough resources to meet all their goals, and if I accepted all the requests I would spend all my Saturday afternoons performing for free. My time

was valuable, and I wanted to be paid for my efforts.

That was then – specifically the first years of turning full time professional. This is now. Now, I have a different outlook on performing a free show, and I donate three to four a year.

Let's start with the pros of donating a free show. Please keep in mind that this is my own opinion, and you may agree or disagree, but what I will tell you is based on my experience of nearly two decades as a full time performer.

As already mentioned, in my first years of performing magic for a living I declined all enquires for free shows. My reasons were many, but here are some of the main ones.

The first big one was the opinion of other magicians. I was new to the actual business end of magic, and I looked up at the long-time pros in my area for advice. (This was so long ago that the Internet was still a strange new world ruled by geeks, ebooks had yet to

This photo shows Tony performing during his Easter themed show





be invented, and “global communities” were the domain of wealthy jet-setters.) All the working magicians of my acquaintance sneered at the idea of donating their time or talent for a cause that didn’t deeply affect them, and maybe not even then. They promoted the belief that a professional magician should never work for free because it could undermine their status as a professional. The job of a professional magician is to entertain and get paid for it.

Next was timing. All these events were scheduled on Saturdays and Sundays, the bread and butter performance days of most entertainers. I figured every donated show meant \$400-\$500 in lost income because I performed somewhere else for free.

I was also ignoring the potential of the promised exposure, and I judged the value of a gig only on what I was directly paid. I simply didn’t feel that donated shows were beneficial for my business. Rather, I felt that I was performing a service for people for which I should be paid, just like a plumber fixes a leaky faucet, a landscaper beautifies the exterior of your dwelling, or a dentist works on your chompers. Being an entertainer was just a different kind of service and why should I give it away for free? They don’t.

The last reason was also the most important to me at the time. I had it in my head that anyone who expected my services for free thought my time and talents were not valuable enough to garner a fee. I resented them for asking, because it made me feel that I wasn’t worthy of doing this for a living. What I have learned since is that they are asking me for the donation because they know my show would add significant value to their event.

Most of the phone calls I receive – and that you do/will receive, too – start with a stranger introducing him/herself, who will then tell you about their specific event. At some point they will mention they want to hire magi-

cian because it would be a wonderful addition to their function. This conversation will quickly head into the direction of them informing you that they are a non-profit organization/fundraising charity/local organization with little or no budget, and will you consider donating your time and talents? They will quickly add that this would be an excellent opportunity for you to PROMOTE YOURSELF AND GET EXPOSURE, which they offer in lieu of payment. It is those simple words that they always mention as the hook to get you in. In essence, they are claiming that you will get many, many paid bookings from the audience at their event, which would (of course) be great for your business.

It almost sounds like a con. Work for me for free, and someone else will pay you later. The strange truth is that they are actually correct. I didn’t see it that way until I performed my first free show – Balding for Dollars.

Balding for Dollars is a huge fundraising event put on by BC Children’s Hospital in support of raising funds for childhood cancer. That year there was about 5,000 people in attendance, including government staff, hospital staff, family and friends of children who were battling the disease, and people who had lost a loved one already and were showing their support.

Let’s backtrack a bit. A couple of years before this phone call my brother, George, was stricken with cancer. He succumbed to it within a few months of diagnosis. This was about 16 years ago. If you have lost a family member to cancer or any other life threatening illness you know what the anguish, heartbreak, and loss is like.

The phone call from Balding for Dollars came to me on a rainy afternoon (it rains a lot in Vancouver so that doesn’t say much). The gentleman began the conversation by introducing himself and letting me know about the cause. He informed me that it was going to be a wonderful fundraising event and that they would love to have me perform two or three different magic shows throughout the day. This meant that I would be there the entire Saturday. He informed me that all the services for that day were by donation and that there were many volunteers as well. Would I have taken this gig had I not lost my brother to cancer? To this day, I don’t know, but being asked to support a cancer cause was like another chance to fight it for George. For the first time in my life my attitude towards performing a free show changed, and that change is forever.

I told the gentleman that I understood the importance of his cause and that I would be happy to come and perform for the entire day, doing three 30 minute shows, one hour apart. I gave up my entire performing Saturday to be there, and I felt damn good about it.

But the gig got sweeter. During that conversation, after I

agreed to do it, he informed me that he was very grateful and of course it would be a great way to promote myself. Then we got to chatting. They had arranged for local TV, radio, and newspaper coverage of the event. Plus, large vinyl banner signs were to be printed up and plastered all over the venue, promoting it. I asked him if it would be possible to get a little TV and/or radio coverage, or if my name could go on one of the banners as the performing magician. To my delight, he agreed to all three, and that changed my outlook about performing a few shows every year for free.

How does this all work? Let me explain by continuing my story.

When I arrived at the fundraiser, I saw many children and adults in wheelchairs, along with multitudes of people with bandanas covering their heads due to the hair loss of chemotherapy. This vision was not unfamiliar to me as I had seen it too often during my brother's battle with the disease. My heart broke, because I knew some of these people wouldn't be alive soon. It brought back dreadful memories of what I already experienced within my family. But when I looked closer I saw hope, smiles, and joy on many of the same people.

I realized I was meant to be there that day.

I performed my three shows to a sea of people both young and old, healthy and ill and I felt so alive and blessed. After my shows I had an overwhelming sense of happiness, peace, and genuine satisfaction that I did good that day. The promoter of the event was also there and he made good on his word. I got a 30 second TV spot where I did a little magic, a radio interview, and one of the nicest vinyl banners I've ever seen with my name on it: Magician Zany Zack performing here today! I remember driving home and feeling great. Yes, I passed up at least two paying gigs that day that wanted to book me, so I figured I lost about \$400-\$500 in income, but what came after was worth so much more.

Without any lie or deception, I can tell you that I booked about 25 paid shows as a direct result of my donated shows that day. Many of these shows came in the form of birthday parties from some of the children who saw me that day. I also booked three company Christmas shows, several summer corporate family picnics, and a few corporate gigs from people who had seen me live at the event or who remembered my name from the TV exposure. That year I ended up with over \$5,000 worth of revenue from that one day.

Please note that this is obviously not a typical fundraising event, as the majority are much smaller in scale.



Most events won't get that much community support, but you don't need to give up an entire Saturday to do them. Let's talk about those smaller events.

Your typical fundraising or charitable event is not going to be for 4,000 or 5,000 people. It will be for a school, a small local community fundraising effort, or a charity event, and it will draw only a few hundred people. I have donated to these types of events, and I always book paying shows from them. The reason is simple. I use some very basic marketing tools when I am at the event to insure that I get remembered.

The first is a 2' x 8' vinyl banner that my printer made up years ago. It goes on the top of my backdrop when I am performing at these free events. It features a cartoon logo of myself and my website, and everyone sees it. It is huge and it is right above me the entire time I perform. I also invested in two vertical roll up banners featuring a life-size promo shot of myself along with my website and telephone number. These are placed at the entrance of the event and in the lobby (if there is a lobby, or another common area if not). They are big and cannot be missed. These were onetime expenses, and I protect them well and pack them carefully for each large scale show, and especially shows where I am performing for free.

I also have thousands of postcards printed up every year which I get done very cost effectively by my printer in bulk. The postcards are 4x6 and advertise me once again in all my glory. I leave a stack of approximately 50-200 on a small table in the lobby or near the stage, depending on the size of the event, and I offer to autograph them after the show.

With all this I can assure you that the free show I performed that day will get me many bookings due to my diligence and self promotion. After all, the person on the phone told me it would be great exposure, and they were right. Not every magician I know sees it that way but I can tell you if you make a little effort and spend a little money on promotional banners you will be set to instill a vision into the audience and they will remember you, and some will hire you for their children's birthdays, Christmas events, Halloween shows, summer picnics, corporate adult shows, and adult birthday parties. This is a fact.

I suppose we should discuss what other sorts of promotion you can get from doing a free show. I will always request the following when I agree to donating my services for an event.

- I require my marketing material to be allowed in any way, shape or form that I ask. In other words, my postcards, flyers, and banners will be allowed to be placed strategically anywhere I want.

- If they are printing any posters or banners for the event, my name and website must be incorporated at their expense. I provide the images they can use.

- The MC must insure that (s)he uses my proper name. Trust me, you do not want to hear an announcement over the PA system that "the magician" or "a magician" will be performing that day.

- If the event is making up posters for their doors, or to be submitted throughout the community, my supplied graphics must be included on those posters.

- If it is an upscale event in which catering is being provided, I am to receive a free meal.

- Free and accessible parking is a must. If the event has valet parking, the organizer pays for my vehicle. If there is paid parking involved, the organizer will have arrangements made prior to my arrival for a free spot close to the door, and that the parking is going to be included. If it is for a community event in a hall or something similar, I require a parking space to be reserved at the entrance by means of pylons or a sign that ensures that when I arrive I don't have to park in no man's land.

- If I am providing my own backdrop and PA system I will require one or two others to help me unload. Although I can unload myself and have many, many times, if it's a donated show it's a small favor to ask.

- I will inquire if there will be any media coverage, such as newspaper reporters, radio stations, or television stations, at the event. If the answer is yes, then I will require some media coverage, and I will remind them that it is great exposure and self promotion, which is what they told me doing the event would give me.

- Finally, I will insist on selling my promotional items at the end of the event or my performance for approximately fifteen minutes. All they need to provide is a small table off to the side of my performing area or in the lobby where I can come out after the show, greet people, sign autographs, and sell them my \$10 "Learn magic with Zany Zack" DVD's or kits. I keep the price low because I use all my own materials. At \$10 they are an impulse buy, but to sweeten the deal I donate back 15% to the event that has hired me. This always has been a positive feature and I have rarely been rejected for this request as I insist this is the final make or break factor of the deal. I must add that the new technology of credit card swipers readily available for iPhones and smart phones is an easy way for me to generate some income at the event and has at times actually made me more than what I would have made in my fee.

So now does this mean I accept every single free show?

The answer of course is no. The reasons are varied. I may already be booked for that time, or if I can't fit it in due to a show before or after. Sometimes the person on the other end will not accept ALL of my requests, the main one being the sale my wares after the show (usually I overcome their protests with a reminder that I am donating a \$300-\$1000 show). Sometimes people are not very accommodating. Sometimes they are just jerks, and I can weed out these people very quickly. Another reason that I won't accept a particular free show could be distance. If the show is too far, I likely won't agree to doing it for free, and I may offer my "fundraiser" rate.

What's that you ask? A fundraiser rate? Why would you have a fundraiser rate when you can donate?

The truth is, sometimes they are looking for donations wherever they can but they have money. They just want to stretch it – or save it – as much as possible. Fair enough, but there are organizations and causes I just don't feel that strongly about and I don't want to donate. But they deserve a break, so I have my fundraiser rate.

If they are looking for walk-around magic and/or balloons, quote them your hourly rate. (Of note – I only donate stage shows). Then give them the "fundraiser rate". It could be \$50 off, a free half-hour, or a reduced flat rate if they hire you for the full gig. (If you are doing walk-around or balloons, be certain to factor in breaks).

If they are looking for a main attraction, do the same for your show price, or, if they are selling tickets to your show, charge a percentage of tickets. This is excellent for schools, since they have tons of opportunities to get the word out and a community invested in them, but since fundraising is the responsibility of the Parent Advisory Committee, there are almost no funds for initial outlay.

And still, there's nothing against taking them up on their offer of "exposure". Insist on the promotional material, the banners, and the posters. Inquire about the media, and request access to it.

These days I tend to pick and choose fundraisers very carefully, and I only donate three or four shows per year. Sometimes I have a vested interest in the cause, like Balding for Dollars or Autism Speaks. (For the readers who didn't know this about me, I have two children with autism). Plus, if I accept "exposure" as a form of payment, I want to be seen by as many people as possible. I am a businessman after all, so I prefer to donate my time and talents to larger organizations in which there will be many more people in attendance. It is a simple matter of math. More people in audi-

ence = more prospective paid gigs. While I would love to be able to help everybody who asks, I just can't give 30-40 free shows a year. At that point it just isn't cost effective because any potential paid gigs would be lost due to commitments to these freebies.

I will donate small shows if I have a personal attachment to the cause. For example, I have donated birthday party shows to good friends and good neighbors, I have done grass-roots fundraisers for families in the neighborhood, and I do seasonal shows at my kids' school. I may even do a free show for a random event that I think is a good cause. Yet, if the event has a hundred attendees or thousands, these days a donated gig will always result in future bookings due to my market-



ing strategies.

Now let's talk about why some entertainers don't want to do free shows. Earlier, I discussed my former feelings against donated shows. I've tossed those presumptions away, but I still get caught in the middle of the Great Donation Debate amongst some performers that seems to never cease.

The main argument I hear around against donating shows stems from the attitude of, "my time is valuable and my services are valuable, and I don't give them away". (This is their personal choice, just as mine is.) Another reason I've heard many times over is, "I am a professional, not an amateur. Professionals don't work for free." (This is why the free show is called a donation.) Then there are some magicians who truly resent the whole idea that someone is asking for a "handout" in the form of a free a show, even when the organization has such a tiny budget that the going show rate would strip it clean.

Recently I was in conversation with a local performer over other magicians donating talent. The gist of his argument was, "If you are performing for free, you are taking away my business." This is absurd, because they were not going to hire you. They hired the person who was flexible and willing to accommodate their needs. You made it pretty clear to them that you were not that person.

The fact is, some magicians will give a free show (or two or three) throughout the year if they get something back in terms of publicity (TV footage for their website, newspaper write-ups, other media coverage, and self-promotion opportunities), with the understanding that the publicity will lead to paying shows. There are other magicians who don't see it this way, and have their own opinions as to why they will never work for free. In all honesty, each of us has an opinion by which we live and perform. In my opinion I will continue to pick and choose strategically a few free shows every year because I know from experience I will eventually prosper financially in the form of future bookings and even great media coverage, which is absolutely wonderful on your website.

Finally, I would just like to say that whether or not you decide to perform that free show for a good cause or for personal benefit, always perform as if you are getting paid just as much as a regular gig. After all, the audience doesn't know. They expect to see a fantastic show. And whether you are getting paid or not, you are obligated to give them exactly that.



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HOCUS-POCUS

BETTY AND PAUL GROSS

Store: Hocus Pocus
Location: Fresno, California
Owner: Paul Gross
Website: www.hocus-pocus.com

In the last issue we visited The Browsers Den of Magic in Toronto Canada. Today we are traveling south, across the US border and west to The Golden State of California. Here we find a magic shop which has been owned and operated by the same person for nearly 40 years – Paul Gross. The shop is Hocus Pocus and it is

located in Fresno, about 200 miles north of Los Angeles. Paul opened Hocus Pocus in 1976; he was only eighteen years old. The first Hocus Pocus location was a 2,000 square foot space located in a shopping mall, and Paul had \$2,500 (approximately \$10,000 today) to open its doors. Of course even then, how does an eighteen year old get a loan of any amount? Paul remembers, “My dad was one of the owners of the largest independently owned furniture stores here in Fresno – which is still in business to this

day by the way – and my dad’s dream, and his partner’s, was that the two sons would take over that business. Before I graduated high school I was working for my dad part time on the weekends. I was doing magic shows on the side and I had absolutely no interest in the furniture business at all – at all. I had a freak accident where I actually fell through a glass door and I almost lost the use of my right hand. When I did that I was off from work for a couple of weeks and one day I told my dad that I want to do magic. I want to

open a magic store and do shows on the side –because I was making a lot of money doing shows on the side. My dad just looked at me and said ‘You know, I wish I had the opportunity that do when I was a kid, but I didn’t, and I’ll do whatever I can to help you get this started. I’d rather you do it, and if it succeeds all the better, and if it doesn’t at least you’ll know you tried.’ So the next day we made an appointment at the bank, the bank my dad did all his business with, and sat down with the bank manager who’s a friend of my dad’s. I went through this long dissertation of I’m going to do this, and we’re going to do this and this. He looked at me and said ‘Paul, that was a wonderful presentation, and if you’re asking me for the money my answer is absolutely no. But if your dad’s here because you’re going to co-sign you can have whatever you want.’ And that’s how I started.” His father’s support allowed Paul to open Hocus Pocus, and it was his mother’s simple suggestion which first opened the door, releasing the magic bug whose bite hit a vein, leaving Paul destined for a life in magic. “I remember it like it was



yesterday. My mom said ‘There’s a show on TV you might want to see.’ It was the first episode of The Magical Land of Allakazam, and I was glued to the set from that day on. I never missed another episode.” [See issue 9 of Vanish for a more in-depth account of Mark Wilson’s influence on Paul.] With no magic shop in town, or even magic books at the local library, Paul got his magic through catalogues until he was about twelve. His parents discovered a magic shop in San Francisco, The House of Magic then run by

Marvin Burger. Even then because the shop was so far away Paul ordered his magic out of The House of Magic catalogue, but now he had some guidance. “He [Marvin Burger] took his catalogue, and he took a little black marking pen, and he marked by each trick and he told my parents ‘If I marked that trick you tell him I guarantee that it will do exactly as it says, there’s no hype. If he buys any of those tricks I’ll give him an unconditional money back guarantee’ which nobody did in those days. Hardly anybody does it today.”

Even having spent most of his life running Hocus Pocus, Paul found time to perform professionally. He spent time as the Bank of America magician, travelling around the country performing for them. He also spent a year as the Holiday Inn Magician. “We designed a show called Suite Magic and travelled around to all the Comfort Inn’s and Holiday Suites, and hired magicians in the different cities, and we did magic shows for the grand openings. I also designed a whole line of promotional giveaways and prizes they gave away at those events.”

Through the years Hocus Pocus changed locations, and with each move the shops focus on magic grew stronger. “When we opened up in a



shopping center with foot traffic, half the store was magic the other was costumes, novelties and that type of thing. Eventually we moved from that shopping center to a different location. When I did that I got rid of all the novelties and Halloween. It was strictly magic and the allied arts, puppetry, ventriloquism and juggling. When we moved from that location to a large location before the one now, it was all magic and juggling.” At 30,000 square feet the current Hocus Pocus location is not what you would consider a traditional brick and mortar shop. Rather it is a magic complex. “The way we’re set up is we are actually three buildings connected. We have the warehouse and it’s connected by my wife’s office, which connects to the building I’m in, and this we call the showroom, but it’s nothing like you’ve seen in a magic shop. And then there’s another big building connected by a hallway behind my office, and that’s where we go through the private estate and collectibles. There’s one large room and several outlying rooms that we use to cull everything out. And in the larger room we use as classes because Tim Mannix, who works here with us, he teaches classes on Saturdays and we also use that for lectures and other special events.”

The private estate and collectibles rightfully inhabit a large portion of



day now, once this issue is released.] We're excited about that because it'll be light-years ahead of where we are now." Which is great news for everyone - I've heard talk about the outdated Hocus Pocus website. "When we had the brick and mortar store, before the internet, on a good day we would do two thousand dollars. In this business [post internet] we'll do fifteen to twenty thousand dollars in a day. It's a wider range of audience. With only a brick and mortar store you're only dealing with the immediate area, a five to six mile radius, unless you're in an area that can pull off of other cities. For us what saved us as a brick and mortar store, we have two huge convention center here, and there was constantly guys coming in from out of town so we had visitors all the time - doctors, lawyers come into town - and the first thing these guys would do is open up the phone book and see if there's a magic shop. That's really what kept us alive."

Hocus Pocus continues to thrive and it is clear to see why. Paul has combined his experience of performing, knowledge of collectable magic pieces and willingness to change the face of the business to meet a changing market place. "I wouldn't

want to go back to just a brick and mortar store. What I have here is better than a brick and mortar store, I mean these guys come in and they go nuts, because I have all this inventory. I can never have that with a brick and mortar store. I wouldn't have the space number one. I've got thirty thousand square feet of building here, and my rent is probably less here than if I was in a shopping center where I had constant foot traffic."

Even in the midst of the vast amount of inventory and large

facility, Paul still attributes success to customer service. "We're very customer service oriented, I don't care if you bought it today or bought a year ago, we'll service what we sell. We'll replace anything no questions asked. I let people send things back if they're not happy with it - give them their money back or select something else, which most shops don't do... My belief is like my dad's in the furniture business. You're building your business on trust and honesty. The old magic dealers just crammed it down their throats; tell them what they need to hear to sell them the product. We don't do that here."

Paul readily admits that his thoughts on brick and mortar stores are simply his opinions, however there's no arguing whether or not his business model works. When visiting this magic shop call ahead of time and give yourself plenty of time to take in the hundreds of thousands of items. If you are looking for something specific chances are they either have it or know where to find it.





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PERFORM THROUGHOUT
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USA. HERE THEY PRESENT
THEIR ORIGINAL IDEA USING
THREE DAGGERS.



A NOVEL

ROUTINE BY

THE COMEDY

MINDS OF REY

BEN & QUIQUE

MARDUK.

Effect:

Marduk says he will do an effect with cards. Rey Ben wants to help him or to perform the trick together ...

Marduk accepts.

Quique Marduk tells him to follow him exactly what he says and does.

Marduk goes close to the audience and approached a young lady. Rey Ben is about a man. After a few gags, the two spectators each choose a card, sign it with different colours of fiber and return the cards to the decks, which are well mixed.

Rey Ben and Marduk are located several meters away, one on each side of the audience.

Finally Quique Marduk says that the card chosen, despite the cuts and blends, will be on the top of the deck. Both take the cards on the top of each deck and the cards are found wrong, Marduk's card is signed by Rey Ben's spectator and so.

You need:

2 decks of cards, a permanent fiber black, a permanent fiber red, two magicians.

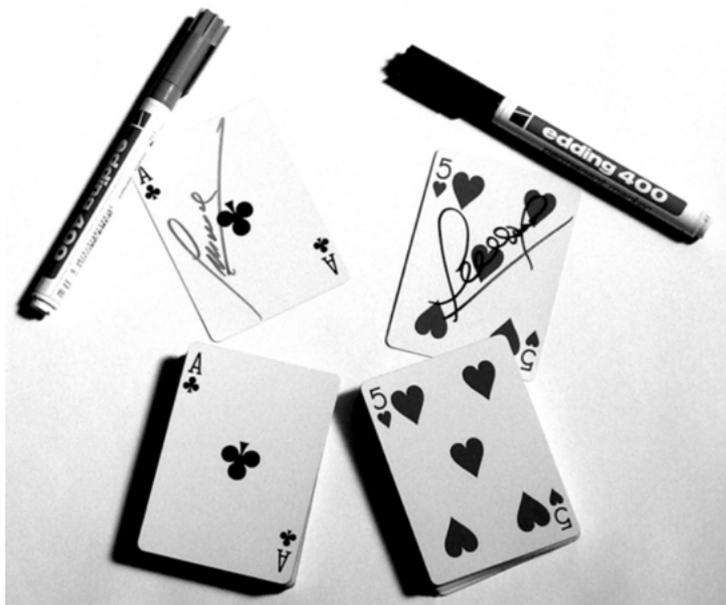
Preparation:

For this example, take out the two 5 of hearts and aces of clubs from the decks. It is always advisable to take two contrasting cards and with space to see the signatures.

