

PDF Taster Issue No.2
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THE MAGIC MAGAZINE FOR
MAGICIANS & MENTALISTS

magicseen

**THE UK GOES USA:
MAGICIANS WHO HAVE
MOVED TO THE STATES**

**SO YOU WANT TO BE
A MENTALIST**

**CRAIG PETTY:
FAKE COINS - PART ONE**

MAGIC IN THE MOVIES

**GAETAN BLOOM
RESISTANCE IS FUTILE**

**TASTER
PDF #2**



Just look at the States we're in!



You only have to draw your curtains and look out onto another miserable day in England to realise that there must be more to life than this. In the past few years, a steady stream of British magicians have taken their talents overseas, so we decided to ask four of them all about it. And if it's possible for us to bribe the authorities for us to join them!

SIMON LOVELL

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What made you move to America?

I had visited America as a student (on an Exchange program called Camp America) and had a great time. Staying in NYC for a while I fell in love with it and decided, there and then, that one day I would live there. Much later I thought I'd pretty much done everything that I wanted to do with my career in the UK and that spurred me on to make a whole new start in a new country. In an odd way I guess that, although reasonably successful, I was in a rut.

How do you get to move and work there?

I gained an early O-1 visa after a LOT of paperwork and meetings and so had a three year permit to both live and work in the USA.



During those three years, with the help of an amazing immigration lawyer, the visa (after even more piles of paper work, full medicals and meetings) became a Green Card giving me lifetime rights to live and work here. As an aside, before moving here, I sold pretty much all the magic stuff I had acquired over the years. Sad? A little, but honestly it also felt like a huge weight had been lifted from my shoulders. I really did have to literally start over! The much easier answer would have been to say, "by plane," by the way!

What are the biggest differences you have discovered?

Two things spring to mind. First one is that Americans seem to generally love magic and its performance ... far more than UK folks do. Their responses are much more enthusiastic! Second was that I had to critically adjust my comedic timing and material. I needed to slow down quite a lot and do a lot more observational comedy rather than just telling jokes.

Are you happy?

I'm always happy wherever I am. To be anything else is, quite frankly, pointless.

Have you had to change your act in any way, to make yourself understood?

Apart from slowing down quite a bit I also discovered that Americans like a more theatrical or story approach. It's not just trick, trick, trick ... there has to be a whole story or undercurrent to link everything together into a complete whole.

My Off-Broadway show, Strange and Unusual Hobbies, (now in its seventh year if that's not too self-serving!) has magic and gambling in it but the hook or link is that it is all about the life of a con man for example.

Where are you based and what made you choose there?

I am based in NYC which I think is the most exciting city in the world. It's also a huge centre for both media and theatre making it perfect for



my work. I regard it as home and really can't imagine living anywhere else.

Do you work through agents in the US?

I work through various agents but also organise a lot of my own work through networking and from others recommending me. Unlike many others, although I do have the mandatory website, I don't do very much on the Internet.

Was it like starting all over again? What was your experience?

It was both thrilling and frightening all at once! Magicians and magic groups were kind of aware of me from my writing and so on but lay audiences had never heard of me. Gaining entry into television especially was very difficult and took a lot of 'knocking on doors' to do so. Oddly though, starting again made me realise again just how much I love what I do. I had to stop coasting as I had started to do in the UK and get off my arse to write and create again, to adapt if you like. It was a rough and rocky ride at first but, thankfully, it all seems to have worked out well. I try to keep re-inventing myself these days to keep that enthusiasm going. Recently I have been doing film and television acting as well as advising and writing for the Fantasma Magic Company who are just a joy to work with. Roger Dreyer (CEO of Fantasma) is not just a great pal but one who constantly gives me challenges to overcome keeping life full of interesting surprises!

Most positive thing about the US?

There is a lot more work here even in these dire economic times. People still want to have fun. I love the fact that audiences are not shy at all, they love to join in and to come along for the ride! I also like the off-stage lifestyle very much as well ... good food, good wine, good shows, great museums, always something to do here in NYC! I have also been thrilled to meet and become friends with amazing magicians who I'd only ever read about.

Miss anything about the UK?

Friends and family of course, good British beer, the Telegraph newspaper (though I can get that here if I go to the right place), big pickled onions and very little else. I love to visit Britain and have always had a great time at the conventions there (hint hint to bookers) but regard NYC as my home now!

PAUL HALLAS

www.paulhallas.com

What made you move to America?

LOVE. Sounds corny, but true. I was in a long distance relationship over several years and we took turns flying back and forth but if the relationship was really going to be meaningful one of us had to move. Since my wife Sharon had worked at a University for around 25 years it seemed more practical for me to uproot than screw up her job and pension plans. After all a self employed entertainer who had already moved several times should be able to find work anywhere.

What are the biggest differences you have discovered?

I think it's a slower pace of life here. I think people here are a bit more thin skinned and easily upset, but it's also a land of extremes when it comes to differing viewpoints. This is probably because of the sheer size of the country and population.

Are you happy?

Very.

Anything surprise you about how magic is perceived in the US?

People who like magic really love it and show their appreciation, though you might get more religious people thinking you're in league with the devil. I remember after doing a sponge bunny routine at my restaurant residency a man looking across the table at his probable grand-daughter and saying in all seriousness, "Now, that doesn't look like the work of the devil does it?"

Have you had to change your act in any way, to make yourself understood?

I think I speak slower now. Initially some people did have trouble understanding, but generally people love the British accent.

Where are you based and what made you choose there?

We are based in Reading Pennsylvania (which does have its own magic shop, Mingus Magic, at which I've lectured three times) but I didn't choose it because of the magic shop. My wife lived and worked in this area so that's why I'm here.

Do you work through agents in the US?

No. I did contact a couple of event organisers in the area when I first moved here but they



were not interested, and I did do a gig for free for one agent, but in the past four years that resulted in one other paid gig. I was never a big fan of agents anyway.

Was it like starting all over again? What was your experience?

Oh yes, but worse than starting all over again in the UK. If you move within the UK it's no problem, because I used to work all over in the UK anyway. You can get in a car and drive to the south coast or up to Scotland etc. and still do gigs for the same event planners. Over here, I think the furthest I've travelled for a show is a three hour drive. I'm an unknown here, so it has been tough, a real struggle. Reading PA is not New York city or Hollywood lol. 2009 was my worst year ever, but on the plus side the lack of work gave me time to finish off a new book, "Still Small, Still Deadly" (the sequel to the packet trick book "Small But Deadly") which I officially released at the Blackpool convention on my annual trip to the U.K.

Most positive thing about the US?

The great outdoors. I just love road trips with my wife when we can get out and about. So far we've only managed a couple of huge ones involving thousands of miles driving. One was when I went out to South Dakota to film some DVDs the other when we decided to drive to Nova Scotia in Canada for the Meeting Of The Minds event. Sure, we could have flown, but the drives are adventures and memorable events that make life wonderful. Thankfully fuel prices haven't reached UK levels.

Miss anything about the UK?

Well, I still have family there, but we are in constant touch thanks to modern communication methods! Other than that the only thing I really miss is the ability to get decent fish and chips.



MARK MASON

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What made you move to America?

I have been coming to the USA since 1992, at first just for vacations. I really like the Florida area and bought my first home here in 1997. I like the place and the people.

How do you get to move and work there?

I applied for an O-1 VISA in 2007 through a

New York Lawyer. This was not an easy process and fairly expensive. This was approved and I recently applied for my permanent resident card - better known as a green card. This was granted in Feb 2010, so now I can stay here for 10 years. Then this is renewable.

What are the biggest differences you have discovered?

They drive on the other side!! Seriously, I would say comedy. I do a lot of gags and many of these I had to re write etc, so they fit the American market.

Anything surprise you about how magic is perceived in the US?

They love magic here, the general public see magic all the time, David Blaine, Criss Angel are shown all the time on TV. Plus several other shows. Just look at how many live magic shows there are in Las Vegas alone!

Have you had to change your act in anyway, to make yourself understood?

As I mentioned definitely my gags. I also deliver my lines a little slower to make sure I'm understood.

Where are you based and what made you choose there?

I am based in Mt Dora Florida, it's the sunshine state. (OK, don't rub it in, Mark!)

Do you work through agents in the US?

No not yet. I may approach a couple but at the moment I am extremely busy with shows, lectures, convention appearances and manufacturing.

Was it like starting all over again? What was your experience?

Speaking for magic shows then definitely yes, I had no clients here. I have built up a few over the years and have several who use me on a regular basis. I performed at lots of weddings in the UK so I decided to try and break into that market in the USA. It's taken a little time but I am now picking up wedding gigs

Most positive thing about the US?

The people are much more positive than the Brits. They have a better attitude towards life.

Miss anything about the UK?

Pork Pies and Brown sauce. Rugby League.

MARTIN LEWIS

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What made you move to America?

My sister married an American serviceman and moved to America, then slowly the rest of the family followed.



How do you get to move and work there?

I was 20 years old and emigrated with my family, I didn't do magic professionally until I was 21 and went to the Magic Castle for the first time. That changed everything.