Draw any fake signature with black fiber on the face of one of the five of hearts, and make any fake signature

THE TRAVEL OF TWO SIGNED CARDS

with red fiber on the face of one of the Ace of clubs. Take one of the decks and put the signed in red ace of clubs on top, Over it, and as a top card, put the five of hearts unsigned. Place the deck in the box and leave it next to the black fiber. (This will be Marduk's deck)



Take the 5 of hearts signed in black and put it on the top of the other deck, and over it, put the ace of clubs without a signature. Place this deck in its case and leave it next to the red fiber. (this will be the Ben's deck)

Procedure:

Both perform the same movements. False shuffle without altering the order of the top two cards. We force the top card. As the spectator sees this card, we take the fiber and ask to sign on the face of the card.

While the spectator does this, we performed a Double Undercut to transfer the signed card from the top to the bottom of the deck, while we make a break above it.

Now we ask the spectator to place his card signed in the middle of the deck, to do this, we cut through the centre



by removing the top half with the help of the right index finger, and we make the spectator put his card, while maintaining the Break.



Now, while you simulate cutting the deck, the card from the bottom goes to the top, just over the real signed card. The rest of the pack goes to the bottom. After this action, the top card will be the fake signed card, and below it, the spectator's signed card. Now make a new false shuffle without altering the order of the top two cards.

Marduk tells to Rey Ben that despite the cuts and shuffles, the signed card will be on the top of the deck.

Now we use a Guy Hollingworth's subtlety. We take the top card and show it to the spectator. Both believe they are seen the card from the other, as it match in value and colour of the signature, and because the location of the two magicians, the same thinks each half of the theatre.

At that time we realize what happened (both signed cards have changed places!)

Each one approaches the middle of the theatre with the deck resting in the left hand (with the spectator's signed card on top) and the fake card on the right hand in full view (not exactly full, but half of the audience).

On reaching the middle of the theatre we caution that the opposite audience never see the faces of these cards. Each one place the card over the deck of the at the same time, and immediately they go back to the spectator who chose the card, but on the way, they perform a Second Deal to take the second card (the authentic signed card) and give it to spectator who recognize it.

The second deal can be also replaced by a "top change" One & a Half also have the very same effect to be performed by a solo magician, and they perform and explain the effect during their lecture for magicians called "Ups & Downs"

By clicking here you can watch a demo of One & a Half. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H3REDfzSMSU>



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NUMERATION REVELATION

TRICK:

Ask someone to concentrate on the last two digits of their birth year and to add that two digit number to the age they will be on their birthday this year. The magician reveals their secret number.

SECRET:

This is something that is best done one on one, because you don't want others to hear the answer. The answer is 113. Basically, this is just a tricky way of saying it is the year 2013. If others hear you say this, then they might deduce that it is always 113 for everyone. If no one else is around then the spectator surmises that the number is always unique.

There is an exception to this rule. Assuming you are reading this in the year 2013, anyone who is born before the year 2000 will come up with the number 113. Anyone born in 2000 or after will arrive at 13. In 2014 the secret number will be 114 for those born before 2000, and 14 for those born in 2000 or after, and so on and so forth. When presenting this little mystery, I prefer to use an older person. Frankly, I think that it



is more difficult to put together how you came up with the larger number 113.

You can really have some fun with this one. Rather than just blurting out the number use your insight and tell them a little bit about themselves. If you are performing this for a pretty girl, then take her hand and pretend to read her palm before revealing the number. Study their tea leaves. Bust out a crystal ball. I'd recommend using the pseudo-science of Phrenology, but people who believe in that should have their head examined.

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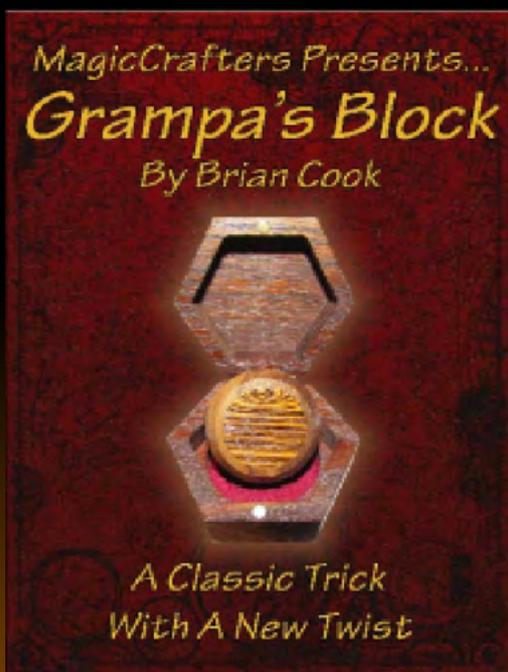
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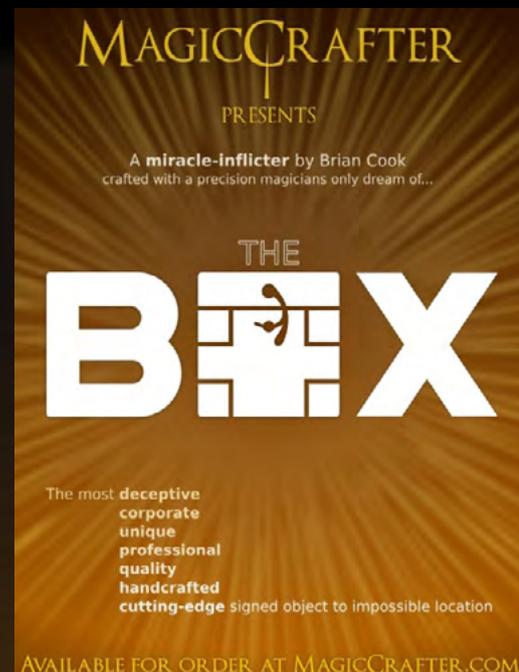
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DANNY ARCHER

Where do ideas come from? I don't know about you, but this idea popped into my head a few weeks ago while sitting at the bar of the Minturn Country Club, home of the Vail Magic Club. After thinking of the effect, and contemplating a method, I grabbed a deck of cards, turned to the people sitting next to me and performed it for them. It got a great reaction and I refined it a bit and it played even stronger. Let me describe the effect and then I will provide two different handlings.

Here is what the spectators experience. The performer hands the deck to Spectator A to shuffle. Retrieving the deck, the cards are dribbled, and Spectator A calls Stop and looks at a card in the middle. This is repeated for Spectator B. Spectator B is then handed the cards and they shuffle the deck. The performer retakes the pack and runs through the deck, removing two cards while the deck is tabled. The two cards are sandwiched between the palms of both spectator's right hands. The magician asks both spectator to name their card when he snaps his fingers. He does and both people say the KD. When their hands are separated, there is only a single card and it is the KD.

This effect can be done with any deck at any time. First I will explain the handling that I use and then I will explain a second, easier handling. After retrieving the shuffled pack, do a standard dribble and when the spectator calls Stop, show them the bottom card of the upper packet and ask them to remember the card. See figure 1 performer's view and figure 2 spectator's view.

Replace the upper packet and maintain a break. Execute a Side Steal of the selected card, which will now be on top of the deck. Glimpse the top card and then establish a break under the top card.

The glimpse that I use is based upon an All-Around Square (turning the deck end for end). The All-Around

Square is hard to describe but you already know how to do it. Just hold a deck in dealers grip and turn it end for end. That's the All-Around Square. To turn this into a glimpse (at least for right-handed people), as the right hand first contacts the deck, the first finger pushes the top card slightly to the left. If you now perform the normal actions of the All-Around Square, and glance down, you will see that the index of the top card comes into view. You are also able to see the bottom card of the deck as well. Figure 3 shows the start, figure 4 the middle and figure 5 the glimpse.

To recap, you have glimpsed the top card and have established a break underneath it. Undercut the bottom half of the deck to the top, maintaining the break. Turn to Spectator B and do a Dribble Force (dribble the cards and stop at the break). Now Spectator B has just looked at the same card as Spectator A. Of course you need to position both spectators so that they don't see the other's selection. Hand the deck to Spectator B and have them shuffle.

After Spectator B gives you back the shuffled deck you ask each person to think of their card as you run through the face-up deck. You upjog the selection and any other card. The two upjogged cards are removed and the deck is tabled. The selected card is the top card of the two-card packet. You explain that you are not sure which card belongs to which person as you ask one spectator to hold out their hand palm up. To illustrate what you want them to do, the two cards are placed into the left hand (in position to do a Gambler's Cop) as your right hand is held palm up. Figure 6 shows the Gambler's Cop and figure 7 shows replacing the Cop.

As you look at Spectator B and ask them to hold their hand palm down over Spectator A's hand, you Cop the bottom card with your left hand. The right hand holds the card(s) and positions them between the spectators

palms as their two hands come together. The right hand sweeps the deck off the table into the left hand and the copped card is added to the bottom of the deck. All that is left is to build it up and they will be surprised when they each name the same card and even more surprised to see that there is only one card in between their palms.

I have always believed that the sleights we have in our arsenal are like the tools a repairman might have in his toolbox. We find the tools that work for us and then change or adapt routines so we can use the most comfortable and reliable tools. The Side Steal and Gambler's Cop are two of my personal favorites but that may not be the same for everyone reading this. Here is another way to do the same trick using different tools.

Have Spectator A freely select a card and when it is replaced, control it to the top. Glimpse the top card and then force it on Spectator B. After Spectator B shuffles, retrieve the deck, remove the selection and another card and openly place them on top of the deck (with the selected card being the top card). Ask either spectator to hold their hand out, palm upwards, and thumb off the top card off and into their palm. Have the other spectator hold their hand next to the first, and ask them to cover the card as you thumb off the second selection. As their hand covers the card, do the Rub-a-dub Vanish (idea suggested by Gregory Wilson). The left thumb pushes over the top card, and as the hand covers the card, the left thumb pulls it back flush on top of the deck. Well done, this looks extremely convincing.

An easier way is to use your own hand to cover the second card. Why you would do this can easily be covered with scripting and presentation.

Have one person hold out their hand and then thumb off the top card onto their palm and cover it with your hand in an effort to determine which card is theirs. Acting unsure, repeat this with the next card and cover it with your hand. I then table the deck, look at the second spectator and ask them to put their hand palm down on top of your hand. Then remove your hand and you end up as before with the selection in between the hands of the two spectators.

This has proven to be a very strong effect and has made it into my starting line-up. I looked around to see if I could find a precedent for this effect and I did not. I ran this by Joshua Jay, Paul Cummins, Jon Racherbaumer and Jason England, four men whose knowledge of card effects are far reaching and encyclopedic, and they could not think of a precedent. Jon and Paul pointed out that the fusion idea as used in Anniversary Waltz, has been done with two DIFFERENT selections fusing together but not like I have done here. That being said, I believe it's possible that the effect has been thought

of before and if anyone using this is aware of an earlier, similar effect, please let me know.

Below is the script that I use when I perform this effect. While I now prefer to always craft my own script, I remember being a young magician and I was always grateful when the author provided me with a starting point.

"Most magicians won't let you shuffle the deck before they do a trick. I'm not most magicians. Here, shuffle the cards. I'm gonna drop them like this, you say stop before I get to the end. Don't forget your card. We'll do the same thing with you... You say Stop. Remember your card. Most magicians won't let shuffle the deck after the card has been chosen. I'm not most magicians. Here, shuffle the deck. Give me the cards. I want you both to think to yourselves of the name of your card. I will look through the cards and see if I get a feeling. I have a feeling that I'm in trouble. I think these two cards are right (cards removed and held, deck tabled), but I'm not sure which card is which. Hold your hand out like this... You put your hand on top of theirs. I'm still not sure... I'll tell you what, when I snap my fingers, both of you say the name of your card out loud. SNAP. The KD?... Wow!... You both looked at the same card... I put two cards between your hands and that means I have a 50% chance of being right... I went to college... Take a look. One card!... Well it looks like I was 100% right!"



Figure 1



Figure 2

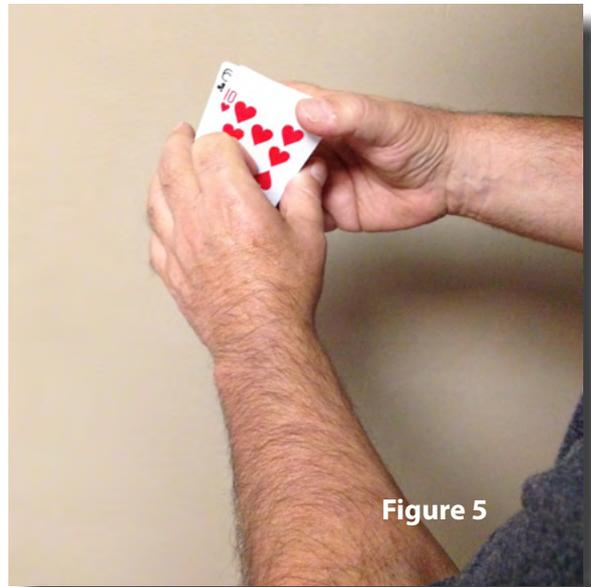


Figure 5



Figure 3

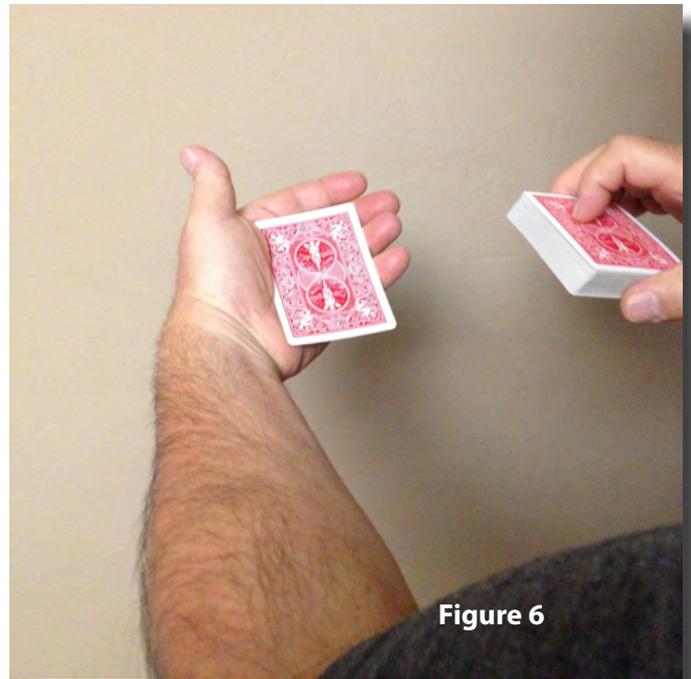


Figure 6

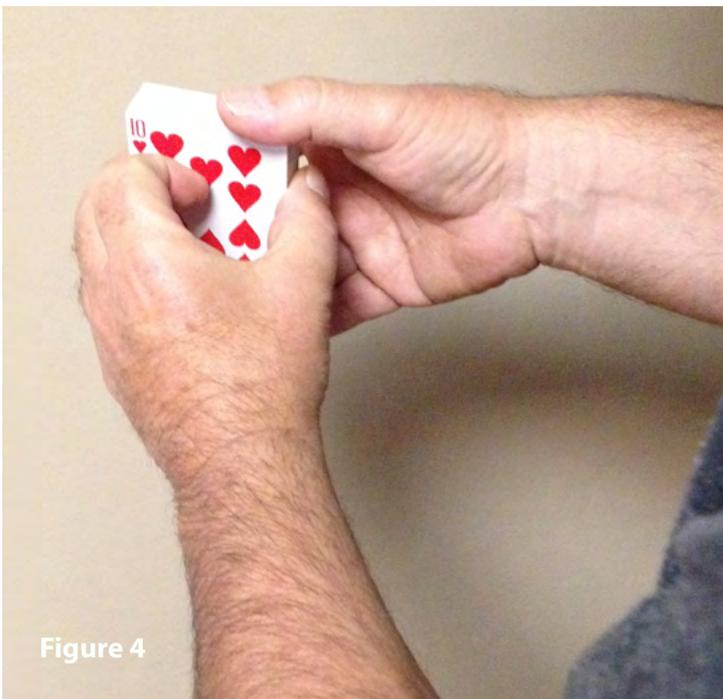


Figure 4



Figure 7

AS HIGH AS A KITE

JOHN CAREY



I have always loved hands off type discoveries of aces etc. The following little variant uses a brilliant and very funny Bill Malone presentational gambit at the end, from his *Cut em High and Tie*, published in Jim Swains book *21st Century Card Magic*. Covertly get four aces to the top of your deck and you are good to go.

False shuffle retaining your ace slug on top. Commence a hand to hand spread and push out about 12 cards from the centre, leaving them outjogged. Swivel them out of the deck, at the same time secretly adding an ace to the top of this packet, using Larry Jennings beautiful 'Optical Add On.' This is very simple as you only have to drag the ace forward with your right thumb and then swivel or strip out the packet, with an ace secretly added on top. Hand this packet to specy 1. Repeat these actions twice more for specy's 2 and 3, leaving all four of you with an ace on top of each packet.

Suggest a little game known the world over as I do. Deal 3 or 4 cards into a face down pile and ask your

helpers to follow your lead. Then overhand shuffle your remaining cards. They once more replicate your actions. Push off 2 or 3 more cards and drop them on top of your pile and invite them to mirror your actions once more. Give your remaining cards a quick mix and drop them on top of your tabled section. An ace secretly resides at the face of your spectators packets and of course yours. Paul Wilson uses this strategy in his ConCam Coincidence routine published in Steve Beams *Semi Automatic Card Tricks Volume 8*.

Walk and talk the group through the classic cross cut force of Max Holden, cutting off a section and then placing the remainder perpendicular on top. They once more copy you. Compliment the group on how well they mixed their cards and replicated you. To conclude the presentation state that the person with the highest card goes to Vegas. Bring your right hand over the upper packet of your section and instruct them to do the same. State that you will count to 3 and they must all lift off their upper packet and turn their hand palm up. You do, they do, and you conclude the effect with a startling discovery of the aces as you call out "its a tie"!!!



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"Sharing the road to success"

TWO-WAY PREDICTION PAD BY WAYNE ROGERS

YOU ARE PERFORMING your favorite "Which Hand" routine and have correctly guessed 4 or 5 times in which hand the spectator is holding the coin or medalion. Now it is time to throw in a "logical disconnect" and finish the effect by using a totally different method.

You tell the spectator you will end by PREDICTING in advance which hand the coin will be in. You flip open a small pad, slap on a Post-It Note sticker, jot down your prediction, close the pad and drop it on the table. You are committed.

The spectator brings out their hand with the coin on the right open palm. You flip open the pad and the prediction reads: "RIGHT HAND." Success!
THE SECRET is a two-way opening pad. Both openings are from the front or top of the pad. Flip the pad open from the short end and you get one prediction. Open it by holding the sides and you get another. Either LEFT or RIGHT.

THE SPECIAL PAD is made up from parts of two pads. The best pad for this has a hard plastic front and back cover and is spiral bound on the short end. From a duplicate pad take off the white cover (it must be white to match the regular pad pages) and add this under the outer cover of your two-way pad, with just a couple of spare pages between the two plastic layers. The extra plastic divider is the same width as the outer covers, but cut shorter.

NOTE. My pad had white plastic covers so I glued on an additional black cover, back and front. The black plastic came from the cover of a soft plastic binder I cut up. The colour of the covers is not important. I just happen to prefer black.

Once assembled the order of parts from the top down is: Top cover, two regular pad pages, plastic divider cut short, the main pad pages and finally the bottom cover. You will see from the photos I glued a calendar under the top cover, and another under the short divider. The

audience will see the calendar whichever prediction you reveal. Visually everything is consistent and I think better than leaving the area blank

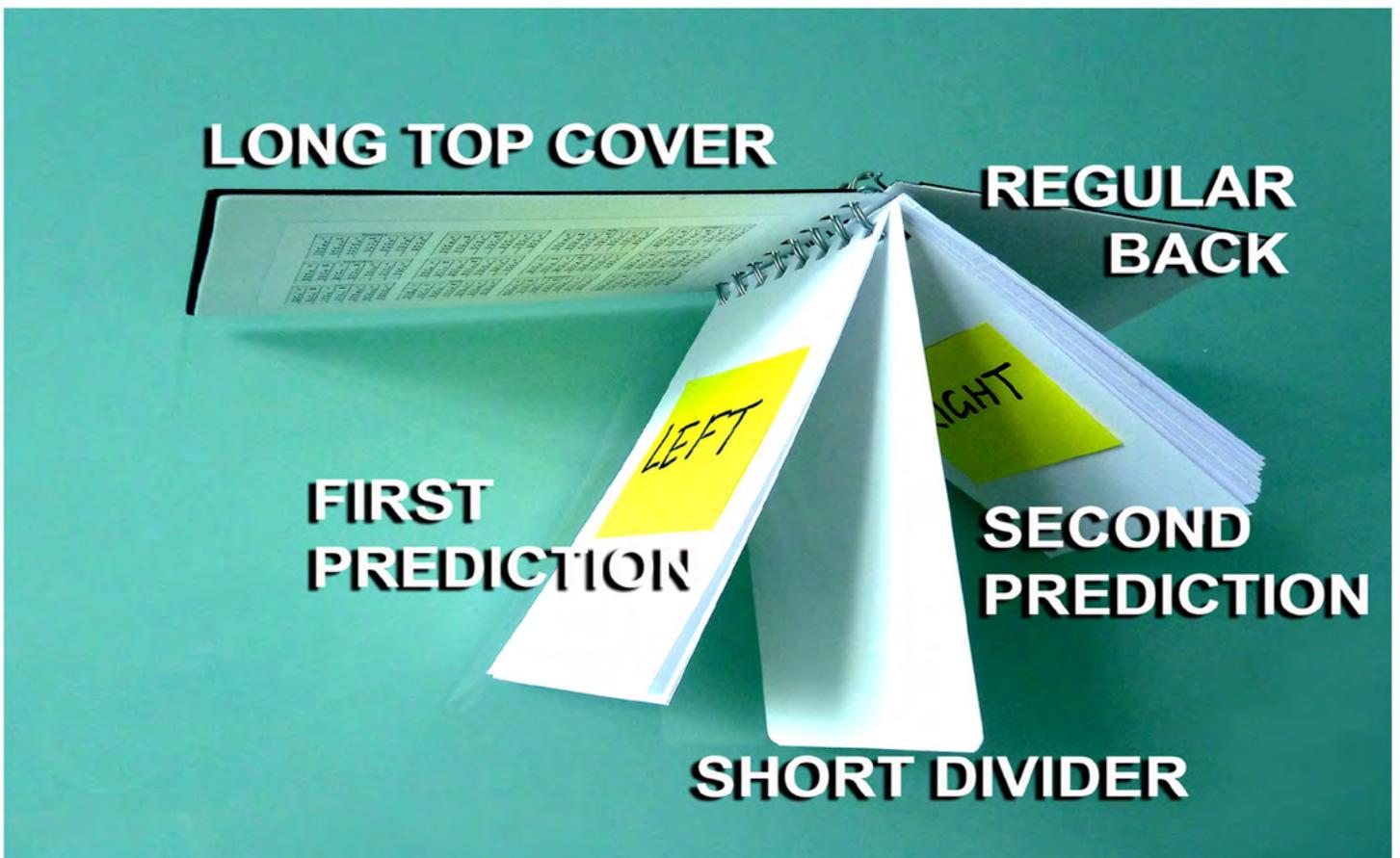
PRE SHOW put the second prediction in place under the short divider and close the pad. During the show open the pad, stick on the Post-It Note sticker and write "LEFT" while keeping your writing hidden from the audience as you do this. Close the pad and place it on the table.

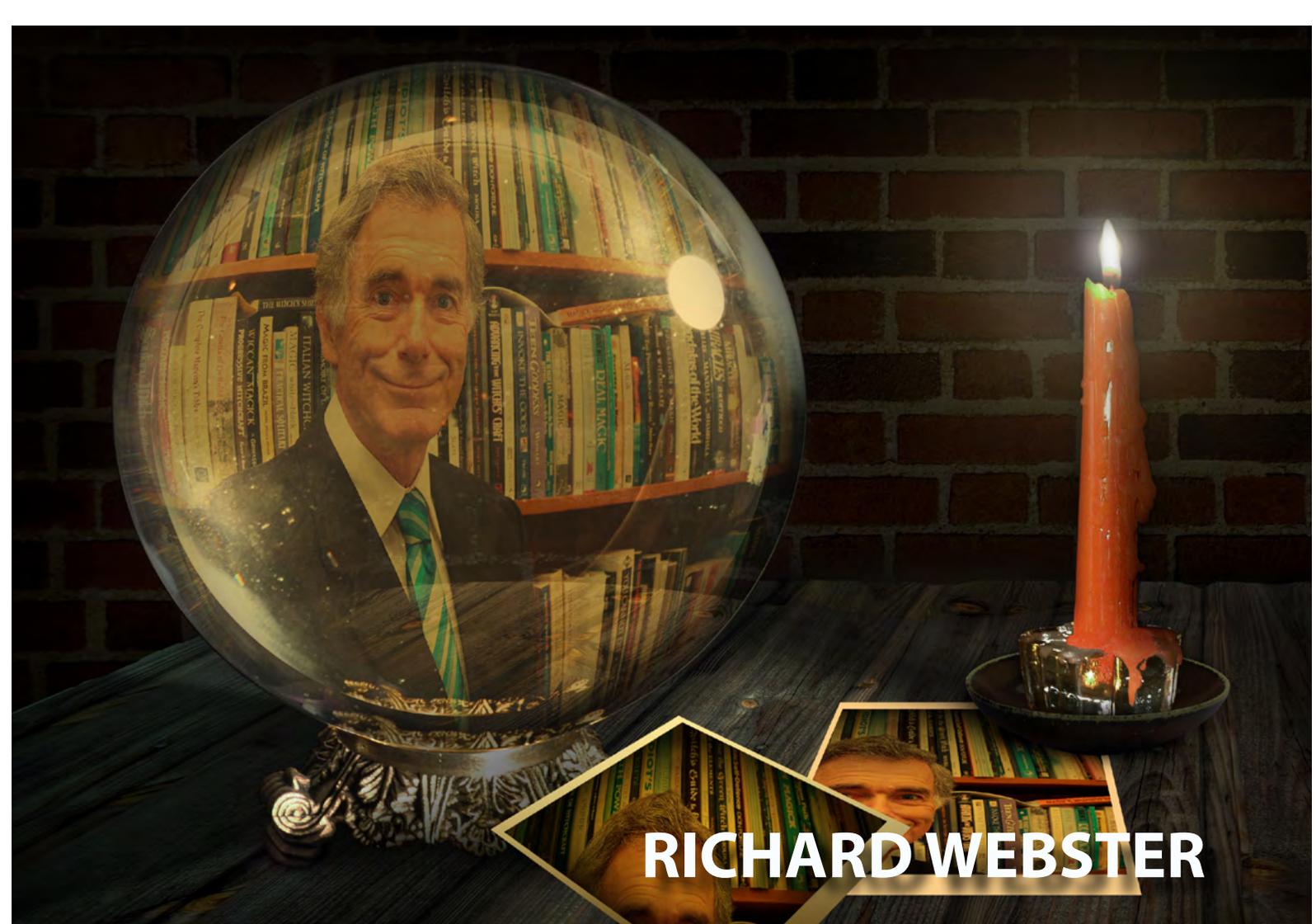
Once you see which hand the coin is in, you either open the pad from the short end, and reveal the first prediction, or you grasp the end of the pad from the side, pick up the second plastic divider along with the top cover plus the couple of pages in between. This reveals the second prediction option. Think of it as a multi-lift in cards.

I like to finish by opening the cover(s) right back to display the prediction as it hides the workings of the pad better. Handle it casually as if it were un-gimmicked. Treat it like a regular note pad and so will your audience.

Inspiration for my pad prediction as a way of finishing my "Which Hand" routine came from the prediction at the end of Christopher Taylor and Matthew Johnson's "ALONE" <http://www.taylorimagineering.com/products/alone-4d.php> AND from a suggestion in one of Kennedy's Mental Underground newsletters <http://mentalunderground.com/>

Wayne Rogers
chicane@nzmagic.com





RICHARD WEBSTER

MY PSYCHIC TRAVEL AGENT

Richard Webster explains a routine from his current repertoire with a travel theme. This could be used for both close-up and platform shows.

"My travel agent is extremely psychic. I might phone her and say I want to go to Eketahuna (small town in New Zealand), and she'll say, 'No, you don't. Come in and see me.' When I do, she'll show me ten sealed envelopes, just like these ones. (The performer displays ten small manilla envelopes) 'These all contain places I know you want to visit,' my travel agent says. She also indicates ten of her business cards spread out across her desk. 'I've also written these destinations on the other side of these cards. Take one of the envelopes, and see what vibrations you get from it. Now, hold your left hand over each of the cards in turn. You should sense an attraction to one of them. Push it out of the line.' She then turns over the other cards to reveal nine different destinations, all places I'd love to go to. 'Open the envelope,' she says. I do, and it might, for instance,

say Barcelona. She asks me to turn over the card I selected, and it also says, Barcelona. 'See,' she tells me. 'Your subconscious mind knew you shouldn't be going to Eketahuna, as you really want to visit Barcelona.' She then hands me an envelope. When I open it, I find she's already prepared an invoice for my flight to Barcelona. I must admit, my wife and I had a wonderful time there.

"It works every time in her office. Let's see if we can replicate it here tonight. I've got the ten envelopes, as you can see. Madam, would you please give them a good mix? Thanks. I also have ten business cards, with different destinations on them. I have: New York, London, Paris, Rio de Janeiro, Geneva, Barcelona, Sydney, Singapore, Beijing and San Francisco. Would you be kind enough to mix them? Thanks. I also have an invoice.

Would you hold it for the next few minutes? Thanks.”

The mentalist turns back to the lady mixing the manilla envelopes. “That’s probably enough. Please give me one of the envelopes. That’s the one we’ll use.” The mentalist also takes back the other nine envelopes and places them in a pocket. He then takes back the ten business cards, fans them and allows ten people in the front row to each select one.

“All I need do now is find the card that resonates best with this envelope.” The mentalist holds his left hand over each business card in turn, and finally returns to one person. He hands him or her the envelope. “I’m not 100% sure,” he says. “But I got the best response from you. What name is written on your card?” “Paris,” the person might say. “Please open the envelope.” The volunteer opens the envelope. Inside is a business card that says Paris.

Finally, the mentalist asks the person holding the prediction (invoice) to open it. It contains an invoice for two people to travel first class to Paris.

REQUIRED:

20 business cards

10 small envelopes

1 prediction in the form of an invoice.

METHOD:

The names of ten destinations are written on the back of ten business cards. The card containing the force destination is marked on the front, so you can identify it later. The force destination is also written on the backs of the other ten business cards, and they are sealed inside the ten envelopes.

During the routine, the ten envelopes are mixed, and

one is handed to you. You also take the other envelopes and get rid of them by placing them in a pocket or in your case.

The ten business cards containing the different destinations are also mixed, and you hand them out to ten people. You need to remember which person receives the marked card.

All the work is done. In your best psychic manner hold your hand over each business card, and manage to successfully match up the card and envelope. Finally, have the prediction opened to reveal that you had predicted this outcome in advance.

Notes:

Frequently, you’ll be able to see the bottom card of the stack as the business cards are handed to you after they’ve been mixed. If you note who takes the bottom card, you’ll be able to appear confused, and have trouble selecting between the person holding the force card and the person holding the bottom card. Hand the envelope to the correct person, and after he’s told you what the destination is, turn back to the other person and ask, “Was your card Paris (or whatever it happened to be)?” This makes it appear that you could have discerned any, or all, of the cards.

Finally, if you own Ludovic Mignon’s excellent effect, “Hotel” (available from Marchand de Trucs), you’ll be able to predict the hotel you’ll be staying in as well.



TI

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INSTANT PHOTOGRAPHY

by Wolfgang Riebe



Here is another incredible effect that will add a new era to the photographic development industry! Yes, I know that everything is digital today, but for the older generation and the hard core photographers who still believe in film, this will be a hit.

I have added this trick together with the previous "Ink Paper to Money" trick, (see VANISH 9) as they apply the exact same principal, and you can refer to the previous photos to make everything clear in this routine.

Imagine this: You show a small, black, photo film capsule, from which you remove a roll of film. Now, in the open light, you pull a piece of unexposed film out of the roll, thus exposing it and rendering it useless... or not?

You cut about one frame size off of this film and let everyone examine it to make sure that there is nothing on that piece of film. Once everything has been checked, you place this film frame back into the black photo capsule, seal the capsule with the lid, and give it to a spectator to hold.

Now, you take out a pile of blank cards that have various holiday destinations written on each card, e.g. Rome, Paris, Munich, etc. You explain to the audience that, on your recent trip around the world, you took some photos, and the film which you just exposed to the light and supposedly ruined contains pictures of you in various cities. The single frame you placed into the capsule could be a photo of you in any city. You want a volunteer to select any card from the pile so that a city can be chosen.

After shuffling the cards, the spectator is asked to freely select one. Let us say that he chose Paris. Now, the spectator who is holding the black photo capsule is asked to open it and remove the piece of film. This is done, and when the frame of film is held to the light, it has clearly changed into a photo negative of you standing in front of the Eiffel Tower!

This trick totally blows away any spectator because it is just impossible to comprehend how you can accomplish this, especially if you have photographers in the audience who know something about film and the development thereof.

If you are looking for something totally different and totally new, this is the trick for you.

You will require a regular, black, photo film capsule, a roll of old film and a negative of you standing in front of some well known landmark in a big city. You will also need some blank playing cards, onto which you have written the names of different cities. In this example, we will stick to Paris and the Eiffel Tower. Lastly, you will also need a thumb tip.

For those of you who are not too clear on what a photo negative is, when you send a roll of film in for development, you get the photos back as well as strips of film which are called negatives. If you hold them against the light, you can see the picture on them, and from these, the photos are developed.

The setup is as follows: Find the negative of the picture/city you are going to force. Cut out only this one frame and place it into the black photo capsule. Also, place the thumb tip (Vernet tips usually fit exactly) into the capsule between the frame of film and the capsule. Have a number of different names written on blank cards of different cities with your force card on top, i.e. Paris.

In performance, have the photo capsule closed on the table with the roll of film lying next to it. The cards can be in your pocket. Because the roll of film is lying next to the black capsule, no one will think that there is something else inside. They will all have expected the roll of film to come out of it — logic!

Pick up the roll of film and pull out a short length, explaining that this is the film you used to take photos of your recent world travels. People will gasp and look in shock at the section of exposed film and may even exclaim that you have just ruined the entire film. However, you calmly explain to everyone that, as a magician, you do not like

taking your film in for developing and waiting to get it back. In fact, you develop your own film magically. You will demonstrate.

With scissors, cut approximately one frame of film off of the roll. Hold this up and let the spectators examine it so that they can all see that there is nothing on it whatsoever. While they are looking at the piece of film, you pick up the black, photo, film capsule and remove the lid, making sure that the inside of the capsule faces you and that no one can see inside it.

Now, take back the frame of film between your right index finger and thumb, and push it into the thumb tip in the capsule that you are now holding in your left hand. Then, pull out the thumb tip with the piece of film in it, leaving behind the original film negative that you put in the capsule when preparing the trick.

To the audience, it must appear as if you have merely pushed the piece of film into the capsule. Now, show the contents of the capsule to everyone. All they can see is the piece of film in there, which they do not realize is now the prepared film negative! Now, ask a spectator to seal the capsule with the lid. The dirty work is done, and no one is aware of it. Isn't magic great?

All you have to do now is to remove the pack of cards with city names and to show them to be normal. Do a few False Shuffles and force the top card using your own favourite method. That's it, because now the trick is basically over for you, and the stunning of the audience begins!

Stress that the city card, i.e. Paris, was freely selected. Now, get the spectator, who has been holding the photo capsule all along, to open it, to remove the film, and to look at it under a light. If close-up, all the audience should immediately and clearly see the picture of, in this case, the Eiffel Tower and you in Paris.

Should you like the idea but not relate to the film negative concept, use a mis-printed photo from your printer that looks as if the ink had run havoc. (The photo should not be recognizable.) Simply have a properly printed duplicate in the capsule.

You could even use Passport photos and work around the theme of people never looking like their passport photos. The possibilities are endless, and the effect is very powerful.

Extract from Wolfgang's book, *The Complete Works*
Available from www.comedyillusionist.com



Carl Andrews has been performing professionally for 33 years. He is also an iPhone developer of over 20 Apps including No Freakin' Way, Magic Draw, True Lies and Show Cues (sound control system).

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TECH TALK

CARL ANDREWS

Three Apps this issue for iPhones and Androids reviewed by our regular Tech Guru Carl Andrews

This issue we have a great new utility prop and two iPhone Apps.

"Supa Thump" by Greg Rostami requires iOS 5.0 or later. Compatible with iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch. This App is also available on Google Play for Android phones. The price is \$39.99. (<http://www.rostamimagic.com/supathump/index.html>).

Developer's Description:

Imagine a thumper that you always have with you (since it's your iPhone or Android device). The transmitter can be ANY device that can connect to the internet (smartphone, tablet, computer).

Here's a small sample of the effects that you'll do with Supa Thump:

Ask a friend (your accomplice) to go to a website on their device and transmit to you . . .

Tell your audience you can FEEL money. Put your hand behind your back and ask them to hand you any bill. You'll know which bill they handed you, without ever seeing it!

Demonstrate your super vision by reading the last four digits of the bill's serial number, even though it's 20 feet away!

Have them remove a card from a shuffled, borrowed deck and show it around (you NEVER touch the cards)



... with your back turned, you'll KNOW their card!!

Features of Supa Thump:

- So easy that you'll be doing it instantly.
- When performing, once you launch Supa Thump, you never touch it again!
- Your accomplice can be anywhere in the world. If they can access the internet, it'll work.
- They can use ANY device (smartphone, tablet, computer, etc).
- There's no limit to how many devices are transmitters and receivers.
- The transmitter gets a feedback signaling your accomplice that you received the thump.
- There's no limit to the number of variables that can be thumped.
- Perform completely surrounded.
- Seven presets are included. (Basic, Grid, Swipe, List, Cards, Money, Examples)
- Create as many presets as you like for your own unique effects.

You can thump:

Any vibration code

Any Image online

Text

Any MP3 sound online

Any URL (website)

You can send all of the above AT THE SAME TIME!

My Thoughts:

Greg Rostami has done it again

with Supa Thump! The iPhone is not the focus or even seen by the spectators. It really is a stealth App that you can use as a secret weapon to create amazing magic! Supa Thump is completely customizable. You can have images, urls, numbers, sounds, and more secretly communicated to you from your accomplice. Your iPhone, acting as a receiver, secretly signals you with vibrations, the information you need to perform miracles. It also allows you to work WITHOUT an accomplice by thumping items to the spectator's smart phone!

This is a fantastic tool for performing mind-blowing mentalism! Greg has also set-up a very helpful Supa Thump Glassboard forum where users can discuss ideas. Available on the App Store and Google Play. For me, this is another must have App!

"Foreseen" is a new iPhone card prediction effect by Aptus Mobile. It sells for \$9.99 and is designed for both the iPhone and iPad, available in the App Store.

Demo Video:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9NBtLycitjs&feature=youtu.be>

Developer's Description:

Ask somebody to think of a card.

It can be any of the standard 52 playing cards in a deck. You pull out your iPhone and go to the photo gallery app.

There they will see, among your other photos, a photo of their selected card! Everything is examinable.

I realize there are other card prediction apps on the market. Foreseen's strengths are in several areas:

- 1) ease of performance, no difficult memorization
- 2) ability to customize the cards to look however you want (e.g. photo of you holding up the card)
- 3) ability to hide from the spectator that you're using an app, even if they examine your phone afterwards.

Foreseen doesn't offer a completely new effect, but if you've tried other card prediction apps and you're not happy with the way they work or find them too difficult to perform, then Foreseen is definitely worth checking out.

My Thoughts:

The App works well and is explained clearly in the instructions. I already have an App or two offering the same effect that I am happy with at the moment. However if you do not have a similar App or as the developer stated, found others difficult to perform, then check out "Foreseen".



ERIC OLSON A WIZARD OF SHOW & BUSINESS

BY TC TAHOE

If you should find yourself in Central Florida on a family vacation, where to go and what to do? There's Sea World, Universal Studios and of course Disney World, but if it's Monday night and you are a fan of magic, there really is only one choice. Wizardz Magic Theater.

Wizardz is a Close-up, Parlor Magic Theater in Kissimmee, Florida. It only seats 50, so it is recommended you make reservations.

Wizardz itself is a great Magic trick. Every other day and night of the week, Wizardz is just an ordinary banquet room at SERALAGO Hotel & Suites.

On Mondays about 3pm Erick Olson,

"Wizardz
itself is a great magic
trick. Every other day and
night of the week, Wizardz is
just an ordinary banquet room
at SERALAGO Hotel &
Suites."





along with his wife Kim and their two children Jake and Brooklyn, transform the room into a theater.

So who is Erick Olson? First I should say Erick Olsen loves magic. I have been in this business for more years than I care to think about and yes I still love magic, but it is fair to say that some of that enthusiasm has worn off a bit from those early days, when everything was new and exciting.

So, when I say Erick Olson Loves magic, I mean he LOVES it! In all the years of being a professional magician I do not believe he has lost any of his enthusiasm, he has not become jaded and his excitement is contagious.

TC: Erick, where are you from originally?
Erick: I was born Rockford, Illinois.

TC: And what was your introduction to Magic?

ERICK: I was in the 3rd grade and one night the movie Houdini, starring Tony Curtis came on the TV. The next day at school I went to the library and found a couple of books on magic. I checked out Dunninger's Complete Encyclopedia of Magic, went through the book, learned all I could. The I returned and tried to check out another book, Spooky Magic, by Larry Kettlekamp, but the librarian made me do a trick for the whole class before she would let check out another book. So that night I got a piece of elastic from my mom and made up The Vanishing Pencil. I performed it for my class, the minute everyone clapped for me...I was hooked!

TC: When did you decide that magic was going to be more than a hobby for you?

ERICK: When I was 12 years I did a library show, I got paid \$20. I remember staring at that \$20 and thinking, "Wow, people will pay me for doing this?"

TC: I meet you when I moved to Lakeland Florida. What prompted your move to Florida?

Erick: I HATE the cold.

TC: Ha, the same reason I left Montana.

ERICK: And I wanted bigger audiences.



TC: Did it feel like starting over when you moved to Florida?
ERICK: Not really, I had a few contacts at some resorts and theme parks. I moved to Key Largo, Fl in 1999 and was the House Magician at the Key Largo Marriott. Then made the move to Lakeland in 2006.

TC: What was your inspiration for Wizardz?

ERICK: The idea of Wizardz came to me after performing at the Magic Castle in the parlor. I thought I want an intimate room like this, were people can see close up parlor magic. There just aren't that many places you can see a formal close-up show outside of the Magic Castle.

TC: Wizardz has been going now, every Monday Night, for over three years. The list of performers you've book is pretty impressive. ,Jon Armstrong, Terry Ward, Michael Ammar, John Farrentino, Aldo Colombini, Doc Eason, Dana Daniels, Nathan Kranzo, Bruce Gold, Chastian Criswell, Danny Orleans, Jonathan Pendragon, Bev Bergeron, Dan Harlan, Shoot Ogawa, Cameron Francis, Bob Swadling and Richard Osterlind, to name but a few.

Besides Wizardz, Erick has three dinner shows during the week.

Every Wednesday, Legacy Grille at Orange Lake Resort, Thursdays you will find Erick at West Gate Villas and Fridays he is doing is comedy magic at the Mystic Dunes Resort.

Not to mention Magic & Martinis, Erick's upscale evening of comedy and magic. This is a "traveling show" and is booked into the finer venues in Central Florida for limited engagements. www.magicandmartinis-show.com

Erick Olson is one of those rare entertainers who understand and can deliver on both the Show and the Business.

For more about Erick www.corporatecomedian.net
For more information about Wizardz and to purshus tickets; www.wizardzmagictheater.com



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Happy Anniversary
to the Wonderground Players
& Support Crew!

My heartfelt gratitude to all the friends and performers who have helped the Wonderground become the astonishing success that it is! - Jeff McBride

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A photograph of two women standing in a carpeted hallway. The woman on the left has red hair and is wearing a black and white patterned dress with a black bag. The woman on the right has dark hair and is wearing a teal dress. They are both smiling. The hallway has a patterned carpet and a wooden handrail.