What are the biggest differences you have discovered?

America doesn't have the history that the UK does which makes change and growth much easier to accomplish, and offers more and better opportunities for performers to enjoy.

Anything surprise you about how magic is perceived in the US?

In my work on cruises I encounter audiences worldwide. Americans are the best and most responsive of all!

Have you had to change your act in any way, to make yourself understood?

No, in fact I try to retain as much of my heritage as possible, it is a definite plus here in the States.

Where are you based and what made you choose there?

Southern California, I chose there because, well, it's Southern California...

Are you happy?

Yes, I had thought of retiring back in the UK but when we went to check it out it was raining, property was expensive, taxes were high, and everything closed on Sunday. We decided to stay in California.

Do you work through agents in the US?

Yes, I have a cruise agency in Miami and a TV and movie agent in Los Angeles.

Most positive thing about the US?

Great audiences, lots of opportunities!

Miss anything about the UK?

Pork Pies... **MS**





Patrick Page

17 March 1929 – 11 February 2010

First met Pat in 1965 when I was fifteen years old. I was doing my very first magic act which I had worked out using feather flowers. As they appeared the music played: 'Tip Toe Through The Tulips'...at which point, that did it for Pat, he quite literally fell off his chair with laughter. I think he took pity on me that night at The Hearts of Oak Building where The Magic Circle had their meetings at that time.

A little while later I found myself working at Davenports Magic Shop where Pat was the manager and this was the beginning of a friendship that would last 45 years. It was here that Pat started to work with me on my magic and in 1967 I won The Young Magician of The Year Award and this was, I believe, all down to

him. He was the most generous man I have ever met and a truly great teacher. He was outspoken and honest and if your card manipulations were rubbish...then he told you so in no uncertain terms! He worked you hard and stretched your ability to get the very best from you as a magician and performer. He saw in me something I could never have seen myself ...in short he gave me a career in magic and a life I could never have had without him.

I know I am one of many who were influenced by Patrick Page and he is without doubt responsible for giving us all a wonderful life in magic. Although he was never known by the general public, amongst magicians, he was the one they all came to from around the world

when they needed to know something about magic. Apart from being a great teacher, Pat was a very fine magician and the depth of his knowledge on the subject was truly astounding! He understood a side of magic that most of us struggle with, that being, how to turn a trick into entertainment. Pat had magic in his hands, he was a master exponent of the Topit Vanisher and there has never been anyone better at handling a 'stacked deck' of cards or palming anything! He was born to be a magician and even right up to and during his last days he was still thinking about his magic and the next trick he wanted me to make for him.

Aside from the magic, Pat was the centre and focus of a warm and loving family, a family which he generously made me part of many years ago, a family to which I am proud and honoured to belong to this day... the door was never closed and no matter where my magic took me around the world...when I came home...130 Lomond Grove was one place I could always be certain of a warm & magical welcome.

Colin Rose
20th March 2010

Gaetan Bloom

Still Crazy after all these Years...

Photographs: Zakary Belamy



Enigmatic Frenchman Gaetan Bloom is one of the most creative magicians in the world. Best known for his now legendary residency at the famous Crazy Horse in Paris, he has stunned audiences of magicians and magic fans with his inspirational performances for many years. Paul Stone talks to this truly outstanding magician...

Who were your inspirations in magic, and why?

This is a short question, but it needs a long answer! It all really started for me when I was 11. The famous French magician and hypnotist Dominique Webb opened a magic shop, and a small magic school in Paris. I saw an ad on TV and, on the spot, I urged my mother to take me there, and my dear Mum did just that, and paid right away for six months of lessons (and she was not that rich!) Thanks a million Mum!

And so that really was how it started. Dominique was in his late 20's, a star in France, and he taught me my first real tricks. Dominique was always prepared to take risks with his magic because he believed that no trick could ever be a complete disaster...and he taught me how to always find a way to

overcome a problem. Then he hired different teachers for the school like Georges Proust, and notably, amongst others, Jean Merlin.

Jean taught me all the tricks, routine after routine, both close-up and stage, including linking rings and multiplying balls. (I hated this one!.. hahaha). Yes, I owe a lot to him too. Then I grew up, and soon was known in the French magic clubs, as a naughty, crazy guy, but funny!

When I was twenty, I encountered for the first time somebody that literally changed my life. The one and only Ken Brooke. Ken and Frank Farrow, his partner at the time, were always very nice with me right from the first day, and Ken opened his heart to me. He was the one to put me in touch with Finn Jon, Fred Kaps, 'The Professor' (Dai Vernon), Tommy Cooper, Pat Page, and so many others, and of course, not forgetting Paul Daniels.

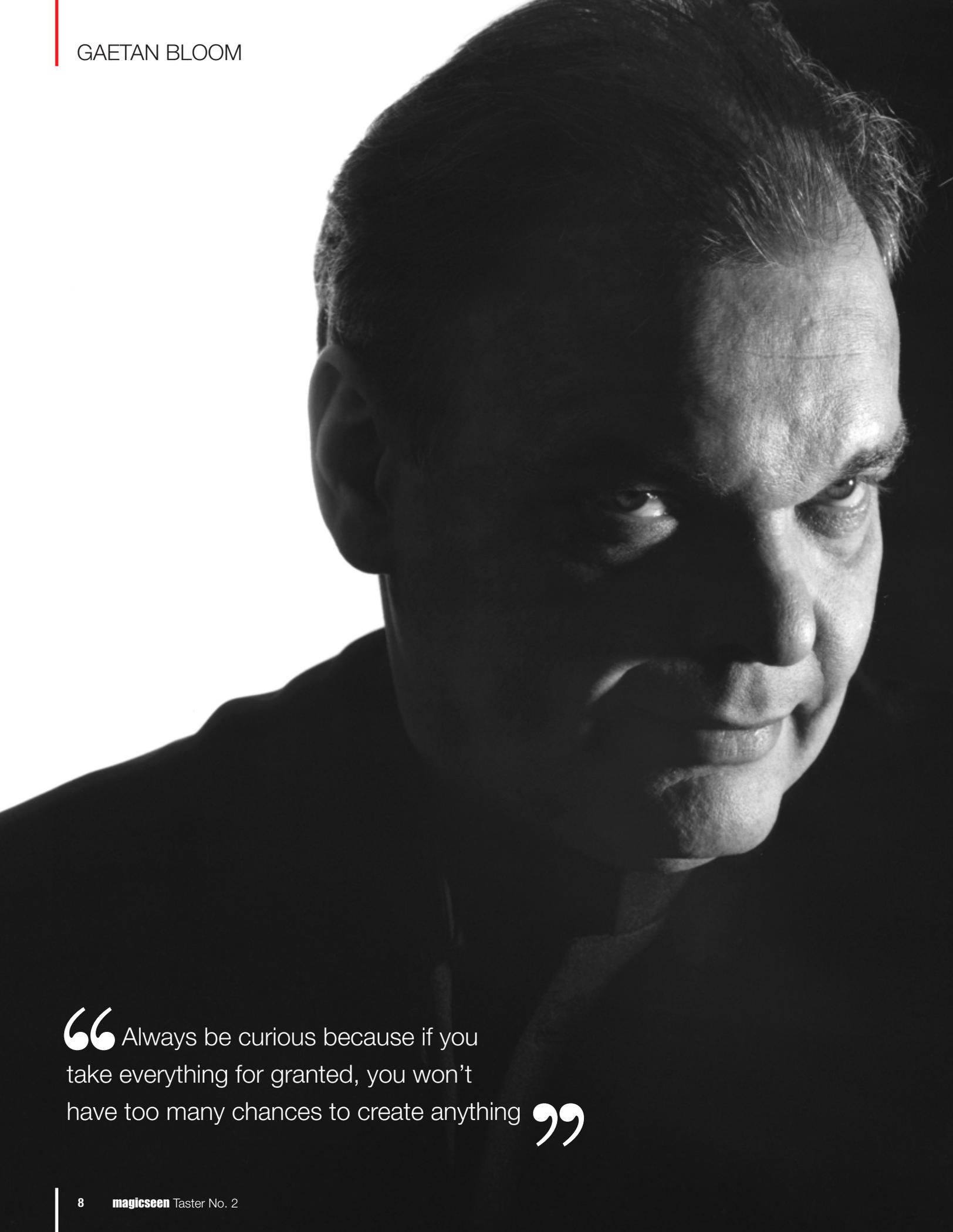
Meeting Finn Jon was the real start of my creativity. Before this time I just had some funny twists on presentation but I spent endless nights chatting with Finn who at the time was working the Crazy Horse in Paris. I used to meet him once a week after his show and he really started me thinking differently about my magic.

So, all these people, including of course my dear James Hodges, formed my roots, and gave me my grounding. So, lucky me!!!

Gaetan Bloom and creativity seem to go hand in hand. Why do you think this is, and have you always had a creative/flair side to you?