THE MAGIC ASSISTANT

BY
GWYN AUGER

Gwyn continues this series with an interview with Joelle Righetti who was a Burton Babe

INTERVIEW WITH A BURTON BABE

What got you started in magic?

I actually started when I was 17 years old when I was hired to work as a performer in the Siegfried and Roy show at the Frontier Hotel called Beyond Belief.

How did you meet Lance Burton?

When I was 15 years old, I worked at the Follies Bergere Show at the Tropicana Hotel and my first time I ever saw Lance, he was walking down the hallway making his way to the stage and he had a white face painted for his act at that time and he was walking very slowly carrying his top hat and cane. I thought to my self as a young girl, "What a

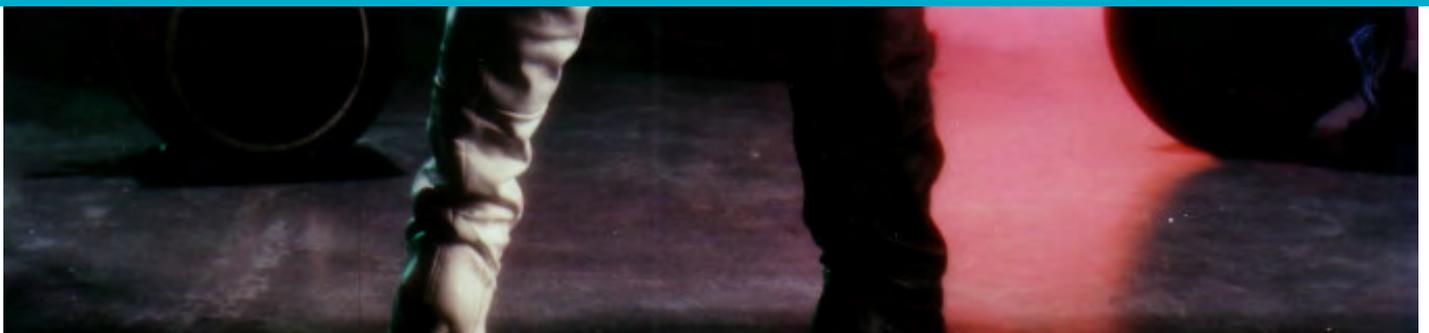
very strange Guy" Some 7 years later I went to an audition for his show at the Hacienda, and out of 100 girls, I was hired to work as one of 6 main magic assistant and dancers. It was truly an honor and a life changing event for me.

What is the funniest thing to happen to you on stage?

I was on stage doing the understudy role for the levitation, and I forgot a very important costume piece and as Lance approached me, he said to me quietly, can you exit stage and go and get the cape? I ran like the wind and came back to stage to save



“JOELLE RIGHETTI AS SEEN
ON A POSTCARD USED TO
PROMOTE LANCE BURTON’S
SHOW 1994”





As *CHER*

the illusion. Man were those bazzarr days.

Have you ever been hurt by an illusion?

Never hurt, but when I was 5 months pregnant with my son, I no longer could get out of one of the illusions as Lance clapped his hands to announce me and every time he clapped, I never came out of the suitcase. Needless to say the next day I was out of the show.. What a crazy show that was.

What is your favorite illusion to watch and to perform?

Definitely the levitation when I go around Lances body. Its truly amazing.

Where in the world is your favourite place to perform?

Anywhere there is a captive audience, however, I loved Japan.

What is the most important piece of advice you have to give future assistants?

Remember your job is to make the magic look easy and teamwork is key always.

If you could perform anywhere again, where would it be and why?

I definitely want to headline somewhere in Vegas as I am also a singer, and actress. It will come soon enough. I currently work for Legends in Concert as a Cher Impersonator from time to time.

Do you think assistants are a “dying breed”?

That’s a loaded question. As long as there are Magic acts, there should be and will be assistants..

If you were not doing magic, what would you have done instead?

Performing, singing or acting somewhere.

Do you have any other amazing talents?

Yes, www.joellerighetti.com Several. I do lots of local commercials acting, and I also am a studio singer for several artists on their records, and also I am a Cher Impersonator and a singer and comedian to name a few.. Oh and I am a mom of an 8 year old son named Dante..

What do you like to do in your spare time?

I love to hang out with my family and keep my Italian family traditions alive.

What is your favorite type of cupcake?

Well, I am allergic to Chocolate and so definitely a white cupcake with buttercream frosting. Yummy



Riding The Rainbow

by TC Tahoe

"I love this book! It has many different styles of color readings.

There are many variations here to fit everyone's venue.

TC has done his homework on this one, he gets into details on color like no other book.

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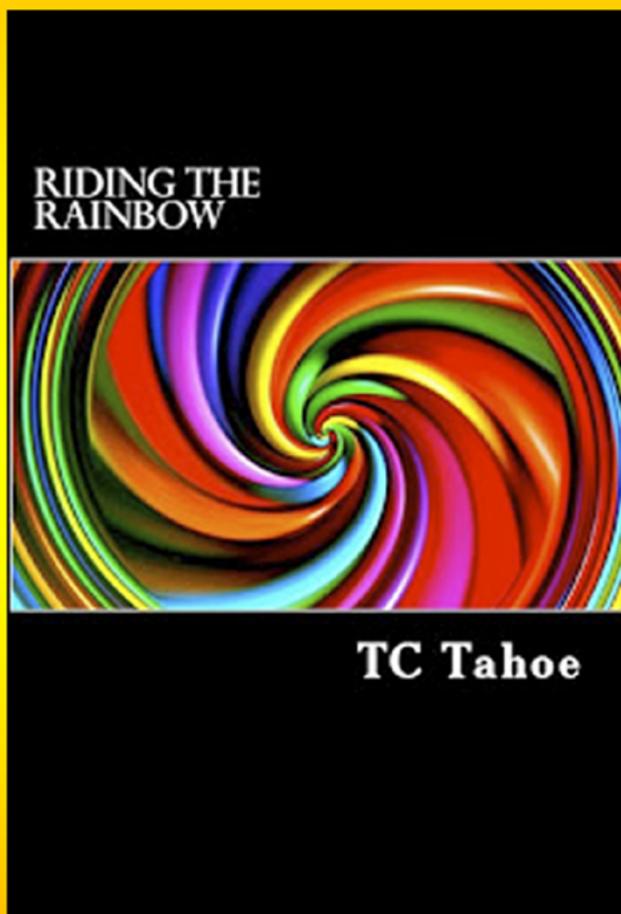
Neal Scryer

"Riding the Rainbow" is a terrific assembly and array of color-based reading techniques; strategies that will serve you spectacularly and readily expand your "reading" toolkit.

With TC Tahoe's "Riding the Rainbow," you are literally handed the keys to a colorful kingdom of objects, and a variety of rich ways to interpret what you (or others) see.

Suffice it to say that, with this project, your dreams of providing a strong and effective reading "really do come true!" I wholeheartedly recommend this to you!"

Scott Grossberg



Available Here

<http://www.lybrary.com/tc-tahoe-m-81000.html>



WILL PERFORM FOR FOOD

LEIF DAVID

Should you never work for free? Should you always turn down charities? Do you offer discounts or reduced rates for not-for-profit organizations? There are lots of things to consider when considering these types of shows.

The problem with free shows

Often these show offers come with the promise of “great exposure”! While its true that there will be an audience that hasn’t seen you before, more often than not you aren’t going to end up directly booking more shows because you performed at their event.

I’ve also found that for free shows they are more likely to be less organized. These events will be run by volunteers or people who are just trying to help out, but may be outside their element. You will need to take extra care to make sure that you get as much information as possible upfront, so



Zhen Birker, 6, is all smiles as magician Leif David shows off a trick.

that when you arrive you can put on an amazing show just as you would at any paid event.

When donating a performance it will cost you money to perform at their event. You will still need to pay for gas, the wear on your equipment, and all of the consumables such as playing cards, rope, and flash paper.

Make sure that when you accept a donated show that everyone else at the event is also donating their services. There's nothing worse than donating your time to arrive at the event and find out that the reason that they couldn't pay your fee is because they spent their money on food, bounce

castles, etc. I only donate my services to events where everyone else is also donating their services. (Once upon a time I discount my show fee for an organization but when I arrived I found out that the reason they asked for a discount is because they had already spent the rest of their money on other activities. I only made that mistake once...)

One of the biggest dangers of donating a show is that you will be giving up a date/time that you could have sold to somebody else. If this happens you not only lose the money you could have made, but it's also costing you to perform at another event still. This is why I am very specific with the

groups that I support. I have to be willing to not only donate a show for their group, but I also have to feel it was still worthwhile if I have to turn down a booking. Some performers will offer to do the show under the condition that they don't receive another booking on that date/time. I would never ever do this— I feel it's unprofessional because it shows that you don't care about the success of their event.

The benefit of free shows

Okay, so we can all agree that you're giving up a lot by doing shows for free. So why would you ever do a show for free?

It can be a great way to get practice and experience when you're first starting out. Once you start getting good, stop doing free shows. It only hurts the market in your area for other professionals.

Often these groups will be able to provide advertising or other exposure. Have a pre written bio, a photos, and your logo all prepared in a presskit. They may also be able to link to you from social media, or include a link on their website to your website. Getting inbound links in our business is difficult so this is a good approach. If the show is for a free community events, local media will be all over it. Make sure you are visible and you may make it onto the evening news or into the newspaper.

In your community there are probably prestigious charities and fundraisers. Performing at these events can be very advantageous. All of the guests at these events will be wealthy businessmen and influential community members. They're well connected and in this case "great exposure" is a distinct possibility. Make sure you collect an amazing testimonial from them to use in your marketing materials.

As entertainers we are very lucky to do something we love. I feel its important to give back to the people and the communities that we live in. I donate about 10 free shows a year to various organizations and charities that I consider worthwhile. Since I am a family entertainer, a majority of the organizations that I support are related to children's charities.

Giving back to the community can also help you win local business awards.

Make sure you get a testimonial and a photo of you performing at the event then use it in your marketing material. Have someone from the audience snap a photo on your smartphone and then use it on social media, your website, and in your newsletter.

How to gracefully decline requests for free shows:

You perform to pay your bills. Even if performing isn't your full time job you can't be giving away your services to everyone simply because they asked. So how do you politely decline their offer?

I explain that I am a full time professional performer and that I earn my living by performing. Then I tell them that I only donate my services to specific charities each year and that I've already selected my charities for that year. I then follow it up by explaining the types of shows that I offer and the rates for each. I may also let them know about any

"Thank you Leif for donating your services for the second annual Children's Wish Walk for Wishes. You were wonderful to work with and everyone was thoroughly entertained! Your generous donation of your time and talent truly added to the day." Katherine Spencer-Lim, Children's Wish Walk for Wishes"

not-for-profit rates that apply. I have turned many of these requests for donated shows into events where I receive my full fee or at least a portion of my fee.

Again, if you are going to perform for free make sure that everyone else at the event is also donating their services. It isn't fair for only you to be doing it for free.

Personally I only donate close-up mingling magic, if I receive a request for a stage show I always turn it down. Stage shows require way more effort and it just doesn't make sense for me to donate those types of shows any more.

Don't feel like you've been taken advantage of by performing for free. Be smart, selective, and feel great about giving back to your community!



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By Tony Chris



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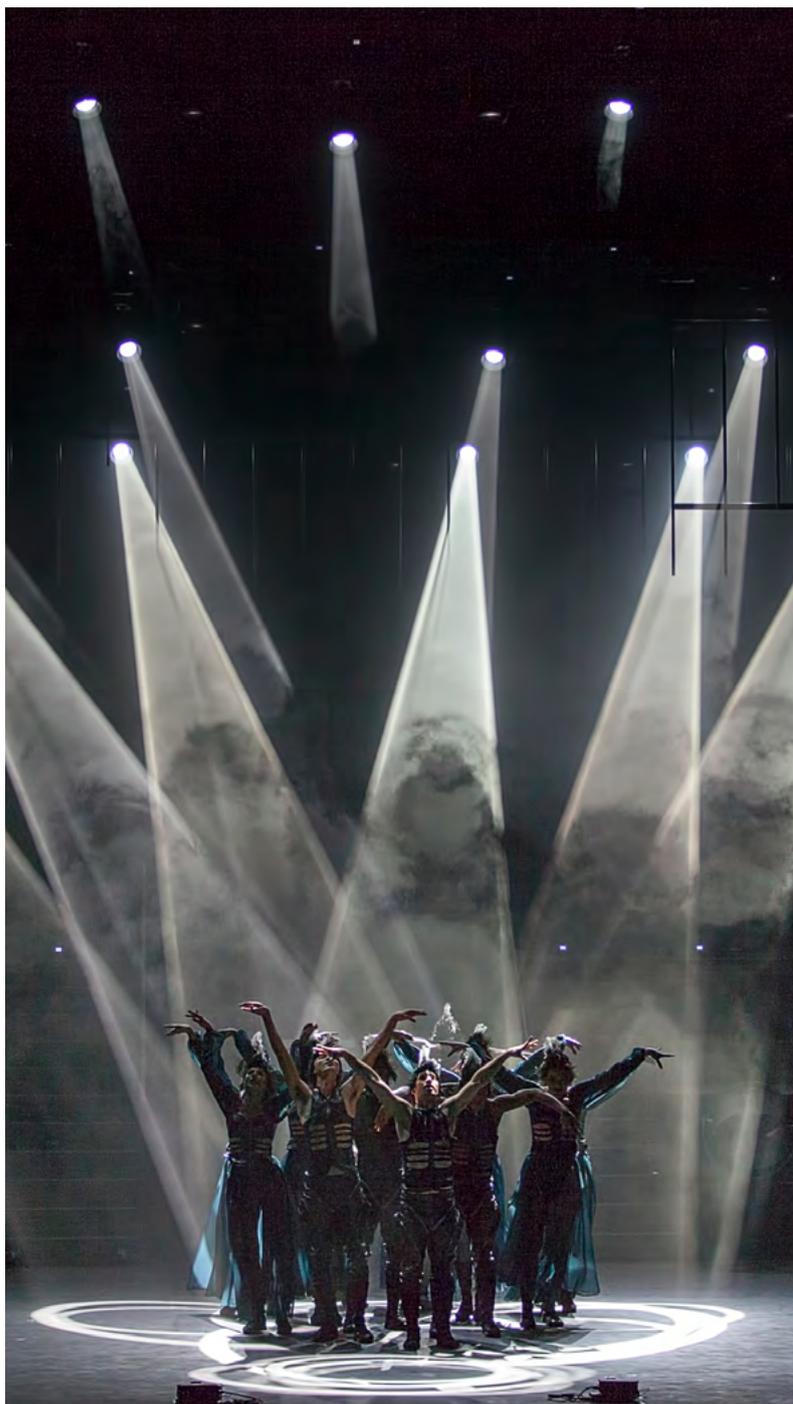
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REVIEW OF LIVE SHOW



VISION

A VISUAL SPECTACLE

BY FRED HANN

Singapore, September 20th
2013. Famed duo Lawrence
and Priscilla Khong ran
an exclusive 'invite only'
production of their show
VISION..

The show, which made its first debut in 2011 at the prestigious Esplanade Theatres by the Bay, was staged at the University Cultural Centre. The event saw series of white collared guests, prominent figures and popular magicians. Credit is given to the production team for making Vision a fully immersive experience from the moment you reach the theatre.

The foyer was packed with people, and it was no surprise that 98% of the seats were filled, though a number of people left after the intermission. The Vision experience included a life size instant photo wall to take pictures with the stars on canvas, tons of pictures of the duo's previous shows and not to mention drink service. Its truly a rare sight here in Singapore, to be served wine while waiting to get to your seat. A win for the team.

The show started with an artistic interpretation of a ballerina on a musical box. Eventually leading to the introduction of young Priscilla. Lawrence plays the role as the on stage Father as well, being clouded by his success, forgetting about his daughter. The duo did a good job with establishing the story line from the very start which did justice to the audience. No guessing needed.

The Show contained a 'live catalogue' of illusions with a number of new and creative

additions as well. The slightly underplayed appearing BMW was amazing, a playground slide illusion which vanished Lawrence but turned Priscilla into a child, and what appeared to be Mark Parker's Populate. Seeing some new material was great... especially from a magician's point of view.

As the story unfolded, the viewer understands the mysticism of the world around the real life father daughter team, revolves around the imaginative mind of Priscilla, who yearns for attention from her magician father and misses her departed mom. Though some illusions were presented in a catalogue style, most were tied in beautifully with the story. Lawrence Khong receives commendation for his Misers Dream Routine with Giant Goldfish swimming around him. Nothing close to the version Teller performs, the presentation aspect was highly creative where Lawrence had to entertain Goldfish (played by actors) with magic.

Priscilla also did a good job on the show, presenting her own band of magic. More than anything else, the viewers see her competency with being a stage performer, performing her short dance numbers and expressing body language perfectly.

Special mention has to go out to the dancers in the show. In all honesty, the dancers gave the show a Las Vegas feel. Highly skilled, the dancers adapted to numerous styles of dance and performed a number of illusions alongside Lawrence and Priscilla.

Being a theatre buff and a magician in my own right, the one thing that blew my mind, more than the cost of each illusion and costume, was the highly elaborate Set. One BIG advantage that Lawrence and Priscilla had was a huge LCD video wall, that was used to project real life moving images. Each set item that was

made as well complimented the illusions perfectly. Priscilla's combination of the Mascot Moth with Things that go Bump would not have been possible without the set. Nonetheless, for the uneducated magician, and the common lay person, there were many miracles that night.

In summary, despite the repetitive story line from their previous productions (daughter falling out with her dad and coming back to find love) this show was indeed a spectacle. Beautiful set, fantastic dancers, illusions you would only dream of owning and two magicians than spin their tales so well, you are brought into the world. Vision, where seeing it is just the beginning.



Fred Hann is a Singaporean based Theatre Practitioner / Magic and Film Critic



MAGIC REVIEWS

PAUL ROMHANY & FRIENDS

Based upon top selling products from magic retailers and wholesalers, as well as consulting with over a dozen professional magicians, Paul Romhany reviews tricks, DVDs, books and Apps.

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1 THE TROPHY

By Andre Sebring & Arkadia



EFFECT: The mentalist places a trophy on her table and talks about the breathtaking possibilities of predicting the winner of a sport chosen by the audience.

Three volunteers join the mentalist on stage. The performer explains that they will participate in a competition. They are asked to grab one medal from a bag without looking. The volunteer who chooses the gold medal will be the winner. However, before any one looks at their medal, the performer reveals who chose the gold one and congratulates the winner.

The winning volunteer lifts the trophy (that has been in full view the entire routine) and reads the badge at the top. It matches the earlier selected sport. When the applause subsides, the performer calls attention to the base of the cup. **Engraved** into the metal plaque reads, "The winner of the contest is Lisa Larsen", the name of the competition winner.

There is no double-talk, pre-work, stooges, forces or hidden assistants. All the work is done by the performer during the performance and everything you need to perform the effect is included. The engraving can be seen and touched by everyone.

WHAT YOU RECEIVE:

- A specially modified 12" trophy made of aluminum and stone
- Five medals, a bag, and gimmicks to perform the "Competition" routine

- A price tag and ribbon for a gag ending
- The necessary gimmicked scoreboard with chalk
- All the equipment needed to be able to perform the Metal Writing concept. The basic kit lasts at least for 200 shows.
- 3 different presentations
- DVD with over 90 minutes of instructions, routines and ideas

MY THOUGHTS:

When I saw the performance I could not figure out how it was possible to have something engraved without any stooges or offstage assistance. Then after watching the DVD and learning the secret I realised this was something that was a major discovery in the field of mentalism.

Andreas and Arkadia have made something many have dreamed about a reality. To actually have a free choice engraved on an object.

The props themselves don't look out of the ordinary, and don't scream magic trick in any way, making the performance even more impossible.

With the equipment provided you can predict ANYTHING and have it engraved on the trophy. The method is diabolical, and best of all it is a one person effect and everything happens in real time.

What sells this is that the spectators can actually run their finger along the engraving and feel that it is indeed engraved in to the metal.

The props are of the highest quality and you are supplied with everything you need, you can also get refills of the 'secret gimmick' when you run out, although you are supplied with enough to last a long time.

When you purchase you have the option of buying extra refills which range from enough for a hundred to several hundred performances.

There is a little preparation needed but once you have mastered the secret method and how to set it up you can do it relatively easily. It will require a little practice both in performance and set-up but nothing the majority of performers can't handle. The work required more than pays for itself in the effect.

All necessary moves have been well thought out for this routine, so anything the performer does is very well hidden within the routine itself. There are no suspicious moves or anything that would give the method away to

an audience.

QUALITY OF INSTRUCTION:

There is a 90 minute DVD that explains everything in detail, from the props to the routine and variations. The only pre-show work is actually setting the actual gimmick but this is more than covered in the DVD.

The most important part is the actual set-up of the gimmick and this is covered very well in the DVD

I showed this to several 'in the know' performers and none of them even came close to knowing what the method was. The idea of Metal Writing is new and you can adapt this routine very easily to fit your own style or change it in any way you want.

The basic method of getting something written on an object that will appear elsewhere is not new, but the fact that it ends up being engraved certainly is. From an audience's perspective it is one thing to have a prediction written down, but to have it engraved really takes it to another level. There is nothing that says the prediction was made days prior to the performance.

Overall I would say this is one of the most innovative mentalism routines and methods I've seen in a very long time. I have nothing but high praise for this ranging from the props, method, instruction and quality of props provided.

To purchase and see a live performance visit the website at <http://www.metalwriting.com>

PRICE is approximately \$500 US (original price is in Swedish Krona).



2 EYE OF ODIN Andreas Sebring & Arkadia



Hjalmar Stolpe was an archaeologist who excavated the Viking city of Birka. During these excavations, he came across a mysterious amulet - The Eye of Odin. This amulet was said to have the ability to predict the future.

The mentalist or magician introduces a small box containing a mysterious amulet. He then shows five different symbols. Each symbol is connected to a specific Norse God. A randomly selected spectator chooses one of the symbols. The performer opens the box and the spectator removes a metal amulet. Engraved into the back of the amulet is the chosen symbol. But that's not all! The spectator's name is also engraved into the amulet. The performer can display it to the audience.

Inspired by Al Korans classic routine but with a new method that makes it possible to show and feel the inscription on the back of the amulet. No double-talk, forces, pre-work, stooges or hidden assistants. Comes complete with everything you need to perform this amazing routine.

Eye of Odin is a utility device that can also enhance your existing mentalism performances. The product comes with three stand alone routines and more creative ideas.

PROPS INCLUDED:

- The amulet Eye of Odin (with its hidden secrets)

- A hand carved wooden box with three secret gimmicks.
- Gimmicked blackboard with chalk
- All the equipment needed to be able to perform the Metal Writing concept. The basic kit lasts at least for 200 shows.
- 3 different routines and multiple ideas for different skill levels
- DVD with over 90 minutes of instructions, routines and ideas

MY THOUGHTS:

This takes the original AI Koran medallion routine to a level that far beyond anything done before. To have three numbers engraved on a medal and have the audience feel it is stunning. I love that this is as direct as the original but with a real kicker ending.

The quality of equipment supplied is first rate, and not massed produced. All the gimmicks are extremely well made including the box, medallion, chalk and blackboard. A lot of work has gone in to making sure everything is of the highest quality and would last a very long time.

If you are familiar with the AI Koran Medallion then you will be aware of some palming. With this version you can do away with palming making the actual effect very easy to perform. Anything can end up written on the medallion from numbers to a name, it all depends on your routine.

INSTRUCTIONS:

This 90 minute DVD goes in to such detail ranging from the method of Metal Writing to the performance and method as well as some great tips. The performance is basically the Koran version with Metal Writing, but it's a sure fire and quick routine.

They have also included extra resources if you want to do other routines. One of the nice extras is if you don't want to use a blackboard they show how to easily convert the blackboard provided in to a note pad and use a large marker. This is actually a great touch because you can use the pad of paper throughout your act.

Every move has been covered and given motivation so nothing seems out of the ordinary.

You will need to spend time practicing metal writing as well as the set-up but once you've got the hang of it

becomes very easy.

This offers SO many possibilities from trade-shows to parlor or stage performances. This is the perfect pack small and play big routine.

Metal Writing should become the standard for magicians and mentalists who want to have a prediction engraved on a metal surface. Andreas and Arkadia have given something very special to the community and it would be very hard to improve on the Koran routine now.

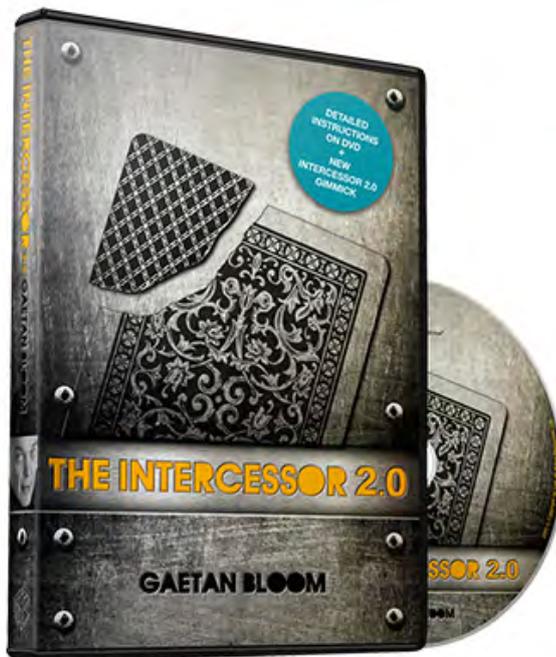
TO PURCHASE visit <http://www.metalwriting.com>
PRICE: \$450 (Approx) - original price is in Krona

BOTH OF THESE ARE EXTREMELY HIGHLY RECOMMENDED FOR ANY SERIOUS PERFORMER OF MENTALISM AND MAGIC.



3 INTERCESSOR 2.0

by Gaetan Bloom and Luis De Matos



The Intercessor is a unique gimmick that makes miracles possible. Created by the inventive Gaetan Bloom and used in his professional shows for many years, it enables you to do most baffling versions of the classic card in orange. Indeed any effect in which a selected card is torn to pieces and then reappears, bar the corner retained by the volunteer, in an impossible location.

The New 2.0 Intercessor Gimmick is included with the DVD together with details for Gaetan's Missing Digit, his Candy routine, handling and performance tips from top magicians around the world, a comprehensive history on the development of the gimmick and performance footage of Gaetan's hilarious Salad routine.

English and French languages.

DVD Tutorial (2h 27m) + Intercessor 2.0 Gimmick

MY THOUGHTS:

I have used and owned the original Intercessor for many years, and it can help you achieve the impossible. Version 2.0 is made from a much stronger material so it will not bend and will last a lifetime.

The real secret of this gimmick is that it does away with any corner switch for a card to impossible location effect. You can have a card chosen and a corner torn, even have the spectator tear the last little piece, and it will

match the card found at any location. It really does allow you to perform miracles and is a must for any effect of this nature.

The big difference from V.1 is this gimmick has two different 'cuts' which allow you to perform the effect twice with two different torn corners. This is what makes it different than the original. You can also do a torn corner with a borrowed note WITHOUT having to do a corner switch.

Note: In some countries you can't tear the money because they are now made of plastic so this would not work in that case.

INSTRUCTIONS:

The DVD goes in to the detail of the history of the gimmick with tips from other magicians, and an incredible live performance of Gaetan's *Salad Routine*. This routine is performance only but a workshop on how to make a card trick entertaining for a stage performance.

The section on the history of this gimmick is fascinating, and there are many lessons here on how something can develop over a twenty year period with ideas from other magicians. This section is filled with some terrific additions which include not having the gimmick inside the deck but still able to perform the same effect.

Included are two routines, Missing Digit and Candy. With Candy the missing card ends up inside a selected chocolate bar. Everything is taught in detail and the filming is of the high standard we would expect from Luis Matos Productions.

You will require a little practice to get used to handling the gimmick, but it's well within the reach of every level of performer. If you can tear a corner off a card then you can use this gimmick.

BONUS:

The bonus section on the DVD includes a PDF booklet by Thomas Duval which has some really interesting work on a similar idea but without using the Intercessor. It is a much more complicated set-up, but does give you some ideas you could add to your performance using the Intercessor. There is also a PDF by Dominique Duvivier which has three routines ranging from an application for mentalists as well as a card to envelope routine.

For anybody who wants to, or already performs a card or bank note to impossible location, this will take all the work out of any sleight of hand and open up even more impossible locations for you. This is the ultimate tool for both close-up and stage magicians and should be in your case along with your thumb tip.

PRICE: \$50.00 US

AVAILABLE all major magic retailers

WHOLESALE: <http://www.murphymagic.com>

4 TICK TOCK by Sean Goodman & MagicDirect



ADVERT:

Magic Direct presents Sean Goodman's Tick Tock. Two watches are handed to two spectators to examine. Each spectator unclicks the crown of their watch and turns it - the hands spin freely and fairly. The watches are now held face down and each spectator turns the crown until they feel the urge to stop - the crown is now clicked in place, the time is set. The times on both watches match. Perfect!!!

Clean direct magic that is easy to perform and different - packs small but plays BIG. Instantly reset.

Tick Tock by Sean Goodman can also be performed so the matching times are different after each performance. Tick Tock comes complete with the necessary watches and comprehensive DVD which offers alternative time matching scenarios with cards and coins (cards and coins not included).

Two watches. Two spectators. One time - the time to let your audience experience the magic that is Tick Tock!

MY THOUGHTS:

I've always enjoyed effects involving time and watches for walk-about work. The three watches supplied are the perfect size for walk-about performers. They are regular nurses watches and not gimmicked in any way. They are very sturdy and will stand up to a lot of regular performance wear and tear. The original effect was

created by Mark Bendell and can be found on his DVD called *Predicta Time* and adapted to what is now *Tick Tock*.

The effect is very straight forward for spectator's to follow, and while there are some basic moves, which are often used in coin magic, it should be easy for most people to master after a little practice.

This is an interesting routine because for some time I've performed something very similar with two borrowed watches using Bev Bergeron's watch prediction 'move'. Tick Tock uses a totally different method than the double watch routine I perform but it is worth noting that the same effect can be performed with borrowed watches. This is not covered in the DVD but my additional thoughts. Tick Tock has the advantage of always being ready to perform, so if it becomes a standard piece in your repertoire then you won't have to worry about the type of watches the spectators are wearing.

INSTRUCTIONS:

Sean does a great job with the explanations on the DVD. All the moves are explained in detail and he talks a lot about when the moves need to be performed. Don't be put off by the word 'move' because they are all natural looking and the spectator's shouldn't be looking for anything. The routine is structured in a way that hopefully they won't suspect anything else involved. The only issue I have is during one performance there is quite an exposure of one of the watches in Sean's hand, but this is because of the odd camera angle. The spectator's didn't notice anything and under real world conditions they shouldn't be looking at your hand, as the watches are either on the table or in their hands most of the time. The audiences attention is pretty much on the watch and not on your 'moves'.

BONUS ROUTINES:

Sean also shares additional routines essentially using cards and one with a coin. They are quite novel routines but not as strong as the original routine with the watches. The coin routine uses the same switch as the watch original watch routine so there isn't much more to learn in handling.

Overall this is a strong magic effect that requires a little bit of handling, but should be well within the reach of most performers. It would make a great addition to the strolling set. Something that's different from the normal tricks most magicians carry.

PRICE: \$45.70

AVAILABLE from all magic shops around the world

WHOLESALE: <http://www.murphymagic.com>

5 POLYESTER by Zivi Kivi



ADVERT: You walk into a group of people in a close up or street magic settings and show them the newest thing in the world of magic - Mind Reading Stickers.

Here's how they work: You stick them on your smartphone (or the spectator's phone) so that they can "charge up". You hand over the phone to the person in front of you and from that point on, everyone is mesmerized by the screen. What they see is the magician doing sleight of hand both live and through a free application installed on all smartphones. You proceed to allow the spectator to select a card, and then dramatically, you peel off the sticker and reveal that although it was completely clear throughout the entire routine, it has now transformed - a card name has appeared on it. You turn over the actual card selected by the spectator, only to reveal it's exactly the same card indicated by the sticker - a perfect match! You can then place the sticker on your business card and give it to the spectator as an impossible gift that she will surely keep.

MY THOUGHTS

This is a clever and novel use of a technology I haven't seen before. The basic working is once the stickers are placed on a phone, a piece of glass or any hard surface and you peel it off and place it back on, a 3D image appears. The image is very basic such as 3♦

It is certainly a very unique way to reveal a forced playing card and with so many possibilities you will soon develop your own routines and uses for these stickers. There are several different outcomes and you have enough stickers to use this in strolling magic with five different results, so if you were asked to repeat the trick you could do it five times. This would be great for those who work restaurants and have repeat customers. You

could rotate the chosen card at each table. Zivi has designed a clever system with a secret mark so only you know which sticker has which card on it.

WHAT YOU GET:

- 150 stickers in three designs
- 100 BONUS stickers in two additional designs
- 1 extra gimmick
- A DVD - 34 minutes long packed with routines and ideas
- 2 music files that you can load into your cell or mp3 player and perform with (royalties were prepaid to the composer)

Routines explained in the DVD:

- Polyester Classic** - setup a mini stage show on your cell and use the Shape Shifting Stickers to get a round of applause every single time
- Plastic Protector** - use the special extra gimmick to create new visual illusions with the spectator's phone
- Double Punch** - use two stickers in a routine that proves you have the ability to change nano molecules and that each sticker can actually predict any card. You can even use this routine to empower the spectator and give her the illusion that they are performing the magic too
- Teleport** - take the image of a card and transfer it onto the sticker, only to reveal the card has literally changed into a blank card
- Borrowed Phone** - a mentalist take on the Polyester Classic that creates an intimate experience between you and the spectator

As you can see there is a lot of potential for the use of this gimmick, not just as a prediction. There is no skill required in making the chosen card appear on the sticker, only in forcing a card so this is well within the reach of every performer.

One of the nice features is that you are supplied with a piece of plastic about the size of an iPhone screen, so if you aren't comfortable putting a sticker on your phone you can just place the sticker on the plastic. The really cool thing about the sticker is the Free App you can download. By using a QRCode ScannerApp you can really have fun with the sticker. For those who like to show off with card cuts then this gives you the perfect excuse to do something clever while the spectator holds the phone or plastic over your hands and the scanner does its magic on the sticker.

Overall a novel prediction effect or shape-shifter with a sticker. You are also supplied with audio files should you want to have dramatic music playing while you perform. I like this idea because it makes it in to a piece of close-up theatre.

PRICE: \$30.00 US

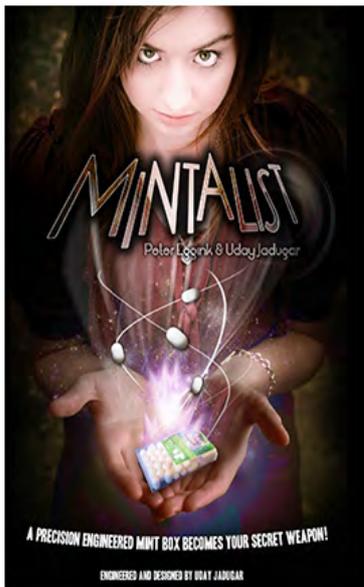
AVAILABLE FROM YOUR FAVORITE DEALER

WHOLESALE: <http://www.murphymagic.com>

Refills available from your magic dealer.

6 MINTALIST

by Peter Eggink & Uday



ON that you'll always carry with you wherever you go. Freak them out with your AMAZING "Mintal" powers!

Mintalist comes complete with a very cool precision engineered mint box including mints and a full training DVD with bonus routines and handling tips.

MY THOUGHTS

This is what I like to call organic magic. In other words it is something you might carry with you at all times, and when asked to do a trick you can do something with 'an ordinary' object.

This can be used as a serious mentalist routine or more of a magic trick where mints change color, it all depends on your choice of performance. In the right hands this is a very strong piece of mentalism which can be repeated with different results. The box is larger than a regular sized Tic Tac box, but this has never been picked up by spectators when I perform it. With Dollar Stores everywhere now you can buy a variety of boxes with candy in them including Tic Tacs, so while this is larger than normal it shouldn't make a difference. The mints themselves are also slightly larger but I found no problem here in Vancouver buying them.

ADVERT: A precision engineered mint box becomes your secret weapon!

Here are some KILLER routines that can be done with "Mintalist":

* Mintal Connection:

At any time you take out your mint box and ask your spectator to pour out ANY amount of mints in her hand BEHIND her back...Instantly you tell her the EXACT amount of mints taken! If you want, you can even PREDICT the amount of mints taken by your spectator. Different outcome every single time!

* Mintal Duet:

From a mixed color box of mints you pour out ANY amount of mints in your hand behind your back. Your spectator is then asked to do the same. Both hands are opened...and it's an EXACT match of both: AMOUNT and COLOR mints!

* Mintal Color Change:

Your spectator pours out ANY amount of mints in her hand behind her back. You not only predict the EXACT amount of mints taken...but also cause the mints INSIDE her hand to CHANGE COLOR!

* Mintal Separation:

From a mixed color box of mints your spectator pours out ANY amount of mints in her hand behind her back. She is then asked to concentrate on just one of the colors...when her hand is opened, ALL the mints have CHANGED into the color where she thought of!

This ULTRA COOL mint box is your new SECRET WEAP-

The gimmick is very well made and with a tap it is ready to go at all times. A nice feature is the gimmick is out of the way once the trick is over, so the spectators can check out the mint box and find nothing. Note the box is NOT called Tic Tacs but rather Fresh Mints.

The only issue I have is that sometimes the mints get stuck inside the gimmick, but this is the nature of using candy that can get sticky if it gets warm. You need to change the mints out a few times a night if using this during the course of an evening. One of the ways around this is to have a smaller number of mints as your prediction. I use only four mints and it takes away from any problems that might occur because the more mints you have in the gimmick the more chance they will stick. Having said that there are outs that are well covered in the DVD should one or two get stuck. Personally I don't like to be in a position where I need 'outs' so just have fewer for your prediction. Also it helps if the spectator gives the box a few good shakes making sure all the mints you want to predict fall out. With a bit of handling and trial and error you should have no problems.

I've also found that the spectators don't want to eat the mints either, which is understandable, so have somewhere to deposit them after each performance. You could load them back in the mint box, but again the more they are handled the more sticky they get. One of the nice features is that should the spectator want to inspect the box they can because the gimmick is easily hidden out of sight, and with a tap it's back in action.

INSTRUCTIONS:

The DVD explains everything in detail including a variety of routines. There is a real variety of routines, and this could be something a mentalist performs as a piece of mind reading or a prediction effect, or a magician performs as a color change mint effect.

It is also perfect for those off the cuff moments when asked to perform a miracle, or for those regular walk-about gigs where you can keep the mints in your pocket and perform it over and over and have a different outcome each time. Not only that but you also have mints with you, which is one of the MUST HAVE items for every performer.

BONUS: a little addition is the label has some predictions hidden on it. For me it instantly screams magic trick and takes away from the regular feel of the box.

PRICE: \$45.00

AVAILABLE all magic shops

WHOLESALE: [http:// www.murphysmagic.com](http://www.murphysmagic.com)



7 CLARITY BOX

By David Regal



Review by Wayne Rogers and Carl Andrews

I am a big fan of performers who can take an established effect to amazing new heights never dreamed of by the originator, and at the same time do the research and credit the inventor of the original trick. David Regal has done exactly that with the Clarity Box.

Here is the advertising blurb taken from David's own web site.

David Regal's Clarity Box

Card to canister... with a clear difference.

When unveiled at The Magic Castle, magicians returned over and over to watch the moment that seemed impossible... when a card that had been isolated within a clear box turned out to be a spectator's signed selection.

The folded card was never out of sight. It was spilled out of the box and cleanly unfolded, yet it was the signed card. That, in essence, is The Clarity Box.

The object need not be a card. It can be a signed bill, or a prediction – truly a utility prop.

This twist on Bruno Henning's classic card-to-canister effect possesses a clear difference: The object that is to be visibly spilled from the container is in plain view at all times.

The quality of The Clarity Box is exquisite. Custom-fashioned from thick, sparkling acrylic it has the look of a miniature museum showcase.

- The Clarity Box is practical. Its base measures only 2x2.5 inches – place it anywhere. And it resets in a second.
- The Clarity Box is customizable. Use supplied design ideas or make up your own.

• The Clarity Box is simple. You will enjoy watching yourself demonstrate it in front of the mirror... and be amazed.

Contains: One custom-made Clarity Box, folded card gimmick, extra blank gimmick (for customization), art for design options, instructional DVD.

The Clarity Box is perfect for those occasions when you want the audience to see in advance what you are going to eventually dump from the box. For years I have performed a Pin Number prediction using a "Card to Sealed Envelope in Wallet" method. Using the Clarity Box I can now have that folded prediction card in full view from the beginning of the show.

Mentalist might consider it to be too much of a "prop" to fit in their act. But I disagree. Once you have used the Clarity box for the prediction, there is no reason why you could not use it as a pen holder or a place to dispose of spare billets or business cards.

I like the way the gimmick can be customised depending on the routine. David supplies adhesive stickers for use with either red or blue Bicycle cards, and there are three variations on the little sign that is inside the box. You can have "EMERGENCY USE ONLY" for a card routine, a "\$ sign" for money tricks or a "? symbol" for mentalism. Of course you can make the sign anything you like. There are also some additional "Hazard" type adhesive strips supplied to dress up the box if you wish.

You will have to do execute a neat "Mercury Card fold" for the card routines, but this technique is taught on the DVD along with an easy alternative card fold you can use while perfecting the Mercury. David thinks of everything!

The clarity Box has gone straight into my act and the audience reaction has been great. Such a big effect for so little effort on my part. The box clearly does most of the work.

Apparently the first supplies of Clarity Box were snapped up and sold out quickly. If you see one, grab it. You won't regret the purchase.

CARL ANDREWS REVIEW

This twist on Bruno Henning's classic card-to-canister effect possesses a clear difference: The object that is to be visibly spilled from the container is in plain view at all times.

The quality of The Clarity Box is exquisite. Custom-fashioned from thick, sparkling acrylic it has the look of a miniature museum showcase.

- The Clarity Box is practical. Its base measures only 2x2.5 inches. It resets in a second.
- The Clarity Box is customizable.

My Thoughts:

While this is not an iPhone App, to me it is a very clever tech-like utility, that the moment I saw this, I had to have it!

This is going straight into my show immediately!

The Clarity Box is very well made, durable, looks totally innocent, and incredibly clever! It can be used for a card revelation, a mentalism prediction, and is limited only by your imagination.

A playing card or prediction card is seen in a clear box sitting on your table throughout the show. Anytime you like, you can dump out the contents of the box to reveal a signed selected playing card or prediction card in the fairest possible manner due to the clarity of the box!

It is so simple, so clean, so easy to perform and yet so totally amazing to the audience!

Very nicely packaged and includes is a DVD, extra gimmick and stickers for customization.

Two thumbs up with a twist!

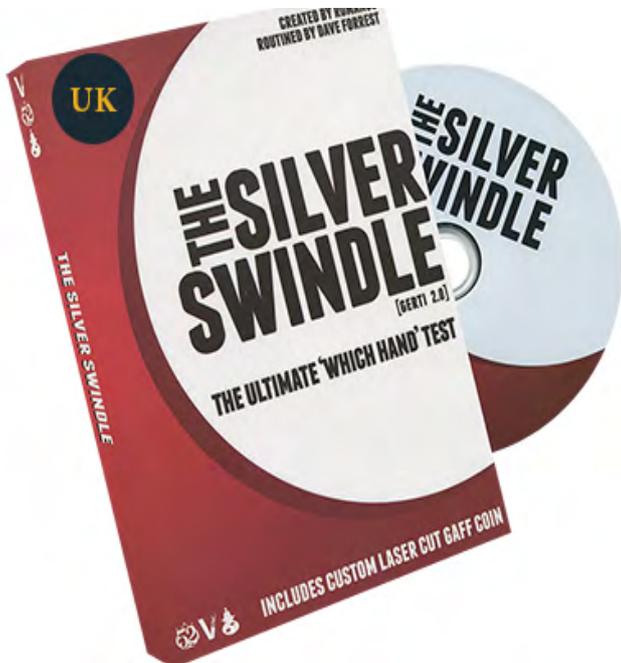
PRICE: \$80.00

Available from David Regal <http://davidregal.com> and other lucky dealers including www.hocus-pocus.com and Penguin Magic.



8

SILVER SWINDLE By Romanos with routine by Dave Forrest



ADVERT: You'll always know which hand the signed coin is in and, despite being allowed to examine the coins, your audience will never know how!

This is Silver Swindle! Your participant chooses any one of two identical coins and signs it. You then turn your back and they put one of the coins in your hand. The other, they hide behind their own back. Despite the incredibly fair conditions, you always know without fail who holds the signed coin!

An incredibly clever and ingenious gaff coin (included) created by Romanos combined with a complete, professional, three-phase routine by Dave Forrest that steadily builds to its impossible climax make this one of the best carry everywhere miracles of all time!