I think it boils down to one word, curiosity. If you want to be creative, you need to be curious, and about nearly everything...as a child, I loved mechanical toys, and I opened

“ If you want to be creative,
you need to be curious, and
about nearly everything. ”



“ Always be curious because if you take everything for granted, you won't have too many chances to create anything ”

each and every one just to see how it worked inside...and the same with electric switches, (I nearly killed myself doing that!) or anything. Always be curious, because if you take everything for granted, you won't have too many chances to create anything.

What did you learn most from working the Crazy Horse in Paris, and is it really as exciting a place to perform as people say?

I just learned to polish a ten minute act, like a jewel, every day.

Before that I used to be tempted to change the act all the time, but at the Crazy Horse, I had to do more or less the same thing every night and instead of working on new minutes, you worked on new seconds. I was very lucky to be the last artiste engaged by the creator of the place, Monsieur Alain Bernardin. It was a dream! From that time as a young man, I saw Finn Jon, Georges Carl, Senor Wences, Milo and Roger, Norm Nielsen, Otto Wessely, and so many others. I always had a dream of working there sooner or later and in the end it happened, thanks in fact to my dear brother in magic, Kevin James. But that's another long and beautiful story.

So, yes I learned in fact to perform my microphone act mostly. I created this act for the Las Vegas Seminar in 1981, (thanks to you Paul!) another wonderful moment and this act was inspired indirectly by two giants, Albert Goshman and George Carl. I wanted to do something based around a microphone, but not copying George, because nobody will ever be able to copy this absolute genius, and adding the sense of misdirection given to me by my dear Albert, another hero and genius. Another unique thing with the Crazy Horse, is that entering the place was like becoming part of a rather exclusive 'inner sanctum', a high quality private club of excellence, something any artiste dreams of. I saw Tom Mullica the first week of his contract there and he was great, of course. And he signed a two year contract. I had the privilege to see him every two months or so, and in this short period of time, the act became gigantic, a pure jewel. That's the magic of the Crazy Horse - it polishes you (dear Tom, you are in my thoughts more than ever. Love.)

Yes, this was a very exciting part of my life. I worked there 15 years and enjoyed each and every minute of it! The show always consisted



of 18 beautiful girls, and three, or later two 'international comedians', as Bernardin called us. Part of the thing is that even if the girls are gorgeous, after a while you get used to it and so it is the 'Speciality Acts' that always 'kill' there.

What other interests outside of magic do you have?

I am curious. Any art, from Surrealism paintings to automatons, to cinema, to sheer comedy, and novels, magic or not. I especially love the books of Frederic Brown. He was the king of the short 'mystery novel' and was able, in a few pages, to build a unique story, and at the last moment, in the very last line, to turn your mind over - just like in a good magic trick.

I also love to cook! I think magic and cooking are on the same register. I could write a book on that, but in both cases, it's much better if you can share it with people. Both have the same kind of mystery, often made of little touches, 'tournemains' as we say in French and the same power of memory. Some magic experiences will always stay in your memories, and the same with some unique meals you had. Unique, fragile, and memorable moments. And of course, I love 'Love' and women! The

“Women have always inspired me, definitely, starting with my mother. Women are just magic, and they gave me passion”

inner sense of magic. Femininity is magic by essence, the earth, that's why the truffle, the most famous mushroom, is so rich with magic, unknown feelings, and aroma, in between a woman's perfume and the earth. 'Alma mater'...ahhh, so French, little Gaetan!!! No, just sheer magic, at its very deepest!

Women have always inspired me, definitely, starting with my mother. Women are just magic, and they gave me passion...forever. I always had a Muse in my life, inspiring me even today, but 'SH-H-H—! IT'S A SECRET!' (as Annemann would say) but she knows,



«Chocoloma..brujita....» aie aie aie...
(don't worry, it's a coded message) but keep it as such, porque viva la Magia!! forever.

I know that one of your sons is a huge fan of the circus, and especially in clowning. Tell us more about him, and how he became so interested in this. Did he inherit this passion from you?

Yes, I have 2 sons, one is 19 now, Julien, and he wants to be an actor, he is very talented especially at improv. I'm so happy for him!!! My second one, 'the clown', is named Baptiste and when he was 2 years old, I took him to Vegas, and there was this magic shop, owned by Earl Chaney, the grandson of Long Chaney, the famous American actor.

Well, I remembered seeing framed photos of clowns in the shop, so I took my boy there to spend a few minutes. He just stared at the pictures for more than one hour, speechless and Earl asked me: 'What's wrong with the boy? I have never seen that!! At his age, after a few minutes, they are normally bored!'

I told him, he loves clowns, since the first circus he saw.

Then Earl told me he used to be a clown himself, and even worked many years at Barnum, attended the clown school, and was even one of the very first 'Clown Ronald for McDonalds'. And with a wink, he told me to bring my boy through into a small backroom he had in the shop. This small room was packed with all the souvenirs from Ronald. All the souvenirs and paraphernalia ever produced including costumes and whatever you can think of. My Baptiste was in heaven, and me too.

Then, Earl put on a real clown costume, with big shoes, and dressed Baptiste also. Both of them spent a good two hours clowning, and it was pure magic. At the end, Earl told me he had never experienced something like that, even after all his years teaching clowning. For him, Baptiste was a 'born clown', or was a clown in another life for certain!!! I don't know! Baptiste went to a small circus school where he learned juggling and other stuff, and also took trumpet lessons.

These days, he is more of a juggler, and plays the trumpet pretty well, we'll see. He's starting to like magic too, but whatever happens I am

confident that he will have a good life, not like being a bank manager or anything as unstable as that! Heheh.

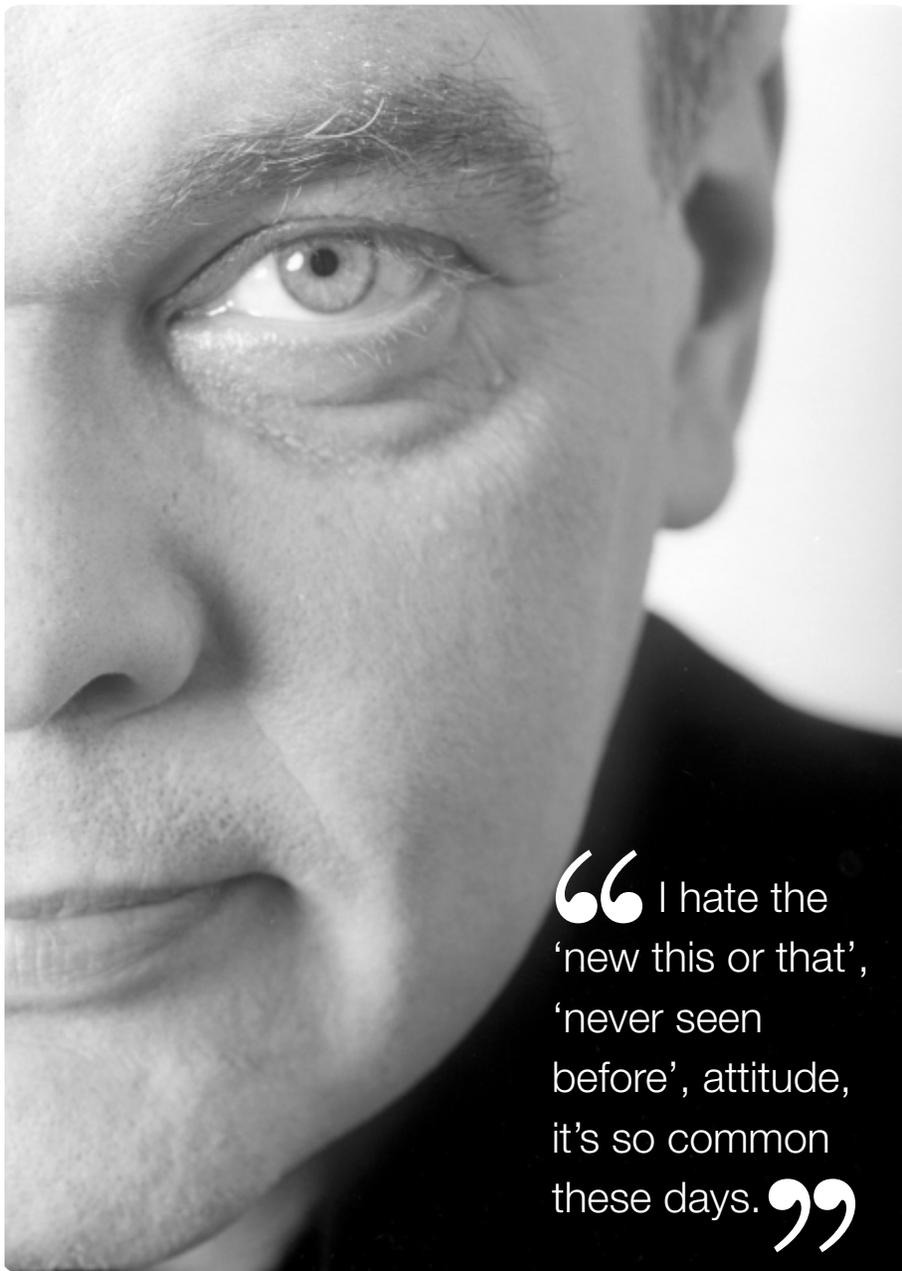
I don't know if it comes from me, and how presumptuous to think so, but yes, I am proud and so happy to see him growing like that. To have children like them is real magic, and a way to stay younger too!