No peeks
No marks
No magnets
No stooges
No electronics
No chemicals

With the thorough DVD instruction, custom laser-cut gaff coin and Dave's killer, pro routine, you'll be ready to blow minds within an hour of opening the package.

Released in partnership with Dave Forrest, Vanishing Inc. and MagicTao

MY THOUGHTS:

This is such a simple idea that the method flies past everybody including magicians and mentalists alike. Having said that, it really does come down to the structure of the routine and not emphasising the importance of the coins. This is where Dave Forrest has done a great job.

The coin that came with mine was a US coin, and even knowing the gimmick coin you could look at both a real coin and this one and still not tell the difference. Apparently that is the difference between Version 1 and Version 2. The machining on V2 is a little less obvious than V1, but in all honesty it is also harder to know which is the gimmick coin and which is not. One suggestion is to use a new coin which would make the gaff quite different once you know the secret.

This version differs in presentation from some of the electronic or magnetic versions in that one coin is held by the performer rather than both held by the spectator. As soon as that coin is in your hand you know if it's the signed coin or not. Having performed electronic versions as well as this one for lay people, the effect is pretty much the same and both get the same reactions.

It's definitely a routine professionals will add to their working repertoire and perfect for walk-about or strolling gigs.

INSTRUCTIONS:

I wonder if the DVD was made BEFORE the new coins were produced, because it isn't as easy to find the gaff as the one used in the DVD. Even knowing the secret I had some trouble distinguishing one from the other. I decided to make my own gaff coin and found it much better than one supplied, also I was able to use a Canadian coin which I prefer anyway. I'm sure if you wanted in your own currency you could gaff a coin once you know the secret, and that is my advice if you don't like in the UK or USA.

Overall, the routine is well structured and has a great finale with a business card prediction. I perform it exactly as on the DVD and it's a very strong piece that plays big in a strolling environment.

I really like this for it's simplicity and structure of the routine. Once I made my own gaff coin I had no trouble performing it with confidence. I suggest using a brand new non-gaff coin along with the gaff to make it easier to perform should you use the coin supplied.

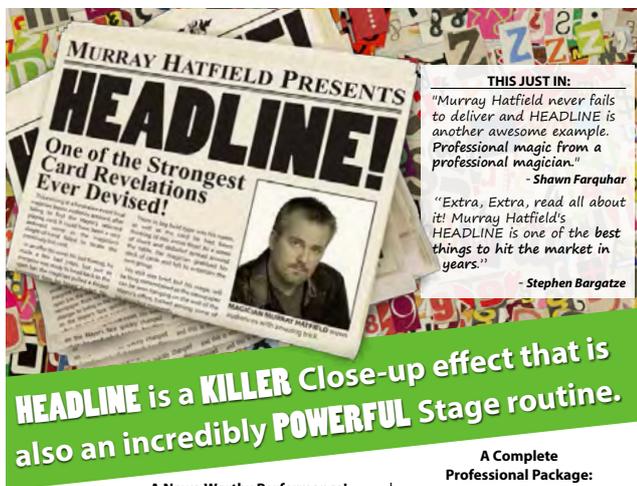
PRICE: \$25.00 (Available in US, UK or Euro Coin)

AVAILABLE from your favorite magic dealer

WHOLESALE: <http://www.murphsymagic.com>

9 HEADLINE

By Murray Hatfield



A News-Worthy Performance!

More than just a card trick, HEADLINE is an entertaining routine that ends in a memorable give-away that will be talked about for years!

Direct from the working repertoire of Murray Hatfield, touring magician and illusionist. In both his close up work and his stage show, HEADLINE delivers a powerful magic punch. This is your rare chance to add an audience-tested blockbuster to your show. Let's hear what other top working pros are saying...

A Complete Professional Package:

- DVD featuring detailed instruction for performing in a Close-up and Walk-around setting as well as a 3 phase Platform or Stage routine that is strong enough to close your show.
- Live performance footage
- Special Newspapers
- Numbered Certificate of Authenticity and Performance Rights

"I absolutely hate HEADLINE. It's one of the easiest things that I do in my show and yet one of the most talked about effects afterward. Why have I wasted all of these years practicing sleight of hand when I could have been using HEADLINE to wow my audiences?"
-Diamond Jim Tyler

"Best revelation anywhere. It will definitely keep you in the headlines. It is a must have for any serious performer."
-Oscar Munoz

"I've had great reaction and comments like, 'I have goose bumps and that's from a guy.' and 'I think I'm scared of you now.'"
-George Franzen

What are you waiting for? Add this reputation maker to your shows and make HEADLINES!

Order Today, Exclusively at
www.MagicTrick.com

See Our All
New Online
Magic Shop!

seen. Ever since then I've always wanted to perform it, but of course never did ... UNTIL NOW

Murray Hatfield inherited the effect and machinery to make these up when he bought Tony's Magic Shop, and during the past seven years has made it his own performing it in close-up and stage. The look on the spectator's face when you perform this is priceless, and if you play it right, could very well get you a standing ovation - it has THAT MUCH IMPACT.

The actual mechanics are easy, if you can force a card then you are all set. The effect is stronger if you can really act as though a card trick has gone wrong. The way Murray performs it is to have three cards chosen, then find the first two using different methods, and finally act as though he's missed the last card. He then shows the newspaper with the headlines not only predicting the chosen card, but also the person who chose it! Trust me, it doesn't get any better than that as far as a card revelation goes.

Each unit comes with a signed and numbered certificate which not only gives you permission to perform but also access to some great deals on refills.

The pre-show work is easy to do, and once it's done you are set. A minimal bit of work at home and you have a super strong routine. I plan to use this on cruise ships as I can take along what is needed and each show can be customized making each repeat performance different.

The real test of this effect is that several full time magicians that I know are performing this in their current repertoire and all of them are having great results.

For close-up workers you can have these prepared a head of time if you have some knowledge of who will be at the show. Murray explains a great way to have these all set up in your pocket and perform at walk-around gigs, especially corporate events. This for me is where Murray has taken this to a very practical level.

If you find yourself looking for a special effect to perform at an important meeting to get a gig then this would fit the bill. Very little work on your part but has huge impact on the spectator.

Very Highly Recommended

PRICE: \$79.95

AVAILABLE from <http://www.magictrick.com>

EFFECT:

The magician has a spectator choose a card from a shuffled deck, after which he tries to find the selected card but without any luck. Just when it appears that all hope is lost, the magician explains that had he only paid attention to the newspaper that day he would have known that he'd be out of luck. He then pulls out the daily newspaper to show the headline that proves not only that he knew what card would be chosen, but who would choose it as well! The newspaper is given to the spectator as a gift for helping out.

WHAT YOU GET:

25 papers to begin with and can buy replacements once you get a special code with your product. DVD and booklet explaining exactly how it works and the history of the effect.

MY THOUGHTS:

The first time I saw this was when Tony Eng performed it on me many years ago at his magic shop in Victoria. I still have the newspaper which 'I' appeared in and thought it was one of the best card revelations I'd ever

9 NO DIARY, DIARY

By Chris Congreave



ADVERT: Chris Congreave has come up with a version of the diary trick that fits in your wallet! No pack, no diary, NO KIDDING!

This takes up NO space and can be used in ANY wallet.

Imagine showing spectator a playing card in your wallet, then give them a small card that has every date printed on it, next to each date is playing card, they look up the card next to their own Birthday.

You then show the card that's in your wallet, it matches exactly!

Completely self working!
Amazing!
Totally deceptive!
Instant reset!
Uses any date!
Works every single time!

WHAT YOU GET:
An instructional pamphlet
Two plastic cards

MY THOUGHTS:
This is similar to Bob Cassidy's Diary effect, but without using a diary. Bob Cassidy is acknowledged in the credits which is good to see. You are supplied with two qual-

ity laminated cards that have dates on them, and next to the dates are different playing cards. The premise is there are 52 cards, 52 weeks, etc. You are supplied with the two cards which fit in your wallet. Once you know the birthday you then bring out the correct card. The marking on the card is easy so you always know which one to use. There are 5 force cards which are cleverly hidden on the cards. The force cards you supply yourself and can easily hide them in an ordinary wallet, although you might want to use a Shogun wallet or other similar wallet. This is a trick you can have in your wallet and always be ready to perform. Anything that has a connection with a spectator, such as a birthday, makes a good premise for an effect.

I don't see this as a mentalism effect but more of a magic trick that magician's would use. A diary is more organic and something people recognise. The card is nothing the spectator would know about, so you'd need to build it's use in to your presentation. The instructional pamphlet supplied has various routines including a tossed out card routine by Titanus which is a novel use of this trick. The card on money routine is a very commercial use of this and would be great for restaurant workers or working bars.

Having spent the best part of twenty years performing all kinds of diary effects, and eventually designing my own, I feel there is something about using a diary that gives the routine more of a connection with the audience. Again, it's just my preference and I like the feel of the diary, however, this does have the big advantage of always being with you.

This is well within the reach of all levels of performers and would be a good trick for those starting out in magic, although it could be something a worker might carry on them and definitely use.

HOW I USE THIS: There was something about this I liked, but not to think of it as a diary effect. I decided to play with this more and came up with a really strong routine that kills and does away with cards in my wallet. A friend of mine has set up an APP for me where I can have a card named and the spectator presses the APP on my iPhone and it shows cards being spread and the only face-up one is the card next to their date on the card. With the gimmick cards this is easy to do as I only need five videos and depending on the password I give them to type in depends on the video revelation. By giving this a little thought I've created something that is unique for me and uses the gimmick in a different way.

PRICE: \$25.00

AVAILABLE from all magic shops world wide

WHOLESALE: <http://www.murphysmagic.com>

DVD REVIEWS

THE CASTLE LECTURE By Steve Valentine



REVIEW by CHIPPER LOWELL

What the AD SAYS:

IN EARLY 2013, actor and two time Magic Castle Close-up Magician of the Year, Steve Valentine, was invited to present his first ever lecture to The Magic Castle (TM) in Hollywood California. The Lecture ran almost three hours and Steve tipped everything. Not just his original effects, but also real world handlings and classic tricks almost lost in oblivion. This is the Lecture that everyone was talking about.

Included in Part One (almost 90 minutes) are incredibly commercial Close Up and Stand up effects all used by Steve in the real world. As well as amazing stories from his long and worldwide life as a magician on the road. This DVD will amaze and entertain you:

SPONGED (a lesson in TT handling from his Castle Act)
CUT DECK (visually restore a deck cut in two, no pulls or pockets)

DICK TURPIN'S THINK A CARD (the greatest single impromptu card trick... ever)

CARDS UP SLEEVE BITS (two of the most visual and funniest additions to your Cards To Pocket routine, guaranteed to get laughs)

THE NO BREAK DOUBLE AND CORRECT SLIP CUT FORCE VALENTROL (the simplest, fastest and most convincing

control of any number of cards for The Multiple Selection Routine. Including three additions from Steve's act that will kill)

And plenty more information you didn't know you needed!

PLEASE NOTE: TV PERFORMANCE RIGHTS FOR THE ENCLOSED EFFECTS ARE STRICTLY RESERVED BY STEVE VALENTINE © 2013

REVIEW:

Steve has been wowing audiences for over two decades with his personality driven magic routines, in addition to juggling a solid acting career both in TV and film (Crossing Jordan, Harry's Law, I'm In The Band, Will & Grace, Boston Legal, Monk, and many more.) He was also awarded "Close-up Magician of the Year" twice by the Academy of Magical Arts.

This lecture is a most refreshing one in that the tricks and routines being taught are solid, strong, and have been audience tested for years in a variety of environments and situations. And each time you think you might have missed an important move or sleight during the course of the presentation, the video cuts away to a studio where Valentine, one-on-one, goes into even further detail, leaving no stone unturned.

There are effects here that many will want to throw into their own repertoires immediately – They're that good. These are truly 'workers', in that they have a strong impact and can be reset in seconds in strolling situations. Let's roll into some of them, shall we?

"SPONGED" – This is killer handling of using a thumb-tip as the performer vanishes and produces a sponge ball, time and again. The moves taught appear completely natural and fully justified throughout. The routine, though simple, is so clean that nothing ever shouts "Thumb-Tip!" like most other routines tend to do. Valentine also provides some important audience management tips that will keep you in full control of your volunteer during the entire routine.

"CUT DECK" – I love that this is a beautiful, opening visual that will grab your spectators' attention as two halves of a cut deck are instantly restored back to one solid deck. What makes this even better is that at the end of the effect, you basically have an un-gimmicked deck of cards, that can be used for whatever routine you'd like to do next. He also shows you a cool mini-deck to standard deck transition that's done in a snap in front of the audience's eyes, and shows you how to leave that 'clean' after the change as well, should you need to use the deck and card case for another effect.

"CARD UP SLEEVE BITS" – Quick, visual gags to spice up card reveals, etc. Silly but visually funny 'quickies' that

will make your audience blink and wonder what they just witnessed.

“DICK TURPIN’S THINK A CARD” – This is an impromptu effect that is perfect for a bar environment where Steve attempts to guess the name of the spectator’s thought of card, but fails. But when the spectator tries to find their card in the deck, it has completely vanished. It’s only a matter of time that he stumbles upon his chosen card...floating, inside his own drink the entire time. This is a wonderful routine, and Steve provides you with some valuable misdirection tips along the way.

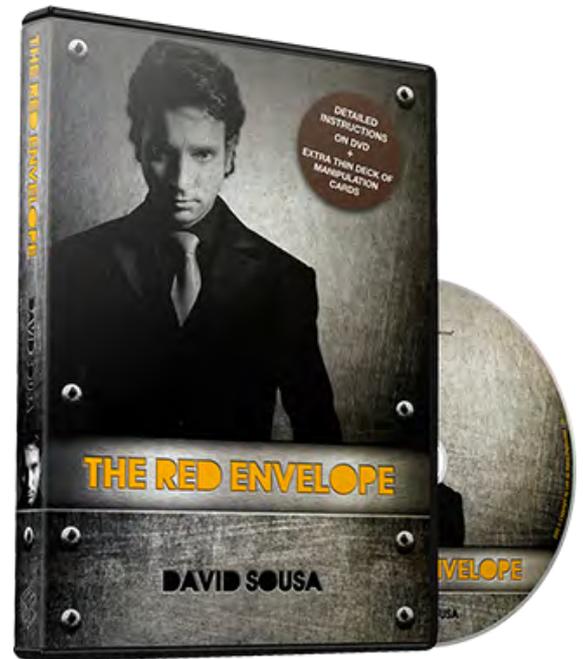
“VALENTROL” – Okay, I love this! The copy reads correctly that this is one of the simplest control of multiple chosen cards, setting you up for a climatic, one-after-another reveal that with proper routining is a pretty solid show-stopper. Steve also provides even more additional tips on this that are fantastic.

In addition to the routines he explains in full detail during this lecture, it’s also a joy to watch a true professional, who understands timing, beats, and control during his performances. The material is solid and I look forward to future video lectures from Steve in this new series. Highly recommended.

Available from your favorite dealers, and also from Steve’s own website: www.SteveValentine.com.



THE RED ENVELOPE By David Sousa



The Red Envelope is David Sousa’s award-winning silent act. This act inspired a generation of world-class manipulators and champions and led to David being appointed Honorary Professor at the Academy of Magical Arts in South Korea.

In this theme act a red envelope appears, transforms and vanishes in the most astonishing manner. These incredible visual effects can be used in any stage act and the ingenious systems applied to develop more astounding productions, vanishes and transformations.

Effects include: Ball to scarf, cane production, card to confetti, interlock card production, card fans to envelope, torn & restored jumbo card, envelope productions and transformations. Learn David’s techniques then apply them to your own act and create your own stunningly visual effects.

English language.

DVD Tutorial (1h35m) + Extra Thin Deck of Manipulation Cards

MY THOUGHTS:

This is one of the best DVDs I’ve seen in a long time. Not because I’m ever going to perform this act, but because watching it was a masterclass in what goes in to making a great act. From the moment a pair of gloves morph in to a ball to the wonderful story line of a red envelope and a card that keep vanishing, appearing and growing

in size, this has everything I would class as a real magic act. It's no wonder David has inspired a new generation of magicians that are now winning all the major competitions around the world.

I was totally taken in with the story line and the poetry of this act. Even if you never perform the act in its entirety, there are parts you could take out and include in your own repertoire. I loved the opening of gloves to ball then to scarf and cane - this would be a great opening for my Chaplin act if performed in my character. And that is what I think this is all about, taking moments from the act and adapting them to suit your own style. There will no doubt be those that want to put in the hard work needed to perfect David's act, but the real benefit will be for those who understand the other elements of this that make it a piece of theatre. For the serious student who wants to learn about how to craft an act this is a must have DVD.

There are moves in here that reminded me of a dove act, but with read envelopes and cards rather than doves. For those who love manipulation you are going to love this product as David walks you step by step with his own routine, as well as supply you with special manipulation cards.

Not only is this a masterclass in crafting an act, it is also a lesson in misdirection. David goes through everything from where he looks to where his hands are positioned at every moment in the routine. So much thought has gone in to every little detail from how to make the cards

invisible by using black art to a very practical tail Toppit for those who don't wear tails.

The filming is first rate, which is what we have come to expect from Luis Matos, and the instructions are very clear and precise. The act is broken in to segments making it easy if you want to just learn certain segments.

If every magician put this much thought and practice in to their act then magic wouldn't have that certain stigma of 'bad cheesy acts.'

There is a bonus section where David explains what he does to prepare his cards for the manipulation part of the act.

If you are looking for a complete act, or looking for something to add to your current act this DVD is **VERY HIGHLY RECOMMENDED**. If you are new to magic I would also recommend this as inspiration of what can be achieved with work.

PRICE: \$35.00

AVAILABLE - All magic shops

WHOLESALE from <http://www.murphysmagic.com>



Elements of Mentalism Vol 1 (Water) by Nefesch



Water is the first in a series of 4 new DVDs where Nefesch will show some of his professional mentalism routines that he performs using the 4 elements of nature (Water, Fire, Earth, and Air)

Routines Included in WATER:

Water Mark:

You predict the amount of water spectator would pour in a glass.

Water Spell:

You predict the word your spectator thought of on the wall of a glass.

Hydrobirthday:

You influence the mind of your spectator, he creates musical notes putting water on glasses. The music plays the song your spectator is thinking of.

Russian Roulette:

A very deceptive and very safe Russian Roulette.

The Fifth Element: Slap or Kiss

A very entertaining routine where the performer predicts if he would be slapped or kissed by the spectator!

MY THOUGHTS

I'm a big fan of Nefesch and reviewed his HUG DVD in the last issue of VANISH. First of all, I have no idea how he can sell this for only \$10.00 retail and make money from it! This DVD is also a download so you have the choice of how you view it. If you like out-of-the ordinary mentalism then this could be the best \$10 you spent.

There are several performances of the effects, five in all, all shot with one camera sitting on a couch. The effects are all water based and one extra piece of fun as a bonus. It would have been nice to see these performed in a real world situation rather than a studio setting. Each effect is explained in detail and how you could adapt them for different working conditions.

The first effect is "Water Mark" where you will predict the amount of water placed in a glass by a spectator. A novel idea which is based on the psychology of a classic "prediction" opener. The method is very simple, and I felt a little too obvious but in the right condition it might work if followed up with other water effects. It's not as strong as a few other routines on the DVD.

The second effect is "Water Spell". This is stronger than "Water Mark", in that you not only predict how much water a person would put in a glass, but also a freely thought of word. Here are new twists on classic methods to accomplish out of the box thinking. The value here is Nefesch's take on the classic secret writing technique.

The third effect is "HydroBirthday". This is a very theatrical routine and my favorite on the DVD. This would be suited to smaller working conditions as the acoustics are important. The spectator is asked to fill six glasses and when the performer taps them the song is Happy Birthday. If working a birthday gig and conditions are right this is a very strong, and certainly unique piece of theatrical mentalism.

The last effect on the "water" premise is the "Russian Roulette". This isn't so much a Russian Roulette as it is an "Acid Test" done with clear liquids, one of them being harmful.

While the methods aren't new, the way the conditions are created really fooled me. Another highlight of the DVD.

The bonus effect, "Slap or Kiss" is a cute routine that can provide an offbeat moment during your performance. As I said, for \$10.00 this is a steal!!

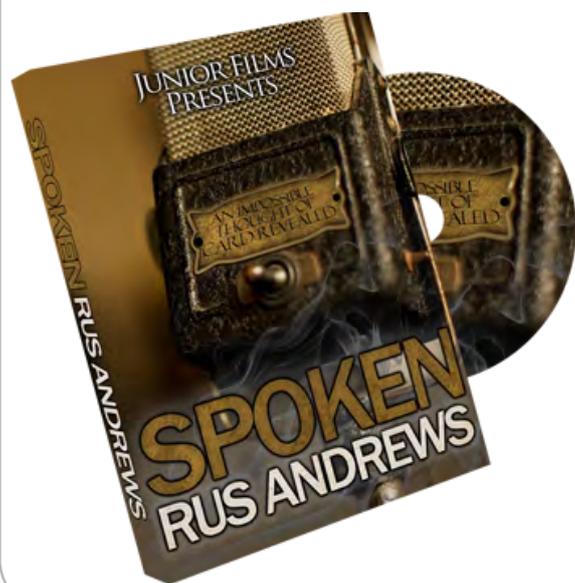
PRICE: \$10.00

AVAILABLE from all magic shops worldwide

WHOLESALE from <http://www.murphymagic.com>

SPOKEN

by Rus Andrews



A prediction is made and untouched from start to finish. The spectator is asked to think of a card. All done in their own mind without the use of any decks or extra props. They then change their mind so it is even more impossible for you to know their thoughts. After making a few decisions and having one card in mind they name the chosen card. You reach into your wallet to show a single card and that your prediction is correct.

No Decks Used

Use Your Own Wallet

Easy To Do

Takes Up No Extra Pocket Space

In Your Wallet And Ready To Go At All Times

Running Time Approximately: 33 min

MY THOUGHTS:

My initial thought was the process involved in the secret was quite lengthy, and there are certain conditions you wouldn't want to perform this under. You certainly couldn't do this with a person in a bar who had been drinking because the spectator needs to be able to concentrate on what you are saying. You would need to choose the right condition to perform this under as it heavily relies on the spectator and their basic knowledge of cards. Some spectators' minds freeze when put on the spot so keep that in mind. They need to be able to focus on the words and questions you ask them.

The prediction itself is inside your wallet to start although they never see it. You just put your wallet on the table. The method is a very clever way to 'force' various cards without using any physical cards. While this routine has impact, I personally think it is a springboard to other routines once you understand the basic method.