God bless children, the one hidden in every grown up!

Do you have any unfulfilled ambitions in magic? Any countries, theatres, TV Shows that you've always wanted to perform in? Also, are there any special magic projects that you would like to undertake?

No. I never really had a career plan, but yes, I would love to be involved in a Magic Theatre in Paris - something like Robert-Houdin did so brilliantly in his own time, but the rules are different these days. Also, I love more and more to coach new performers, talented magicians and other performers too. I love to put my little 'Bloom touch' here and there. A few years ago, I heard another giant friend of

“ I love to put my
little ‘Bloom touch’
here and there. ”



“ I hate the ‘new this or that’, ‘never seen before’, attitude, it’s so common these days. ”

mine David Williamson, say in a lecture, “we are all standing on the shoulders of past giants” - and it’s so true. That’s why we have to just stay more than humble, when we talk about ‘creativity’. We just take tricks where they were left and just make the ball roll forward a little bit. That’s the way it should go - I hate the ‘new this or that’, ‘never seen before’, attitude, it’s so common these days. No, we have so much to learn from the past masters, we just push the ball forward. If you read Robert-Houdin, David Devant Jarrett, Al Baker, Tarbell, Karl Germain, and later, Roy Benson, Robert Harbin, Ken Brooke, Fu

Manchu (David Bamberg) and a few others, you realise how much ahead of their time they were, and still are. And Goldin, De Kolta, the list is endless, and it will continue to be.

My dear friend Christian Fechner was the first one to tell me clearly this thing: ‘Magicians, more and more, have a tendency to go for the easiest way, and they think they improve. It’s far from the truth! Often, they just lose the initial brilliance of the original effect’.

Go and check out the initial ‘ethereal suspension’ from Robert-Houdin, and all the

innovations, which came later. No method is better than the original one! There is a lesson here: The Holy Grail is not in the easy one, but in the simple. The apparently simple. This was the ultimate motto of Dai Vernon: Keep it simple!!! If you do a trick with three moves, try to do it with only 2, then with only 1, and if you can eliminate this one...you have a miracle!...!!! This is the ultimate quest!!!

However, nothing ‘easy’. The ultimate beauty is in the simple, but it can take your whole life to get there.

Just as art is not necessary, it’s just indispensable.

At THE INNOVENTION in Las Vegas in October where you will be performing, our aim is to produce a Magic Convention with a very different approach and emphasis. Our theme is ‘Celebrating Excellence’ and we will also be looking at the importance of having your own ‘USP’ (unique selling point), developing your own style and original performing ideas. Do you feel that these aspirations are important?

Dear Paul, of course yes, not just important, but essential, and if not, I won’t be there - and would not have had the desire to be there. But I know nothing about excellence, and will be so happy to learn, and share, and talk about ‘developing your style’, etc. Yes, of course it’s the goal, the Holy Grail, but it’s not something you can learn in one day.

The big thing these days, on all the forums: I don’t want to do tricks, I want to stir the emotions - that’s the real magic. It is just something that only experience can bring you, day after day, that’s just life!

Whatever your style of magic is, you have just to try to give the best you can every time - learning from every mistake, day after day, and, sooner or later, emotion will come, just like magic. Emotion is not a definite goal, just a result, and it is the most beautiful one.

It was a real pleasure to talk and share these thoughts with you and the **magicseen** readers.

With kindest thoughts.

Gaetan.

Berlin...March, 2010.

The Weird & The Wonderful!

Chris McDaniel is an amazing man who holds the World Record for the most targets whipped from the hand of an assistant (61 in 60 seconds!). He's also a World Champion Trick Roper. However, there's much more to him than that, so let's find out about this charming fellow from the good 'ole US of A...

Tell us in three sentences what you do!

I entertain folks with the Wild West Arts. Art forms that evolved out of the everyday work skills of the American cowboy. Trick roping and bullwhip artistry mixed with cowboy songs, humor, and a little cowboy magic from a modern day western showman.

You are pretty handy with a whip then. How do you get into that?

Well, you get yourself a whip and then you've got two choices. Try to figure it out yourself (not recommended) or get yourself some good instruction on safe and correct whip technique. Those who try to figure it out themselves usually end up with some painful reminders of their folly on their arms, hands, and ears.

Does your special skill make ladies find you desirable?

I get a lot of flirting but let's face it, a fellow in his mid 50s who pretends he's a cowboy for a living and looks like Buffalo Bill tends to go home alone more often than not.

You've been on the David Letterman Show. What did you do?

I did a segment called "Is This Anything" where David Letterman and his music director Paul Schafer watch a short unusual stunt and then decide it's 'Something' or 'Nothing'. On my segment the curtain opened and I used a short bullwhip to cut a target roughly the size of a breadstick out of my own mouth. David said that I frightened him and at first, he had thought that it was nothing but the more scared of me he got the more he decided the crazy looking cowboy with the whip had better be 'Something'!

Biggest influence in your career?

I worked at a show park in Nashville Tennessee called Opryland as a singer in the Country Music show there. I got a chance to appear on the world famous Grand Ole Opry with

legendary comedienne Minnie Pearl. Waiting backstage for my entrance, Minnie asked me, "Honey, are you nervous?" "Yes ma'am", I replied. She leaned in close and said, "Just love 'em honey, and they'll love you back". I've tried to do that every time I've stepped on the stage since.

We never had a 'wild west' in the UK, although we do have a place called 'Moss Side' which can be quite wild. Do you think you could walk through Moss Side after dark and tame them with your whip?

I don't want to spoil anyone's image of me as a tough guy, but whips as weapons are highly overrated. For a whip to be most effective the opponent has to be at exactly the right range for the length of that whip. Very difficult to get your attacker to stand still for you to hit him. All a wise opponent needs to do is rush the whip and grab it, thereby reducing its effectiveness to using the handle for a club at best. No, I think I'd just avoid 'Moss Side' after dark, this old cowboy is getting a bit too old for places like that. I'll take my 'wild west' onstage, thank you. On the other hand, the whips do seem to discourage hecklers pretty effectively.

You have many skills, including Firearms (popular in Moss Side), magic, billiards and trombone. Not all at the same time, surely?

Now THAT would be an act I would pay money to see! I do have many skills but I think three at a time is about my max!

Favourite magician?

I have so many! After being a regular at Monday Night Magic for almost 12 years I've been privileged to work with some of the greats, many of whom have become friends. So it's really hard to pick a favourite. But one of the best magic experiences was opening for and getting some great compliments and advice from Paul Daniels. My childhood favourite magician was Mark Wilson. I think my love of



magic comes from watching his TV series "The Magical Land of AlaKazam" when I was a kid.

Do you own a microwave oven?

I certainly do not. A hot plate and a toaster are all I need. I have very simple tastes.

What was your parent's line of work?

My father was a Baptist preacher, my mother a stay at home mom. I think I learned a lot watching my dad "perform" every Sunday.

The greatest pleasure in life is?

At the risk of sounding too cliched, I think the love of friends and family is the greatest pleasure, but close behind that is the joy that I get when I have a great show for a fantastic audience. That is my addiction.

www.chrismcdaniel.net



So you want to be a... Mentalist

Mark Leveridge

It is perhaps easy to imagine that the current popularity of mentalism in the UK is a relatively new phenomenon brought on by the highly publicised success of Derren Brown. But actually the fact is that mentalism has been in the public eye for many, many years through the work of stars such as Al Koran, Chan Canasta, Kreskin, The Piddingtons, David Berglas, plus modern day exponents such as Andy Nyman, Marc Paul, John Archer, Luke Jermay, Graham P. Jolley and many others who have caught the imagination of the public at one time or another.

Yet at a time when perhaps mainstream magic is going through a slight dip in popularity, why is it that mentalism appears to continue to ride high? Part of the answer may well be that the mind reading, mind control and prediction skills apparently used by the modern day mentalists still appears to have a credibility with the watching public. Derren Brown may tell his audiences that he cannot read their minds, but I know from having attended a number of his live shows that many lay people leave expressing the opinion that he really CAN read minds, because in their view there is no other explanation for the things they have just seen him do!

So since there appears to be a noticeable demand for performances of mentalism, we thought it would be an opportune moment to approach three top working mentalists, Marc Paul, Kennedy and John Archer, to get their views on what it takes to be a successful modern day mentalist.

The first point I wondered about was whether there is any real difference between a performer who only does mental effects and the magician who includes say, a book test, in amongst more regular magic routines? All three of our experts seem to agree that it all depends on how the performer wants to be perceived because the way that an audience views what a mentalist does as opposed to what a magician does, can be very different. Marc Paul expresses it thus:

“A subtle definition that I like to think of is that a magician does impossible things while a mentalist does things that might just be possible. They can still LOOK impossible but the audience is more willing to believe in what they are seeing. Mentalism is the last frontier of magic where some people believe that it is real.”



“Mentalism is the last frontier of magic where some people believe that it is real.”

So it's perhaps a credibility thing. If you want to be seen as someone who might just be able to use mental powers alone to achieve a miracle, doing a multiplying billiard ball routine in your act is going to take away that image and return it to one where you are a magician who happens to do mental 'tricks'. Kennedy agrees that it all comes down to the intention of the performer.

“A magician is presenting theatre. He is asking the audience to suspend their disbelief. The audience know it's tricks, they just can't work out HOW it's all happening. A mentalist is not asking for the suspension of disbelief, his presentations are more of a 'lecture' or demonstration that is being presented not as tricks, but as something informative.”

Or are we, as performers, perhaps trying to draw lines and create definitions which generally speaking the lay public are not aware of? John Archer thinks maybe we are.

“When working for lay people, which is still 80% of my life, I am usually referred to as a magician, comedian or comedy magician. No lay person has EVER asked me why I do the burnt note to envelope or six card repeat in amongst my mentalist material.”

Being referred to as a 'magician' is seen by many as being counter productive when it comes to getting bookings. Rightly or wrongly, there is a feeling amongst entertainers that magicians are not cool, that they are so often tarred with an unfavourable brush and that therefore they are less likely to get work. That

is why many have turned to mentalism as an alternative, since it is a way of escaping the label of 'magician' and makes them appear more Derren Brown than Harry Potter.

In years gone by I would suggest that many mentalists did take themselves very seriously and their presentations would be, by today's standards, long winded and somewhat pretentious. Unfortunately, amateur mentalists still fall into this trap at times and there is nothing worse for an audience than being stuck in a room for what seems like hours with a boring mentalist! These days the lay public are pre-conditioned to expect their entertainment to be fast paced, lively and often light hearted. So given these expectations, how can the modern day mentalist retain his authority and image without boring his audiences to tears?

Well, introducing some elements of comedy into the act would be an obvious answer, but surely this would destroy the impact of amazing feats of mind control, would it not? Strangely, no! Many top mentalists use a light hearted approach to make their presentations more palatable, some even resort to broad humour. John Archer is an obvious case in point here, so what are his views on it?

“Most modern mentalists today use some humour even if it is minimal. It warms you to the audience if nothing else. If you decide to use humour or comedy (I'm not sure of the difference) then you have to be careful that it doesn't tread on the important moments of magic. If used well I believe that comedy can enhance rather than detract from a routine. Mentalism is full of process and there are many times when I use comedy as a justification for a process or as a cover for that process.”

Kennedy agrees that comedy can be an important part of a mentalist's approach.

“Comedy has a definite place in mentalism. You don't need to be a comedy mentalist to use lighter moments in your act. It's about adding colour, light and shade to your character to continue your audience's engagement. However its use is important. I think it's extremely important that you choose the time for comedy with precision. You do not want to have the comedy overshadow the impact of an incredible revelation. If you're

Assuming that you want to be seen therefore as an out and out mentalist, what would be the three most important things you need to bear in mind in order to make a success of it all? Here's the advice from our sage ones.

Kennedy:

1. Knowing who you are.
2. Knowing what you want your audience to feel.
3. Learning how to make it interesting.

John Archer:

1. Make it a priority to be original and not just another Derren Brown clone.
2. Learn to act - mentalism is all about the performer and not the props.
3. Take yourself too seriously at your peril!

Marc Paul:

1. Character - play the part of the mentalist, but make sure it fits with your own age, looks and personality.
2. Image - if you are clear on what your 'character' is it will help you to know how to dress, wear your hair, stand etc.
3. Skills - deciding what your 'super powers' are going to be. Is it metal bending, memorising a shuffled pack, reading minds and so on.

doing Smash and Stab, for example. You're down to the final 2 cups - one hides a nail under and you're about to slam your hand down on one of them...this is a terrible time to crack a joke.”

Marc Paul thinks comedy can be useful but does also caution on its use.

“Humour that naturally comes from amusing situations created in your show is great. Mentalism can be a bit heavy so well placed humour can lift the show and add light and shade. As a general rule however I would say that all the humour must happen during the procedures building up to an effect. When the actual mind-reading takes place the humour must stop so that the impact of what is being done can be appreciated by the audience.”

So, it's pretty clear from this advice that it's OK to include lighter moments and some comedy in your show in the build up to the climax of an effect, but don't let it run over the big finish or you will ruin the strength and impact of the routine. Now, what about props? There is often discussion about how many props a mentalist should use. Some would say that if you could genuinely read minds, you wouldn't need any props and that therefore to clutter the act with all sorts of objects and paraphernalia is simply to make the whole show look more like a magic show. Others would argue that a judicious use of props does not have any impact if what you do with those props is consistent with a mentalism show. Here's Marc Paul's take on the subject.



"Using a dove pan to switch your billets is not a good idea! Mentalists need certain props. Pads of paper, marker pens, maybe a flip chart, a clip board or two etc. All of these are props but they are not out of place. They may be gimmicked to the hilt but to an audience they appear to be everyday items that serve a function within the show....However, recently this seems to have been taken to extremes with the drive towards PROP-LESS mentalism.....No pens, no paper, no books NOTHING.

What most don't realise is that a well constructed seemingly impromptu set can be much more effective than a truly prop-less one. The reason is that many prop-less effects just don't have good dramatic structure. Let's take the simple task of how to reveal the information. Dramatically it is far better for the performer to secretly write something on a pad of paper then ask the spectator to reveal what he is thinking. The performer now slowly turns over the pad and reveals that he is correct. Between the spectator's reveal and the performer's reveal a dramatic tension can easily be created. This tension is released as applause or reaction. IT IS 100% CONTROLLED BY THE PERFORMER. If you have no props most of the time you have to use a verbal reveal. The performer says "You're thinking of the number 37". The spectator says "Yes I am!" This puts the control of tension with the spectator and trust me they are not as good at controlling it as you are!"

Kennedy feels that it all comes down to the relevance of the props themselves.

"If the prop has purpose, reason, a story or rationale then heck..use the thing. In my show right now I use 2 flip-charts, some books, a pad of paper, a deck of cards. But they all have rationale. And when I use a deck of cards, I don't excuse them. I just use them, I get on with it."

John Archer tries to make sure that any props he uses are not ones that look like they were built for trickery, as this can ruin the image that everything is genuinely done by the power of the mind. He says:

"Personally most of my act could (or looks like it could) be bought from Staples or a high street shop. So I don't think it is about few props



but I do think it is about natural looking props. If you are a serious mentalist then I believe you should be able to put a show together from items you can buy in the high street."

Right, so we now know the basics of what makes up a good mental act, but is it going to be any easier to get paid work? All three experts feel that current times make it hard to book almost any act, and mentalists are not immune from those hardships. Kennedy makes a very valid point when he says: "As with any business, it really is about finding the people who want to see what you're offering and bringing their attention to you."

John Archer feels that even with mentalists, it is often the individual performer who is being booked rather than the type of act, so if they like you as a performer you will get the work almost irrespective of what your act is made up of.

Marc Paul has very definite views on the best ways to get work and his advice is gold dust for not only mentalists but for anyone looking to make themselves available for paid work. If you are genuinely serious about making it in the commercial world, read what's coming up now, then read it again. The advice he gives is worth far more than the cost of this magazine!

"You have to build your business over time and I'm sorry to say that it can take a LONG time.

“ Personally most of my act could (or looks like it could) be bought from Staples or a high street shop. ”

John Archer

There is the Front Door or the Back Door approach to getting business. If you only have a short time in the business you will have very few shows / contacts under your belt which means that you will have to rely on the front door approach. This means contacting companies "cold" either by phone or by email and trying to get a show booking. You will need good publicity material...a brochure, a website, a promo DVD etc. All of this will cost you money up front and NONE of it guarantees that you will get any work. It can be done, of course, but it's time consuming, soul destroying and expensive. You see, the company has not SEEN you work. Therefore, they will judge you on your promo material and your pitch to them; which means you need the very best promo material that you can afford and a pitch that is utterly compelling! I don't recommend this approach.

The back door approach is far more effective and is vastly cheaper! BUT it takes time. I think it is not just about doing shows it is about doing consistent shows. This is so important. You need to develop a dozen or so clients who want to use you for ALL their events not just a "one off". This month I will do 12 shows for 8 clients. Only one of those clients is new the other 7 I have done many shows with before. For two of those clients I will do more than one show this month. My clients book me because they KNOW me and they are very happy with what I do. They are NOT booking a mentalist they are booking Marc Paul. They don't want a mentalist...they want Marc Paul. This is how you get consistent work. Develop clients into friends, that's the key. I suggest to you that you get a regular gig in a local restaurant as this will expose you to a lot of prospective clients AND you'll get paid for doing it. All the time you are developing your

clients and your performance skills. From this you will pick up other work including the odd corporate gig. Your career grows, your fees go up and life is good!