You can use your own wallet, but you will need to have space to hide some cards that will eventually be one of the ones called out. Once you grasp the method and what is involved you will certainly have something you can have on you at all times.

For mentalists who don't like the idea of carrying around a playing card you could easily have the prediction written on a business card, which makes this a great way to hand out your business cards. As I said, with a little thought this could be a springboard for something much stronger.

I will say that there are some 'outs' that may or may not be needed, depending on what card the spectator chooses. I've never been a huge fan of these outs and I find they never have the same reaction as just bringing out the thought of card. Again, using a different 'wallet' that is on the market you could have it loaded so there are no outs, although the benefit of this is that you should be able to use your own wallet.

The method itself is well hidden and if the spectator were to think back and try to recreate what happened they will be put off by the fact they changed their minds several times. It is the changing of minds where you need a spectator who can concentrate and understand what you are asking.

An additional idea on the DVD is DR. TEAR which is a clever way to make sure the trick goes the way you want, and might actually help with my initial concern of not working well under conditions with certain spectators. Again, it is something you can have on you should you have concerns.

One of the bonus tips is something using a Max Maven idea and if it's a hit with the card chosen then you have a real miracle. It's almost worth trying just to see how many times you get this right. By using the method you are probably going to get more hits than misses.

INSTRUCTIONS:

There are several performances of Rus performing under different conditions and the instructions are very well explained. You will need to remember a few of the key points then try them out on fellow magicians until to get the feel for the patter. As the title suggests what you say is important to how the effect plays out.

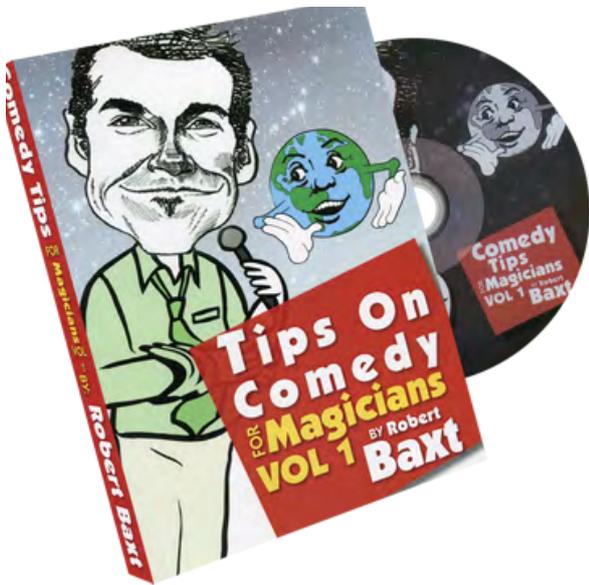
A novel concept that has come from a few other sources, which is acknowledged, but well within the reach of most performers, both magicians and mentalists.

PRICE: \$25.00

AVAILABLE: All magic shops worldwide

WHOLESALE from <http://www.murphymagic.com>

Comedy Tips On Comedy For Magicians Volume 1 by Robert Baxt



Reviewed by Tony Cris

I just want to start off by saying that I have always been a big fan of the comedy magic of Robert Baxt. I have seen him live several times and can attest to the fact that this man is truly funny! He really knows how to make a magic show funny and he does it in a way that is truly unique to his eccentric style.

I was delighted to see this new DVD offering from him land on my desk. I wasn't sure what to expect to be honest but I will say that I was not disappointed. Robert has taken his many years of performing as a comedy magician and made one very good DVD out of it. He talks about the do's and don'ts as well as how he has become successful at it.

Now I must state that if you are looking for a ton of great comedy routines to add to your working repertoire, you are probably going to be disappointed. I say this only because this DVD is not intended to give you 9 or 10 stellar comedy magic routines or to feature a live show in its entirety. It has very little in terms of actual performances although, what he does give up in the live routines is 100% pure gold! You will get to see some amazing magic routines constructed by a true genius of the comedic, magical arts.

This DVD offers, in my opinion, a lot more valuable information for those who want to truly, be funnier in their shows, add a dynamic of comedy in a skilled and logical manner and finally, to be informed of many tips and ideas of how to succeed in being funny with magic. To me, this is far more important than learning a few new tricks!

if you are looking for some amazing theory, direction and real work on performing comedic magic, then you are going to be very pleased with this DVD. Robert's information will be very enlightening to those who are even quite seasoned in comedy magic. I say this because I am one of them. I have been performing my adult comedy magic show for decades and have a fine show. After watching this DVD 3 times now I might add, I have learned many different aspects of funny business and how to be more funny by watching this offering. I know that sounds silly as you can't just learn to be funny from watching a DVD but you will learn how to work at developing the natural funny character of who you are. Robert discusses this extensively on the DVD as he pounds home how you shouldn't try and immolate somebody else and how you need to develop the real "you" instead! Throughout the DVD, Robert has many tips based on real life lessons that he has learned over the years. There are some great stories including one of his early shows as a birthday party entertainer that will make you rethink things.

If you are seriously considering adding a comedy magic act to your work, please do yourself a favor and pick up this DVD. If you are already performing a comedy magic show, please still pick up this DVD. It will be a valuable investment and well worth your time. It will also be one that you will watch over and over as you absorb the multitude of amazing information the Mr. Baxt has to offer you. I truly hope there will be a volume 2 and 3 as he has only just begun in his sharing of fantastic information.

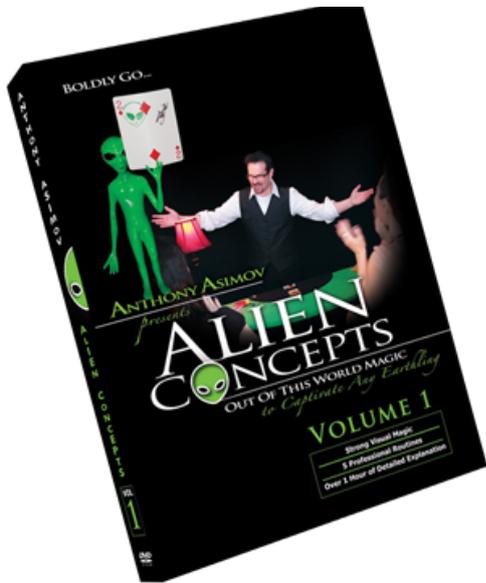
I highly recommend this DVD and will be using lots of the tools and tips that he has given up to the magic community here.

PRICE: \$25.00

AVAILABLE all magic shops worldwide

WHOLESALE: <http://www.murphymagic.com>

ALIEN CONCEPTS VI. 1 and VI. 2 by Anthony Asimov



I will review both volume 1 and volume 2 together.

The performance is in a studio setting with a lay audience, but you certainly get a full understanding of each effect and if it would work for you or not. While the material is well thought out I feel it is better suited to more formal close-up conditions than restaurant gigs, walk about or the bar type magic. The presentations are lengthy and in the strolling situation there often isn't time or the right acoustics for people to hear the performer. Having said that, if you were looking to put together a more formal show where you are standing in front of a table then there is enough material on these DVDs to choose from. Anthony is a charming performer and it was a joy watching him work the crowd. It was a pleasure to watch him perform and teach the effects.

VOLUME 1

Five effects in all ranging from cards to a Gypsy Thread that is killer to a matrix routine with a difference using Tarot cards.

Some of the highlights of this video include a no palming method of getting three thought of cards in to a hat previously shown empty. My favorite routine on here though is a great twist on the Gypsy Thread where you restore two different colors on to one thread. My only issue with the explanation part of this volume is that some of the handling and placement of the props in

The Alien Thread routine are glossed over rather quickly. He does take the time to explain the set up but there are some finer handling points that could have been discussed in more detail.

The Twin Card is a self-working routine where a spectator pairs two cards together using only his decisions and a single die.

VOLUME 2

Again it was fun to watch his 45 minute performance, some of the material is commercial and not explained. There are four effects taught on this DVD.

Some of the highlights here include The Cloned Cards which is a Wild Card routine which has a nice addition of becoming the chosen card.

My favorite on this DVD was 'This is Nuts' where a freely chosen card appears inside a walnut that is randomly selected from a bowl of walnuts on the table. This is probably the cleanest version of any type of effect I've seen like this, and certainly something magicians will love.

A Close-up Encounter of the third kind is a three phase routine which flows nicely from one effect to the other and if you are looking for a routine to add to your act that fills time with some strong magic, this is well worth checking out. The effect is after three spectators select and sign their cards, they are shuffled into the deck and then revealed in visual ways ... the first is torn and restored, the second teleports to a tiny box that's been in full view the entire time, and the third visually changes right before the spectator's eyes without any cover whatsoever ... signatures and all.

FINAL WORDS

The filming is first rate and Anthony certainly is a working magician who has his chops down. I enjoy his performing style as he has a very charming manner about him, which makes the magic that much more stronger. There are lessons to be learnt when watching a professional work with material that he has obviously worked hard at and made his own. This is where a DVD like this is really worth it's weight in gold.

I would highly recommend getting BOTH DVDs because the material on both is worth watching.

PRICE: \$24.99 US each

AVAILABLE from all magic shops worldwide

WHOLESALE from <http://www.murphsymagic.com>

BOOK REVIEWS

CREATIVE MAGIC By Adam Wilber



Creative Magic has the formula YOU need to kick start your Magic Creativity AND Career. This book is for the magician who wants to create magic and make money while doing it.

Adam Wilber is a working Pro, for over 15 years he has been creating magic and lining his pockets with cash. You are going to learn 16 effects that Adam uses at EVERY paying show he does. These are tricks that pay the bills AND book shows over and over again. You are going to learn HOW to create miracles. Every step of the creative process is explained including 9 EXERCISES in creativity that ALWAYS produce results and ORIGINAL TRICKS.

You are going to read interviews and essays from some of the most creative magicians alive today and you will get to learn the secrets to their creative success.

You will learn ALL of these professional, money making effects and ALL the creativity exercises, essays and contributions from famous magicians, Daniel Madison, Brad Christian, David Regal, John Guastaferrero, Dan Harlan, Marc Spelman, Pete McKinnon and Alan Rorrison!

Here is what other people have to say about Creative Magic

"...If you're a magician, you need to pick (Creative Magic) up. Creativity at its finest." -James Kaine

It would cost OVER \$100 to buy each and every one of these effects and that is without all the amazing Creativity Exercises that train you to become an inventor and creator of magic.

To get the essays and insight from all of the other contributors took Adam over 2 years!

You don't have to wait 2 years you can buy Creative Magic RIGHT NOW and start performing and creating your own miracles right away.

MY THOUGHTS:

This book certainly has some very creative ideas in here with 16 effects using playing cards, coins, earphones, rings, batteries and soda bottles. There is something in here for everybody from the card and coin worker to those who like to make their own props. All of the effects are close-up based and most would work under test conditions.

My favorite is Cash Card where a playing card changes in to a dollar bill. This is the cleanest and most visual of this type of effect I have seen. It is easy to make up and can be in your wallet ready to perform at all times.

Boxed In is a well routined card and ring routine where a card changes places with a ring with a kicker ending. It's very clever but will take a bit of work to make the props.

While the magic is strong and practical, the true value of the book are the little additions after each effect where Adam shares his insights on creativity. He shares some creativity exercises which are really fantastic and will get you thinking on how to create your own magic effects. There are a number of these exercises and ideas that I have never thought of before. It doesn't matter if you are already creating your own material or just starting out, these exercises will help you work and develop your thinking so you can be even more creative.

The final part of the book are essays by some of the most creative people in the business. They all share their thoughts and ideas on creativity. This is HIGHLY recommended for every style and level of performer. Think of the magic as a bonus to the must read material on creativity.

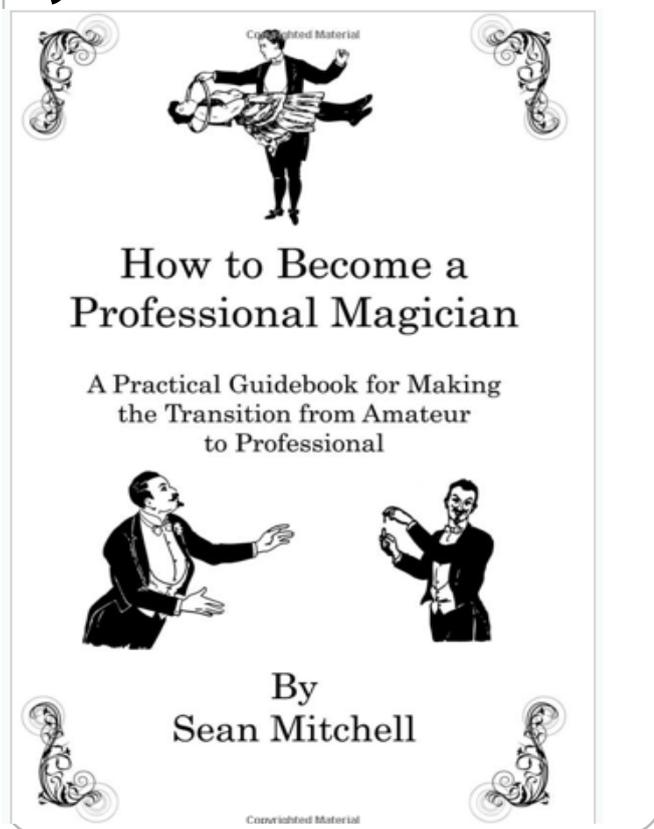
PRICE: \$34.99

AVAILABLE from all magic dealers worldwide

WHOLESALE: <http://www.murphsymagic.com>

HOW TO BECOME A PROFESSIONAL MAGICIAN!

By Sean Mitchell



REVIEW by Chipper Lowell

Coming in at 440 pages, one immediately gets the impression that this is not a project that was thrown together in a day or two, hoping for a quick buck. Instead, for those hobbyists and fans of magic out there around the world, wondering about whether they should take that all-consuming, monumental step into becoming a full-time or even part-time 'pro', there is a wealth of information stored within these pages.

During my time in high school I always wondered why there wasn't a class that was directly focused on teaching you the basics of life in general. A teachable roadmap that would cover everything to checking and savings accounts, applying for a job, finding an apartment, buying a car, managing your money, and giving you the skinny on the all the pitfalls and cons you might run into once thrown into the real world.

The same could be said for magic in a way. The 'holy grail' for me and literally thousands of others over the past 70 to 80 years was the iconic and detailed, Tarbell Course In Magic. It gave you a wonderful overview of all the variations of magic, from close-up, to stage,

to mentalism, manipulation, illusions, and more. While there were a few small chapters devoted to actually 'being' a working magician, it was mostly filled to the brim with a never-ending series of tricks and routines. Any time a young kid would talk to me about getting into magic, I would usually recommend the Tarbell books to start them on that road.

Where the Tarbell Course left off in the actual nuts and bolts mechanics of being and making a living as a professional magician, this book takes over the job nicely. This is not a book devoted to actual tricks or routines, as there are plenty of those filling the bookshelves of every enthusiast, bookstore, brick and mortar magic shop, and library for miles. Instead, this book could have easily been titled "Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Being a Magician but Were Afraid to Ask." (With apologies to Woody Allen.)

For those already waist-deep in the profession, a lot of the tips and advice may seem redundant and even at times somewhat obvious, but for those just starting out or even just toying with the idea about dipping their toe into this unique career path, it's a great read and a good jumping off point.

The topics are broad, which is a good thing, although I do wish he had covered marketing and promotion with just a tad more detail, but then the book might have had to add yet another couple of hundred pages to cover it sufficiently. Still, the chapters contained do indeed offer a wide range of topics in the magic field, such as: structuring a close-up set, structuring a parlour/stage show, rehearsals, gaining performance experience, pointers for preparing for a gig, proper conduct at a gig, stage and sound equipment advice, creating promotional videos and a proper website, business card design, costuming, tax deductions and business expenses, what to charge, and more. Whew! You can tell that much of the information in here was derived from the author's own, unique and solid knowledge and experience in making a real living as a performer. This is advice from someone who has truly breathed magic 24/7.

Other chapters and headings include how to handle and work with leads, deposits, contracts, follow-ups, negotiations, networking, and there are also pages dealing with one's personal goals when it comes to lifestyle, money and ambition. So many things are taken into consideration here without any sense of sugar coating that if you are truly on the fence wondering if this is a lifetime career choice for you, the decision can be weighed pretty honestly with all the facts presented.

What was refreshing for me was the lack of wacky, mumbo-jumbo type diagrams, flakey motivational speeches inspired by Tony Robbins, and over the top cheerleading moments about how wonderful it is to be a magi-

cian taking up precious space in the book. Instead, it is straightforward and fat free. It is written with clarity and directness from the real point of view of someone who has been 'in the trenches' for years and knows what he is talking about.

If there were any quibbles at all, it would be that typos can be found sprinkled throughout, and the layout could have used a healthy dose of photos and drawings to provide examples of the various points and detailed advice discussed within. (I've have been told that typos will be corrected in the next printing.) But those are small details that don't detour from the wealth of knowledge being doled out continuously, page after page.

A sample performance agreement and contract forms, along with a list of books for additional, recommended reading is included at the back. For those starting out in this crazy, magical industry, which is truly equal parts 'Show' and 'Business', I would heartily recommend this book.

PRICE:

Kindle \$9.95

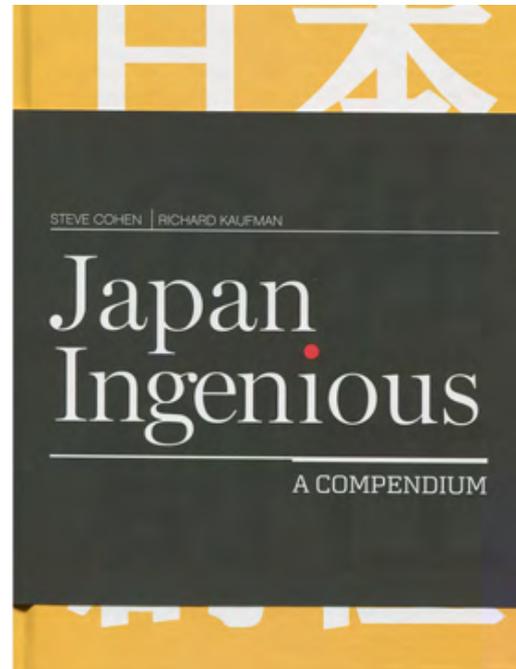
Paperback from Amazon \$22.00

AVAILABLE from:

<http://www.amazon.com/How-Become-Professional-Magician-Transition/dp/1478307633>

JAPAN INGENIOUS

By Steve Cohen and Richard Kaufman



ATSUKAWA AWARD WINNERS + GUESTS

21 MAGICIANS

67 EFFECTS

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Hiro Sakai

Tomo Maeda

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Kazu Katayama

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Akira Fujii

Yuji Wada

Yasuyuki (Bona Ueki)

Tomoyuki (Bona Ueki)

Tomoyuki Takahashi

Katsuya Masuda

Shigeo Takagi

Tenkai Matsuura

Hideo Kato

Kenichi Kuroki

Ryu Susato

Kazuyuki Hase

Dr. Sawa

MY THOUGHTS:

When I picked up this book it brought back so many wonderful memories of when I was growing up in New Zealand and would buy quality magic books and spend time reading and choosing which trick I wanted to learn first. I would slowly make my way through them and end up doing them all. There was no better feeling than working through the explanations, making the props and practicing.

This hard cover book is 252 pages and filled with some outstanding routines ranging from cards to mentalism to tricks using ping pong bats, glass and shoe laces.

What I love about Japanese magic is that it's always very visual and out of the box thinking. Some of my favorite effects in here that I have played around with include:- Autumn Mystery where you show a bookmark and a leaf which is glued to one of its sides. You then make the leaf penetrate through a sheet of clear glass or plastic, which penetrates back through the glass onto the bookmark. There is some construction needed to make this up, but well within the reach of most. There are variations on this effect but it is a lovely piece of magic that can also use whatever is available to your working environment such as a glass table, a telephone booth or a store window.

The Volunteer Swindler by Hiro Sakai is something you can carry with you in your wallet and perform it anywhere. The effect is that you show a five dollar bill and tell the story about how you try and fool people by folding it in such a way that it looks like two five dollar bills. After showing this you open it up to show it has now changed to a ten dollar bill. With a little bit of work on your bills you have an effect that is easy to do and would be great for any type of impromptu situation.

Celebrity Torn and Restored Card by Hiro Sakai is a terrific take on a torn and restored signed card. Based on handlings by Kenton Knepper and Ben Harris this surpasses its inspirational sources. What I love about this is that it solves two problems that most of these type of effects have. Sakai has overcome both obstacles and developed excellent real-world solutions. This would fit right in to any close-up or walk-around performers repertoire.

One Man Self-Levitation by Hiro Sakai is an illusion designed for an appearance on Japanese television, but would work well under the right conditions or more intimate setting. The performer steps in to a small box and let's the sides down suddenly showing him floating straight up in the air about a foot.

Money Circulation by Ichiro Mori is another great impromptu type routine where you borrow a bill and

cause it to rotate on a small paper tube you have made in front of the spectator. It's very visual and offbeat which is what I love about Japanese magic.

Torn and Restored 2000 by Kenichi Kuroki is a breakthrough in a torn and restored bill routine. This is organic magic at its finest. A bill is displayed, folded, and its centre is covered with the exterior piece of paper from a gum wrapper. The paper and bill are torn clearly in half and the bill is restored. The paper remains torn as proof. The work on this is very clever and once mastered you'll have it for life. I can see many magicians wanting to learn this because again it can be performed anywhere and at anytime, making it perfect for that moment when asked to do a trick.

Sneaky Sneaker by Kenichi Kuroki is another visual effect where you pluck the bow off your shoelaces leaving an endless lace, and then replaces it in a different position on the lace and unties it. There is a little bit of work required to make this up, but it's well worth it. This could easily have been a marketed effect and something you'd expect to see David Blaine or Angel perform.

Ping Pong Pocus - If you play Ping Pong you'll want to do this!! In the course of playing Ping-Pong, as you are about to serve the ball changes color - not once, but twice. As a kicker the paddle shrinks. Again this could be a great effect for television or a special moment where you want to create a seemingly impossible miracle.

As well as the many tricks in here using different objects you will find some great card routines that can play by themselves or as part of a larger routine. There is something for everybody from stage to platform to close-up. There are 67 effects so it's jam packed with enough material to last you a long time.

The quality of production is first rate, and the magic inside is fantastic. There is something for everybody and every working environment. I still believe books are the best way to learn magic rather than DVDs because books helps create more original presentations and originality than trying to copy a persona from a DVD.