You should be able to do close-up magic / mentalism and a short cabaret spot. By being good in all of these areas you will get consistent work. That is the beauty of the back door approach. You get booked to do some close-up magic at a party. There you meet the company's head of marketing...you have just stunned him with some amazing magic. In conversation you casually mention your idea of using magic to promote the company's products. 3 seconds later he wants to book you at his next trade show! It works, I've done it many times. By the way, this ability to perform close up, mentalism, stage, trade shows etc. will help to protect you from falls in the economy like the one we are having now. I know for a fact that budgets are much tighter within companies at the moment so corporate shows are not an easy area to get bookings in at the moment. This is another reason why I DON'T recommend that you jump in feet first now...the economy is not in a good way. Take the slower but infinitely better approach of building clients over time.

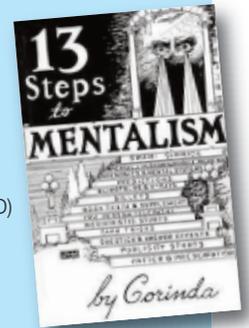
One final point, NOW THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT. Please don't even think about any of this unless your performance and crowd pleasing skills are fantastic. You are taking a huge risk with this approach and it's a risk that affects OTHERS. If you screw it up, you will screw that client up for EVERY other magician in the world!!! Just imagine some time in the future I approach them, they don't even give me the time of day, they just tell me "Oh yeah we tried a magician once it didn't really work". That would really annoy me!!!"

magicseen would like to thank Kennedy, Marc Paul and John Archer for helping us to put together this article.

ms

If you want to delve more into the world of mentalism, here is a list of sources for further information as recommended by our trio of experts.

- 13 Steps To Mentalism (book) - Corinda
- Practical Mental Effects (book) - Annemann**
- Educating Archer (DVD) - Archer (wonder who recommended that one?)
- Psychological Subtleties Series (books) - Banachek**
- Mind, Myth and Magic (book) - T. A. Waters
- Stunners (book) - Larry Becker**
- An Actor Prepares (book) - Constantin Stanislavki (explains how to create a believable character)





Magic in the Movies:

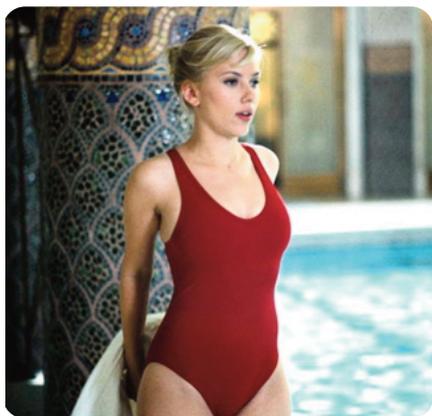
Woody Allen's 'Scoop' (2006)



The last few years has seen a spate of magic-related movies, with *The Illusionist* and *The Prestige* both taking plenty of money at box offices around the world. One movie which seemed to dip under the radar is *Scoop*, Woody Allen's second movie set in London, starring Scarlett Johansson, Hugh Jackman, and Ian McShane.

The premise has a famous English journalist (Ian McShane) dying and on his way to Hell when he receives the 'scoop' of the title: a tip from another recently deceased that a wealthy young aristocrat (Hugh Jackman) is a serial killer who has been terrorising the city.

Determined to get the story out, the journalist comes back as a ghost and materialises in the act of a stage magician (Allen), where he gives the scoop to a young American journalism



student (Scarlett Johansson) who the magician is trying to make disappear.

The student sets out to get the goods on the unlikely suspect, in the process of which she falls in love with him and the magician bumbles his way around British high society.

magicseen grabbed a quick word with Woody Allen about the movie, which received good reviews at the time, and looks even better now. In scripting and playing the character of Sid Waterman – a.k.a. Splendini – Allen returned to writing about, and playing out, scenes of magic and those who practise it. So, what's the appeal?

"Magic is just something that always was a little junk-tooth interest of mine", says the prolific film-maker. "I liked it when I was a kid, and I've grown up as a sucker for it. It always strikes me as amusing and interesting, and I'm always taken with the kind of cheesy-looking Japanese red lacquered boxes and silk handkerchieves and swords and cards and silver rings and all the apparatus that gives it an exotic look."

Allen has previously written a childhood-memory play entitled: 'The Floating Light Bulb', and according to Scarlett Johanssen, he's no slouch when it comes to performing magic. "Woody is great at magic tricks. He knows all these sleight-of-hand and card things. He's great at it!" says the stunning actress.

Scoop was filmed in London, which Woody really enjoyed. "It's a very nice place to film in. I mean, I like filming in New York a lot myself, but London is accommodating to me; the weather's very good there and the conditions for shooting – the financial conditions, the artistic conditions – are good, so it's a pleasant place to shoot. There is also the theatre tradition – and the tradition of magicians performing on West End stages."



Award-winning magician Scott Penrose was the magical advisor on Scoop. We asked him to tell us about his experience on the movie, and working with amateur magician Woody Allen....

When magicians go to lectures or read books on showmanship/performance they are often told that they need to find the best material that suits their own personality or character. In the case of working on a movie one has to not only find material that suits the character's personality but also the tricks must be within the actor's ability. Added to this there is also so little time in which to accomplish all of this.

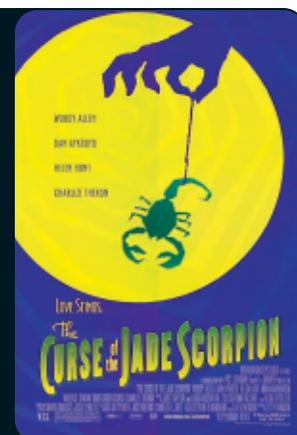
In the case of Woody, finding the material to suit the character was not difficult. When I discovered that the character's name was called "Splendini" and the costume designer showed me Woody's performing outfit, finding the right material to suit Woody's character was easy! In terms of finding the right magic that was within Woody's ability, this was aided by the fact that he is interested in magic already and has a degree of sleight of hand ability. However, despite this existing ability that had been developed over a number of years, the qualities that he brought to the role was his

natural performing talent and comic timing. Had he pursued conjuring as a career he probably would have been brilliant. This revelation came to me when we were filming one of the main magic scenes at the Shepherds Bush Empire... I gave Woody a Ghost Tube Botania for him to perform (a trick that suits the character of Splendini perfectly) and he had to perform it on stage before the camera and hundreds of supporting artists that made up the audience. Woody trotted on to the stage, showed the tube empty and produced the giant bunch of flowers from the tube - he literally tore the audience apart each time he performed the trick. Although it was the right trick for the Splendini character and was within Woody's technical ability, it was all about the performance. Bottom line, it was nothing to do with the tricks.

Another part of this routine involved a volunteer from the audience disappearing and reappearing in a large Chinese-style cabinet known as the Dematerialiser. Often for TV or film when boxes are used for disappearances or productions, a camera cut is used – however, the production team wanted the trick to work as it would live because they filmed everything in real time with takes lasting several minutes. So rather than shoot around the effect and fix it in the edit, Scarlett Johanssen genuinely appeared and disappeared while the scene was being filmed. However, when the film was edited it looked like we could have cheated and accomplished the trick by using a camera cut but we didn't. Doing the trick for real certainly made filming it easier and perhaps quicker. I inherited the illusion after the film, but it was huge, was made of thick MDF and did not break down for travel.... not one for the weekend illusionist! **ms**

UNDERRATED GEM: Curse of the Jade Scorpion

An insurance investigator, played by Allen, is hypnotised during a cabaret show and is then manipulated to commit a series of daring jewelry robberies during the night - every time he receives a telephone call from the crooked hypnotist. The excellent story takes an even better twist when Allen is assigned to the case as an investigator and he has to investigate his own crimes! If you're a fan of 50s style screwball-comedies and love hypnosis, then you must see this movie.



THE WORLD OF FAKE COINS **PART 1**

By Craig Petty



Craig Petty is one of the UK's leading experts on coin magic, and we are delighted that he has agreed to put together this series of articles on fake coins. In this first part, Craig takes a look at over a dozen of the most common and popular gimmicks, explaining what they consist of, what they do, and where you can get hold of routines using them. This article is a fantastic resource for anyone looking to move into magic with gimmicked coins. In future articles, Craig will be detailing some of his own routines using some of these gaffs.



THE COIN SHELL

The Shell Coin is one of the oldest fake coins but also one of the most popular. In essence a shell is



half a hollowed out coin that fits over a normal coin. There are two types of coin shells: expanded and unexpanded. An expanded coin shell has been widened and will fit over any coin that matches it. Whereas an unexpanded shell will only fit over the coins that have been specially machined down to fit inside it. If you try to use an unexpanded shell with any other coin it will not work.