PRICE \$60.00

AVAILABLE from all magic shops worldwide

WHOLESALE: <http://www.murphymagic.com>

SCRYER'S 13

By Richard Webster & Neal Scryer



ADVERT: The Mystery of the "13 is over... We are proud to announce the next project from Scryer. This work contains 13 contributors PLUS over 11 routines from Scryer.

For many of you, just the below information will be enough to justify the purchase...

Contributors: (Alpha Order) Keith Barry, Meraux Dantes, Jerome Finley, Sidney Free, Docc Hilford, Ross Johnson, Ted Karmilovich, Darrel Mac, Tony Michaels, Richard Osterlind, Sandra Sisti, Peter Turner, Richard Webster.

A Peek Inside! A partial small teaser of "some" of the contents in Scryer's 13!

Scryer's Gypsy Fortune Telling Machine Reading:

Possibly the easiest reading you could ever do, with an exceptionally strong impact. It's so easy you'll be able to do it in a few minutes plus you get your information out there -while you are getting paid.

Scryer's Human Pendulum Invisible Deck:

How's this for something different? The spectator actually becomes the pendulum!

Scryer's Signature Duplication:

This is a tribute to Dr. Jaks – a reputation maker for sure. Performer Jon Stetson kills with this and very few of Scryer's closest friends — until now — have used this technique with great success... Hard to part with, but it's here...

A Bizzarist Dream Come True:

A foolproof safe "smash and stab" that uses a prop but ends with an extremely strong emotion kicker. No one can get hurt on this – the spectators and performer are actually guided by a "passed spirit."

Scryer's Easy Coin Bend:

Like you have NEVER seen before. Expect standing ovations – also only tipped to a few of his closest friends. This is real work, no gimmicks, and a signed and bent coin with their name on it. Completely different than the previous coin bend shared in Scryer and Friends.

More Reputation Makers from Scryer "included." Stay Tuned. Sneak peak below from only four of the chosen "13 contributors!

The Osterlind Read:

In his masterpiece "The Osterlind Read," Richard explains a brand new approach where one spectator reads another and the performer shows he does the exact same thing, but in even greater detail! It is a mind-boggling demonstration that shatters the audience thinking processes!

Medium Rare – Jerome Finley:

Jerome's information should probably not have been included, especially as he is only bringing this information to light and giving it a voice for someone else who wishes to remain behind the scenes. A prominent psychic, gifted spiritual healer and clairvoyant medium who he refers to as "Bee."

Keith Barry – Magical Memories:

This has been played out in front of 30,000 people in Ireland! Killer!

Peter Turner – Getting To Know You:

Absolute masterpiece

Richard Webster – How to hypnotize a person with a Pendulum:

Classic Killer Webster...

Please guard this book carefully, as it contains some of the best material in the world of mentalism.

MY THOUGHTS:

Destined to become a classic of mentalism this book is filled with material for the working mentalist. Scryer has a knack of keeping methods simple with devastating results, which is why he has such a huge following in this field. As the title suggests there are routines by Scryer and 13 of his closest friends, who happen to all be the leading mentalists performing around the world today. How he is able to get some of their pet routines is beyond me, but thankfully for us they are willing to share their material.

Let's look at the material by Neal Scryer first of all. There are 14 effects ranging from pendulum routines to an offbeat Bank Nite routine. There are routines for close-up venues as well as stage material. One of the things I like about Scryer's thinking is how he is able to combine routines with publicity in a way that nobody is aware. An example is his Gypsy Fortune Telling Machine Reading where he is able to give readings without doing much work. To anybody who wants to get repeat bookings from a gig this is pure GOLD!

He also takes a few standard 'magic' props and turns them in to miracles for lay people, without any 'magic' involved. He takes standard tricks that a lot of us have and for private parties can create great stand-up routines. As I said, the methods are simple but the effects on lay people are strong. His Bank Nite is such an example. I performed it recently and it was one of the strongest routines in the show. If you had to put together a full evening of mentalism then the material Neal offers is all you would need. His thinking is direct, slightly offbeat and practical for every working condition. For my cruise ship friends I would highly recommend this book if you are looking for material should your act get lost and you need to perform. As I reading this book I was wishing I had it years ago when my luggage was constantly lost. Something that Scryer's routines have is a real connection with the audience, whether it be a story about his grandmother to using a borrowed watch, they are all personal and connect with people. I think that is the real secret to Scryer's work and is why many professionals are using his material.

The 13 friends then offer their contributions. My first stop was to read Keith Barry's routine Magikal Memories This routine comes from Keith's current show which has been seen by more than 30,000 people in Ireland. The routine is fully scripted as Keith uses it in his show and you can imagine the impact is so strong it would make the spectator cry. It is amazing that Keith gave this routine away, but for those who purchase the book you will have a very emotional and powerful routine.

Jerome Finley offers an essay that should probably have never been published in the first place. The information is from a working psychic and offer information that is used by most of the top people in this field. Without giving too much away let me just say that this chapter alone is worth more than the price of the book. I would suggest EVERY single person claiming to do mentalism read and study this chapter. It will open up new doors and put you steps ahead of everybody else. The material offered here is what some people have started religions with!!

Ted Karmilovich offers a routine called Voice Print Plus which uses a very clever method to achieve a great piece of mind reading. By asking a few questions about a first kiss you are able to tell the spectator the name of that person. The questions don't have anything to do with the actual method but are part of the fun of this routine.

I have found after performing some of the pieces in this book that the strongest reactions come from females. It is something that Neal himself seems to understand and makes a strong connection in choosing his material and who it is best suited for. Not only is this a book about effects, but it's also a great lesson in presenting material to the right audience which will get maximum impact.

This book is for the serious practitioner rather than those who just dabble in mentalism. It is priced accordingly as the material is from performers who make their living doing this type of performance. If you have a serious interest in mentalism, or perform full time then I would very highly recommend this book. Scryer has a very large following and as another reviewer said, "this book should be called 13 Steps To Mentalism - but that is already taken." This book is very much a lesson in mentalism and if you bought one book this year and wanted to make a career from the material, this should be it.

My high praise comes from having performed some of this material in my full evening shows as well as incorporate it in to my everyday life, especially when asked to do something. If I want people to remember me the chances are it's a SCRYER routine that I will do!

PRICE - \$165.00

AVAILABLE from <http://www.stevensmagic.com>

E-BOOK REVIEW

INSTANT AUTHOR MAGIC KIT

By Mister Gregg



ADVERT: The best instant author book available! Earn extra \$ at gigs!! Many entertainers have discovered the GOLD MINE in back-of-room sales.

This "Learn Magic" Instant Author Kit is how it's done. It's a book that's already written, illustrated and ready for you to add your name. Selling this after your show can result in doubling or tripling your normal fees per gig.

"Learn Magic" includes blank sections on every page for your logo, name, etc. Pages are not numbered, so you can mix and match what you need.

Comes with Four books, B&W and color version in two sizes. Each book is 44 pages with over 50 tricks and gags in each one.

Seven Speciality books - \$175 Value included FREE

Thirty Two Additional Covers \$49. value included FREE.

MY THOUGHTS:

To be honest I didn't want to review this because I

wanted it all to myself, but it was sent in for review so I had no choice. This is without a doubt the BEST back of room sales book I have ever come across. What's makes this so great is that you get SO many options to customise it. All the work is done if you want to have them printed as they are, but you can very easily add your own logo and name to the covers and inside pages. If you have basic computing skills then this is easy to do, or Mr Gregg offers some services to help you out.

There are several versions on his website to download, if you didn't want to spend the full, and well worth \$149 on the main version. You will get PDF versions of the book and can change them using software that is available for all computers.

As a person who knows how to make extra cash from BOR sales I can tell you this is something you should seriously consider. If you work birthday parties, restaurants or even cruise ships here is a magic book that is filled with great tricks that aren't the standard ones we all know and see in these type of BOR books. Once you pay for the downloads you will have the books and all the extra covers to easily make up the book. There are also separate books on money magic, rope magic, card tricks, etc. so you have more options rather than just selling one book. The potential to make a lot of extra cash here is HUGE.

You can also use the covers to make up posters advertising the books, again easy to customise. You can print the books yourself or take them to a professional printer. With offset printing these days there are many cheap options to print books that look like they've come from a professional publisher. If you wanted to have your very own magic book to sell after a show this is the kit to get.

You get many options should you wish to print a full color book, or just black and white. There are two different sizes for different paper sizes with the smaller ones being perfect for those who teach magic classes. Use these as special gifts or give-aways to promote your show, or sell them after shopping mall shows.

As well as tricks there is great advice in the books for aspiring young magicians, which we all know is just as important for kids to read as learn tricks. It's all here, with loads of easy to follow illustrations and easy to read text. It's a book a kid would buy, a parent would buy and grandparents. This is a no-brainer if you want to have a personalised magic product to sell after your show.

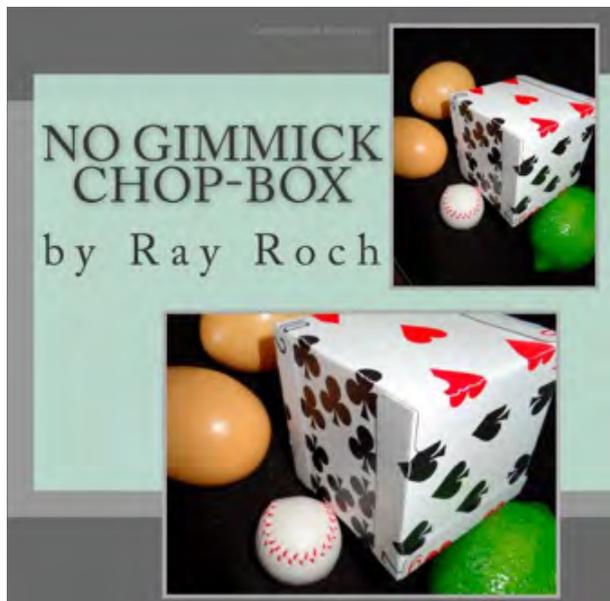
PRICE: \$149 includes ALL the extras

AVAILABLE from

<http://www.mistergreggy.com/shopping>

NO-GIMMICK CHOP BOX

By Ray Roch



ADVERT:

Really "Outside of the Box!" Roch's thinking is really "Outside of the Box" when it comes to something so innocent as a little origami box built in front of you in a matter of seconds out of just six playing cards. Ray teaches how to quickly build, and gives away his in depth secrets, which turns his Impossible Box into a diabolical magical device for producing, vanishing and switching. The moves which Ray showed us could have only be honed through years of performance, but Ray is able to teach us the artifice which makes the Impossible possible to master, and completely adaptable to one's own routine and patter. Not only does Roch give you a very magical and entertaining routine which even fools magicians, but he also gives you the ability to easily create an instant cost-nothing working prop anytime for yourself or a unique souvenir for your volunteer which that person will value and keep forever.

MY THOUGHTS:

Ray's original DVD called *The Impossible Box* was well received in the magic community when it was released a few years back. Since then Ray has been diligently working on taking the concept steps further, and created a very practical and well structured no-gimmick chop cup style routine using a box. I had the pleasure of seeing Ray perform this, along

with other magicians, and nobody knew the method. The reason we didn't know the method was because it had never been done before. It is all in the way Ray constructs the box that turns it in to an instant chop cup, and everything is examinable or can actually be given to the spectator as a souvenir.

This book is available as an e-book or hard copy. Both have colored photos showing all the necessary steps and moves. You don't need the original DVD to learn how to make the box as there are step by step photos in the book.

If you've ever wondered what to do with your left over playing cards this could very well be the thing to make. Once you have mastered making the actual box, you can put it together in seconds making it a good restaurant routine or walk-about.

The loads are such that it is pretty practical and the appearance of the eggs is extremely clever. The actual appearance of the lemon and eggs at the end is a real surprise and Ray has worked out how to load them at times in the routine when there is no heat on your or the box. He has spent the better part of the past few years working out every aspect of the routine and with the help of his magic friends has constructed a practical routine for the working magician.

Without giving the method away I would say that the actual chop cup method is brand new and deviously clever. I know when I saw it nobody has any idea how it worked, especially when he just gave us the box. This is what makes this routine so unique. I love the fact you can use the box as a give away. You can easily adapt this to other productions if you wanted to produce chocolates, candy or even a glass of liquid.

As Ray himself says in the book, "It is not for the feint of heart. It will take diligence and many hours of practice to attain proficiency." If you like to spend some time working on an effect that not everybody is going to do, this would be a great choice. Once mastered you will have something very unique and I'm sure add to your regular working repertoire.

There is so much you can do with this presentation wise. Ray has even had cards made up so when the box is made it looks like a large die.

PRICE: \$25.00 US

AVAILABLE from any magic retail shop as a download or direct as a hard copy book from Ray's own site at: <http://www.rayroch.com/contact.htm>

WHOLESALE from <http://www.murphsymagic.com>



**Fight for
your show
every time
all the time!**

**Rantings of a
Comedy Magician**

When we read reviews of various tricks on the market, there are buzz words that many of the working pro's are looking for, like, "Resets instantly", "Plays big, packs small", and "A real worker" come to mind. And that's all well and good, but I often feel we miss the boat when it comes to the actual environments we'll be entertaining in.

See, the thing is, no matter how great your magic is, it all comes to down to getting that all important personality of yours and the 'message' of what you'll be doing across to the audience in front of you. That venue that you have been hired to perform in can and will

CHIPPER LOWELL

make' you, or 'break' you, with no apologies should it all go downhill fast. It can be pretty demoralizing at best, and at worst, make you want to hang up your tuxedo, sell the rabbit, and quit.

Many years ago, I was asked to do a last minute corporate show for a special luncheon, taking place in a good sized, banquet hall connected to fancy, modern arboretum. My performance area was to be a typical, raised platform located directly in front of about thirty '10-top' tables. All looked fine, except for the glaring fact that there were no less than six, five-foot wide planters, four feet high, made of mirrored glass, positioned in a straight row across the front of the stage. To add insult to injury, the tops of the planters were filled with tall bamboo shoots, creating a complete wall between the stage and the audience. I felt like I was working in the middle of a panda sanctuary.

I politely explained to the event planner that no one could recognize the stage, much less see my show, and she replied, "Oh, that's fine. You can simply perform in front of the planters." Now a newbie in the business would probably shrug their shoulders and agree, and that would be it. But that show would have suffered immensely.

Seriously, who decides to place large, mirrored planters behind a magic act? Not to mention the stage lighting would be bouncing off them and into the eyes of an irritated audience. At the end of that train wreck of a show, the audience, and the booker, would have come to only one conclusion: That the magician sucked. To make matters worse, hardly any of them would place the real blame on the set-up of the room, the location of the planters, the stage, etc. Nope. More than likely 100% percent of the responsibility for the horrible time had by all would be placed upon the performer.

Now I could go on and tell you literally hundreds of stories like this, where you are stuck between a rock and hard place with an audience expecting you to pull miracles out of your butt. And we've all had them. But here's what I did in this particular circumstance:

I replied to the lady in charge with, "No thank you. I want to make sure your audience has a great time today. After all, that's what you're paying me for – Both my show and my years of experience presenting my show to groups like yours. If possible, let's find another place for those planters." She fidgeted just a bit and shook her head "NO". After a rather awkward pause between us, she finally opened up explained that she had hired "this amazing designer" for the event and those planters were his cherished and brilliant contribution to the décor, and she didn't want to "piss him off" by moving them.

Well, I was a little shocked to say the least. Here was a grown woman, who had been in the event planning

business for 20+ years, willing to jeopardize the entire entertainment presentation for 300+ attendees at this special luncheon because she was trying to avoid a conflict with a decorator. Wow. My mind raced quickly and I figured that giving her a proper education by example was the key. I gently took her by the hand and led her to a table front and center near the stage. I walked around the planters and stood center stage. "Can you see me easily? And can you also see what I'm doing with my hands?" (Knowing no one could see, I should have flipped her the bird.) She replied, "No. Can't see a thing."

"Okay, now I'd like YOU to stand up on this stage, and I'll sit at a table." And with that, suddenly it all 'clicked' for her. To put her more at ease, I volunteered to talk to the designer myself so the pressure was off her shoulders. Why not? The designer wasn't the one booking me, nor would he ever anyway. The event planner was able to save face, while the designer wound up throwing me dirty looks right up until show time. But the end result was that we were able to get those planters moved far away to another location in the venue. I felt like President Reagan delivering his "Tear down these walls!" speech.

The show, which followed the group's luncheon, was a rousing success; thanks to the simple fact that every single person at every table could clearly see me, my props, and the volunteers I brought up onstage. And by the way, as a side note, the decorator stuck around for the show and realized how much more smoothly everything worked out. I also made sure to ask the crowd for a big round of applause on the décor, and mentioned the man by name. Professional Ass-Kissing 101, baby!

What I'm getting at here is that you have to literally fight for your show as much as possible in order to give the performance of a lifetime. You are your own, best champion. It doesn't stop with the selection of the most practical routines or the choice of a prop case or table. That fight also has to take down as many of the physical roadblocks and obstacles thrown at you before you ever set foot onto that stage. Even those people who have seen your show elsewhere (in a nice setting) and booked you for their upcoming event may not have your best interests at heart. And why should they? You are the professional and it's up to you to speak your mind when it comes to how the stage and tables or chairs are laid out, and suggest the proper angles that don't obstruct views, or making sure people aren't seated to the extreme sides of the performance space, or even worse, sitting directly behind you.

The fight is never ending and extends to other factors like firmly requesting that your show only take place after the final dessert plate has been removed from the tables so there's no dinner interruptions, or show interruptions. If the lighting is too dark going for a "more intimate dinner setting", you have to

have the guts to ask that the lighting be made brighter for your performance afterwards for maximum effect. Don't get timid on these things...ever.

The same goes for sharing a stage. How many times have you had to work alongside a DJ carting along all of his equipment or even a live band? Chat with those people about your specific needs and also see how you can help them with theirs. Be willing to move speakers and instruments before and after your show. Be creative and give 110% percent when it comes to solving problems and finding solutions. In the end, they will respect you, the booker will admire your professionalism, and the audience will get to see you do what you do best in the best possible setting for your show. It really, really, really, really, really (you get the idea) makes a difference.

I should provide a small word of caution here. I make sure to never be a pain in the ass about making all of my demands loud and clear when it comes to performing. The first rule of thumb is to make sure that you have mentioned your technical requirements, and "Do's & Don'ts" in a straightforward manner in all of your correspondence and emails long before the show date arrives. Even in the contracts I send out, there are clauses that I consider so important that I require them to be initialed along with the signatures at the end of the agreements. This insures that those paragraphs have been noted and read by the bookers and event planners. I should also mention that not once, after any of my shows, have I ever had anyone complain about my earlier 'demands' or attitude, as they all quickly realize it was all done for the betterment of the show, the audience, and the evening at hand.

And now I'm going to add one more suggestion to this "champion your own show" concept, and it's this: Not only provide yourself with the best environment to do your show at a top level (within the limitations of the room), but also ask yourself what more can be done to 'own' that particular room during a show? How can I turn that space into a real advantage?

In other words, take the time to not only make the room work for you, but also see how it can actually benefit your act, your show, your routines, and even your sense of humor. If you go above and beyond the call of duty, people will sit up and take notice. I'm not kidding around here. They will sit up and take notice. Need I say it a third time?

For example, I was performing a multi-week run at the Tropicana Casino in Atlantic City. The theater seats around 1,500+ people and along the front edge of the stage apron were these small, little light bulbs which became flashing, running lights along the floor and the proscenium as well. They could blink, dim up or down, or 'chase' in one big circle around the frame of the stage.

During my act, the lights would remain 'on', dimly lit as not to detract from the show, but the audience could plainly see them.

In the middle of my act, I would casually look off into the wings on the either side of the stage, as if I didn't want to be caught by anyone, and then (when I felt the 'coast was clear') I would reach down, unscrew one of the tiny bulbs and quickly toss it into my prop trunk. I would say, almost as an aside, under my breath, "My refrigerator light at home is busted." This would get a huge laugh from the audience because it looked improvisational, in the 'moment', and, more importantly, it used the environment around me.

Another time during a large corporate event in a grand ballroom, I once hung a giant playing card with a cloth covering it from the bottom of a chandelier high up near the ceiling. I had discovered earlier that day during the technical run-thru that the tech crew could simply press a button and the chandelier would lower itself and the card automatically when I gave the cue. That little 'visual' element suddenly made my show appear to be custom fitted to the venue!

For smaller gigs in places like corporate meeting rooms, I've secretly placed a sealed prediction behind a prominent painting in the room. At the required moment, I would ask an audience volunteer to stand up, reach behind the picture, retrieve the package and bring it forward. The story line was usually that it was a special 'message' from the old guy in the painting who had founded the company. Audiences love creative moments like this. They eat them up like candy and during the next couple of days you wind up being the topic of conversation around the office water cooler.

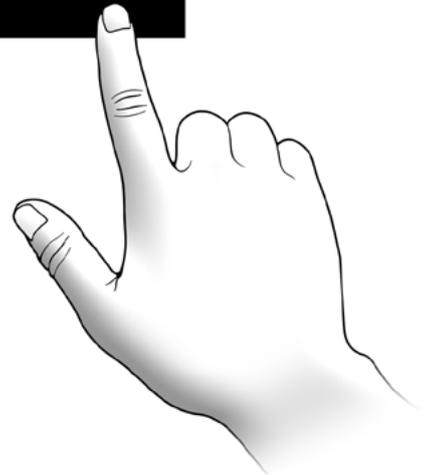
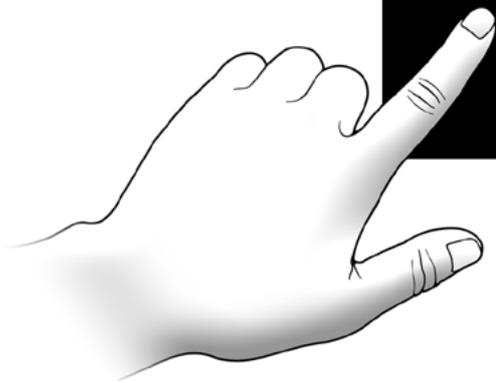
So, I implore you to not only fight for your show to be the best it can be in whatever challenging venue you're presented with, but try to take that all important, extra step to utilize that space in unique and creative ways in order to make the evening even more special and one-of-a-kind. Remember, the more you set yourself apart with your shows, original routines, and personality, the more people will remember you, take notice, and hopefully hire you and recommend you to others out there.

Please feel free to drop me a line, should you have any suggestions or questions I can help you with. Happy to do so, and those emails are often the key to inspiring new topics for my column here in VANISH. All the best, and I wish you much success!

email: chipper@chipper.tv



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