Many coin routines work on the 'One Ahead' Principle. This means that you have an extra coin and are therefore one coin ahead of the audience. With a shell you have all the advantages of having an extra coin without the need to hold out throughout the routine. When you need access to an extra coin you can simply un-nest the shell and when you want to show your hands empty, the shell can be loaded back onto one of the coins. This is a great situation to be in and allows some very deceptive displays.

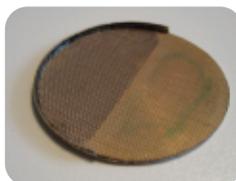
One of the best known routines with a shell is David Roth's 'Shell Coins Across' which in turn is a variation of a Derek Dingle routine. The effect takes place totally in the hands and is used by many professionals. Another classic routine with a shell is 'The Three Coin Trick' by the late great Geoff Latta. He constructed a wonderful multi phase routine

using just two coins and a shell. Our editor Mark Leveridge also has a wonderful routine using a shell called 'Slo Mo', which he published in his Master Routines DVD set.

Shells make routines such as coins across and 3 Fly much easier to perform than gaff free versions. There are hundreds of different routines in print but a great place to start is Troy Hooser's book 'Destroyers'. Troy Hooser developed a number of sleights with a shell that before he came along people just had not thought about. He has also released a DVD specifically on the shell coin called 'Shellraiser'. If you are looking for a more advanced book on shell technique Kaino Harbottle released a book in 2006 called Coinapalooza 1 – Shell Shocked. This is an excellent book but the material is very difficult. Finally, Garrett Thomas has some wonderful shell routines in his DVD Set – 'Inside the Mind of Garrett Thomas'.

SLIPPERY SAM

Steve Duscheck invented the Slippery Sam coin gimmick (the same person who invented the coin routine Lethal Tender). Basically a Slippery Sam is a normal shell with half the rim taken away. This means that it can be used just like a normal shell but if you orientate the



coin the correct way, you can separate the coin from the shell by sliding it with your thumb. This allows you to create effects such as a coin appearing next to another coin at the fingertips.

Since the original Slippery Sam was invented there have been a number of improvements. The magnetic Slippery Sam uses a magnetic coin and shell so that the coin stays in the gimmick even if the hollow rim is pointing down. The magnet is not very strong though so you can still slide the coin out easily. Bob Kohler developed a locking system for the Slippery Sam. This allows you to lock the coin inside the shell and release it again easily. There are many routines available which use this gaff. Theory Eleven have released (with Steve Duscheck's permission) a version of the original Copper Silver routine that this gaff was developed for called Digital Deception. Magic Box based up in Newcastle have also brought out a copper silver package using two Slippery Sam's called Copper Silver Extreme. This package has dozens of effects and routines using the Slippery Sam gimmicks. Finally, there are numerous 3 Fly routines on the market, which rely on the Slippery Sam to work. The original (and probably still the best) is Bob Kohler's U3F. However Lance DeLong had a number of wonderful ideas, which he published on his DVD set 'Sleight of Hand Required'.

THE FLIPPER COIN

Bob Swadling invented the original flipper coin many years ago. In essence this gaff is a folding coin stuck inside a coin shell. One half of the insert is hinged and flips outwards, creating the illusion of two coins. A small dental elastic band holds the insert in place and stops it from opening. The old style flippers had the band around the outside meaning that in order to open it, you had to shake the gimmick up and down.



A few years ago an American coin manufacturer by the name of Todd Lassen changed how the fake was made and created something called a gravity flipper. The gravity

flipper has a number of advantages over the old style flippers. Firstly the banding is internal meaning that from the outside the coin looks normal and can even be examined. Secondly the coin opens by gravity, which means you no longer have to shake the coin. Thirdly the coin will lay flat when open, which was impossible with the original fake. This means you can apparently lay two coins down in the table, in your hand or even in the spectator's hand.

The flipper coin can achieve certain visuals that no other gaff can come close to achieving. For example you can open a flipper apparently displaying two coins, lay these coin(s) on your hand and throw them up in the air. It will create the illusion that one of the coins vanishes visibly. Unlike most coin gaffs the spectator's focus can be on the vanish. The audience can burn your hands and will still be amazed when you throw the gaff up in the air and one coin

melts away. This makes coins across routines very deceptive as you can routine the effect so that each time the coin travels across the audience can see the coin disappear.

Troy Hooser was one of the first magicians to unlock the potential of the Flipper Coin. By combining the gaff with a shell he created some truly memorable routines. Most of these are in print in his book 'Destroyers' or his 'Silver Surf' lecture notes. Eric Jones has also put some great ideas using a flipper in print, which are available in his Fingertips lecture notes. I have published a DVD called 'Flipped Out' which explains flipper technique and demonstrates nine really commercial routines. Finally my Mirage Coin Set uses a copper / silver flipper. This is more deceptive because it allows you to show a copper and a silver coin and visibly vanish either the copper or the silver one.

THE SPLIT COIN

The Split Coin was invented by Johnny Wong in 2005 and used in a routine called 'Coin Through Bill'. There are other versions of this type of coin gaff that have been marketed over the years such as the Clone Coin by Merlin's of Wakefield and The Super Coin by John Kennedy. World Magic Shop currently owns the rights to the original Split Coin.



The Split Coin is a coin that splits into two to show two separate coins and then goes back together into one. There is a very thin magnet on each half of the coin which means that the gaff will align back into one coin automatically. Normally you will find a Split Coin will have Teflon tape on the inside of both coins. This will mean that the two halves of the coin will split apart easier and more importantly, silently.

Obviously the Split Coin can be used to do everything a shell can but with a number of advantages. You can throw a split coin around and it will not split open till you want it to. The magnet means that you can ditch the coin on another magnet when not in use. Finally it is easier to split apart a Split Coin than it is to un-nest a shell. The one problem is that you

need to be careful of your angles. Once the coin has split in two each half will obviously look thinner. The audience cannot notice this so you must orientate the coin so that the edge is never towards to audience.

As the Split Coin is a newer gaff there is very little material available. Greg Wilson released a couple of DVD's explaining possible uses of John Kennedy's Super Coin. Mark Lee also released a DVD with a couple of routines for the Clone Coin. In 2008 I released a DVD called Split Happens with 14 routines using a Split Coin. However, these routines will also work with a Clone Coin and a Super Coin. At the moment Split Happens is probably the most complete source for routines with this gaff.

THE COPPER / SILVER COIN

The copper silver coin is another gaff, which has been available for a long time. As such there is a lot of material that has been published for the gaff over the years. A copper silver coin is simply a coin that is copper on one side and silver on the other. Obviously the audience is not aware that this coin is double sided so you would never show the true condition of the coin.



A copper silver coin is most useful when you need to change copper to silver or visa versa. So for example copper / silver transpositions would work very well. In a routine where a copper and silver coin change places potentially numerous times, having a coin which can be shown as either copper or silver is a distinct advantage. Spellbound routines also benefit from using this type of gaff as it makes the change sequence a lot easier to perform. Finally incorporating a copper silver gaff into a wild coin routine makes things a lot easier. Basically a wild coin routine is when you show that numerous coins have changed into other coins. You can imagine how a

copper silver coin would be of assistance. David Roth has some great routines with a copper / silver coin which can be found in his book 'Expert Coin Magic'. The New York Coin Guys (David Roth, Michael Rubenstein, Geoff Latta and Mike Gallo) released three DVD's on copper silver routines many of which use a copper / silver gaff. David Forrest and Cameron Francis have also released a DVD called 'Attack of the Copper Silver Coin' which looks at material specific to this gimmick.

Finally as part of their World's Greatest Magic Series L&L Publishing released a DVD specific to the copper silver coin.

THE SUN AND MOON COIN

The sun and moon coin is one of the most underrated fakes in the whole of magic. In essence it is a copper silver coin with a copper shell, which goes over the silver



side. When the shell is in place it looks like a regular copper coin from all sides. The shell and coin have been specially machined to look like one coin when the set is nested together. You could not put a regular shell on a regular copper / silver coin and call it a sun and moon set, as it wouldn't look as deceptive. The most common use of a sun moon coin is in the hugely popular hopping halves set. In every hopping halves set you receive a sun and moon coin and an additional expanded shell, which fits over it.

Doug Brewer has released some great material with the sun and moon coin, which he published on his Half and Half DVD set. Many years ago Roger Klause published a routine called Soleil Et Lune. Many people consider this to be the ultimate sun and moon coin routine, it can be found in 'The Collected Almanac' by Richard Kaufman. Finally there are some wonderful Sun and Moon routines in the book Tavern Magic 2 by Mike Wild. Mike wrote this book specifically to educate people about the possibilities with a sun and moon coin.

CHINATOWN HALF

The Chinatown half is a copper silver coin with one big difference.



One side of the gaff appears to be a regular silver coin whilst the other side looks like a Chinese coin with a hole through the centre. Obviously this makes the gaff more deceptive than a normal copper silver coin. There is no way the

audience can suspect a double-sided coin because of the apparent hole.

However, there are drawbacks to this as well. The gimmick works by having a hole on one side of the coin that is not drilled all the way through. In this hole you put a piece of coloured paper. The colour of paper you use depends on how you wish to handle the coin. The most common use is to have flesh coloured paper inside. This means that when you hold the coin against your hand it will appear that there is a hole in the coin because the audience will be able to see your palm through the coin.

Another example would be to use white paper and a white handkerchief. In this case placing the coin on the handkerchief will create the illusion of a hole in the coin.

The problem is that this restricts where you can place the coin and how you use it. For example if the paper is flesh coloured you could not put the coin down on the table or the fake will be seen by the whole audience. Therefore with this gimmick good routing of the effects you wish to perform is vital. Luckily there are many different sources for material with this gaff.

As you can imagine, the gaff lends itself to the same type of routines as a normal copper silver coin. Therefore transpositions, wild coins etc work really well. L&L publishing released a DVD devoted to the Chinatown Half as part of their World's Greatest Magic DVD set. Joe Rindfleisch also has a number of excellent routines with this gimmick on his Extreme Coin Magic DVD. However the best routine I have ever seen with the Chinatown Half was by Justin Miller and is called Walking in China.

This can be found in his Strolling Hands DVD Set. What Justin did in this routine was use a black insert and a black handkerchief and perform a transposition with a Chinese coin and a silver coin. However he put a shell onto the Chinatown half which meant at any point he wanted he could show a normal silver coin. Then by palming the shell away he is left with a normal Chinatown half gimmick.

This is an example of using more than one fake to create a killer routine that your audiences will love.

THE FOLDING COIN

If you have ever seen a magician put a coin inside a bottle there is a good chance you have seen a folding coin in action. Over the years the coin in bottle has become linked with the folding coin. The reason for this is that a folding coin is



perfect for achieving this type of effect. A normal coin would not fit into the neck of a bottle but a folding coin works perfectly.

A folding coin is basically a coin which folds up. There are two types - double folders and triple folders. Triple folders fold into three while double folders fold into two. Typically, triple folding coins are the ones that are used in the coin in bottle routine, as this version of the gaff will slip in and out of a bottle more easily. Traditionally the folding coin works by using a dental rubber band to hold everything together. However, recently a company called Tango have developed a folding coin with an internal banding system.

There are many other uses for a folding coin aside from the coin in bottle routine. David Roth developed some very clever displays, which allows the coin to be used for a coin through table effect. In Bobo's Modern Coin Magic a folding coin is used to create the illusion of a coin penetrating through a borrowed finger ring. A very clever magician from Japan by the name of Doctor Sawa published a routine where a coin was pushed through your hand in slow motion. This looks really good and was also accomplished using a folding coin.

Finally one of the most well known uses of a folding coin in recent years is the coin bite effect, which was popularised by David Blaine. In this effect the magician borrows a coin and bites a piece out with his teeth. He then proceeds to spit the piece back onto the coin. Although this can be done with a double folding coin, special coin bite gaffs are now available to buy. These are the same as a double folder except the fold is made to look like teeth marks.

COIN UNIQUE

The Coin Unique was invented by British coin expert Eddie Gibson. There are many effects possible with the coin but the most well known would be to take a £1 coin and a penny (for example) and make the penny vanish leaving the £1 coin. The pound coin is a shell and the penny has a pound coin on the other side. When the penny goes inside the shell the coin locks together creating the illusion that there is just a pound coin. The set magnetically locks together meaning that once together everything can be examined.



These coins are available in many denominations and currencies but all work the same way. The disadvantage with this gaff from a routineing point of view is that once the coin is locked together it is very hard to take apart again. You either have to shake the coin or put it against a strong magnet. This means that the gaff is best when used for a single-phase effect. The other small problem is that the gaff is well known by laymen because of years of overexposure in joke shops. This is not a problem as long as you use the coin in a way that laymen have not seen it used before. Notable routines include the penetration of a coin through a glass dinner plate, which was published by Sol Stone in his DVD 'Quick and Casual Close Up'. Martin Sanderson also published a wonderful handling of coin under watch on his DVD 'Corporate Close Up'.

2 COPPER 1 SILVER

Connie Haden invented the 2 copper, 1 silver coin effect many years ago. In essence this is a gimmicked coin, which can be shown as either two copper coins or one silver coin. There is normally a



SCOTCH AND SODA

Scotch and Soda is in essence the same as the Coin Unique but using a different mechanism to lock the coin instead of a magnet.

Normally a scotch and soda is made up from an American Half Dollar and a Mexican Centavo. There is a version, which uses a dime and a penny, however this set is known as Gin and Tonic instead of Scotch and Soda.



CIGARETTE THROUGH COIN

This gaff is a true classic of coin magic and is a firm favourite for many top professionals the world over. In effect a cigarette is borrowed and penetrates a borrowed coin. This gaff works in a similar way to a flipper coin except there is a hole in the shell side of the coin and a plug the same size and shape of the hole in the insert. Therefore by pushing a cigarette against the coin it will open the flap and create the illusion of the coin being penetrated.



copper shell (for example an English penny) and a copper silver coin. The copper silver coin is generally made out of a smaller copper coin (such as a Mexican centavo). You can display two copper coins, however by nesting the coin in the shell and flipping it over it will display as one silver coin.

This gaff is normally used for two for one transpositions. In other words making two copper coins change places with one silver coin over and over again. There are many magicians who have published routines which use the set. Notably John Bannon published in his book 'Smoke and Mirrors' a wonderful routine using the gimmick. Doc Eason also has a very nice version of the same sort of effect on his L & L produced DVD set. Bill Malone performs a routine David Neighbours created called Sandy on his DVD set 'Here I Go Again'. Finally on his DVD Flurious Gary Kurtz

It has the same advantages and disadvantages as the Coin Unique.

To unlock the coin you have to use a bang ring, which is a ring that you place the coin into and then bang onto the table. Although the gaff is the same as a Coin Unique, and therefore the same routines will apply, there are routines published which are specific to the Scotch and Soda. These routines generally use the bang ring as part of the effect. Greg Rostami has a number of routines, which utilise the bang ring, and they really demonstrate outside-the-box thinking.

There is nothing else to do with the coin except a penetration. However, many magicians have put their own routines together with the gaff. David Williamson and Michael Ammar have published fantastic handlings of the effect which incorporates a great switch of the gaff for the borrowed coin. Tom Mullica published an equally fine routine in his cigarette magic DVD set. In his routine the cigarette penetrates the coin into a bottle. Finally, Joshua Jay published a great handling in his first book 'The Magic Atlas'. In his routine a paintbrush penetrates the coin which is a great addition to the routine.

performs one of the best routines with this gimmick using coins and playing cards.

There is a variation of the 2 copper 1 silver set called Copper Silver Brass. This set is exactly the same except that the shell is a Chinese coin. This means that the coins stand out more as being totally different from each other. The disadvantage is that there are certain displays that were possible with the original set that cannot be done with the new version because of the hole in the shell.



TRIPLE THREAT

The Triple Threat Gimmick is also known in some circles as the 3CM. It is based on Connie Haden's Double Shell Gimmick with some improvements. Depending on who you listen to, the coin is attributed as being created by either Jamie Schoolcraft or Todd Lassen. Jamie Schoolcraft markets his version of the gimmick as the 3CM and Todd Lassen markets his version of the gimmick as the Triple Threat.



There has been a great deal of controversy over this in the last few years and as a result nobody knows for sure who is really in the right.

In essence, this coin is an unexpanded shell over a coin with an expanded shell on top. What makes the gimmick really clever is that the coin and the shells are all magnetic. Even better, the magnetic strength varies in each shell. What this means is that you can throw the coin from hand to hand and coin roll it, and it will stay together as one coin. However you can easily separate the coin from the shells as the magnetic strength is not sufficient to lock everything in place (like a Coin Unique for example). The coin is typically thinner which allows the nested set to look just like one single coin. With this gimmick you can show one coin and your hands empty and one by one produce up to three coins with ease. Likewise you can then vanish the coins one at a time until you are left with just one coin.

As the gimmick is so new there is very little material available that has been published. Troy Hooser has a set of lecture notes on the Triple Threat which are available directly from Todd Lassen.

Christopher Congreave has a very nice handling of Three Fly called 'Expensive Fly' which he published on his DVD with Gary Jones called

'Flying Tonight'. Doug Brewer also has published material with the gimmick is his DVD set 'Half and Half' which came out in 2008.

Finally, probably the first person to release material with the gaff was Dan Watkins who put out a set of notes on coin magic called 'Coin Vanish Volume 1'. In these notes there is a routine called 'Coin Vanish Trio' which uses the Triple Threat gimmick as well as a lot of sleight of hand.

The gimmick is very versatile and you can achieve so much by using it. It is great for coins across routines as well as routines where you have to change or vanish multiple coins. The best part is that because of how the coin is made it works best being held up at chest height.

This makes the magic more visual from a distance and is perfect when performing for large crowds or big tables. This is an area where in the past coin magic has been considered weak as a lot of the more traditional coin magic is performed on a table or at waist height. This alone opens up many more possibilities than with other similar coin gaffs. **ms**



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