

THE MAGIC MAGAZINE FOR MAGICIANS & MENTALISTS

MSM

MAGICSEEN MAGAZINE

Taster Issue
No.10

ALSO INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

KEN BROOKE

PLUS...
MASTERCLASS
COMEDY
REVIEWS
LETTERS
LES GIBSON
MAGIC SEEN ONLINE
JAMES EARL JONES

THE INFINITE IMAGINATION OF
RICHARD SANDERS



READERS' LETTERS

If you have anything you would like to tell us, whether it's about the magazine or anything magic related, please email: grahamhey@magicseen.co.uk



JACK'S TASTY MAGIC FOR PIERRE!

World class Chef, Marco Pierre White continues to fall for the magical skills of Jack Stephens who in turn continues to fall for the wonderful food on offer at Marco's magical restaurant (watch those calories, Jack!).

We'd just like to point out our reference in the last issue about Jack being rushed to hospital was a joke. Jack is alive and well, and performing miracles on a daily basis!

IT AIN'T ALL MAGIC

Great to see an article of alternative ways to entertain Children, as stated in the article children's parties are not the cash cow they once were, despite other entertainers telling me otherwise.

I have just decided to get back into face painting, so I am eager to read what your article on this

DYNAMO IS WET!

Am I the only person who thinks Dynamo's shows are just full of camera tricks, and stunts which David Blaine did ten years ago? Walking on water? Call me cynical, why don't you?
H.K Stourbridge

Dear cynical, cut the lad some slack! What a breakthrough for a young magician to have his own series!!!! When was the last time that happened in the UK? At least the public are talking about magic again, which can only be a good thing. And anyway, we think Dynamo is ace. And there is no harder working magician than him. Who cares about a few

camera tricks anyway? They have been around for years...

DYNAMO THE KING

How great to see a young magician like Dynamo on the TV! It is the highlight of the TV week for me and my two sons. He is making magic really cool and some of his tricks are AMAZING!!!!
Dan Harrop, West Ham, London.

HAND IT TO DYNAMO!

I'm not a big fan of Dynamo, but you have to admire the way he gets publicity and national coverage in the press. With his walk across the Thames river, he was featured in almost every national newspaper in the UK,

and the Daily Mail devoted a whole page to his exploits!

I read the article when he was featured on the cover of Magicseen, and it really opened my eyes to all the hard work he had put in to get where he is today. When I hear magicians criticising him, I think they are just jealous.
Jake Taylor, Jersey

We are big fans of Dynamo, and we don't mind saying it. Not only is he very skilful, he happens to be a really nice guy. If we had a spare room at Magicseen Towers, we would adopt him!



subject has to offer. And a guy doing it? - well some of the best face painters in the world today being men (Brian & Nick Wolfe from America.. Look them up).

On a side note, have you guys ever considered doing a sister mag for the children's entertainer? I don't recall ever seeing a magazine in the UK. There are loads of subjects to cover from Face painting to doing hospital shows etc, just a thought.

Best Regards,
CHUBBZ & Co.

Thanks, Chubbz! As far as a mag for children's entertainers, the idea is good, but publishing's an expensive business these days and usually relies to an extent on advertising. We will think about a regular section for children's entertainers – we will discuss this at our next meeting!

PENN & TELLER - UP & DOWN!

I thought the Penn & Teller series was for UK magicians to try and fool 'em. It has rapidly become a showcase for world champions and performers from overseas. The standard has fluctuated wildly, and there have been acts performing which wouldn't fool

Mr Bean! I started off enthusiastic about the series and ended up pretty bored!
Jane Southall, Kilmarnock

STARTING OUT!

I am just getting in to magic and found Magicseen during an online search. Could you recommend any books for someone new to magic?
Miles Fenton, Salisbury

Hi Miles, You could try Mark Wilson's Complete Course In Magic, which is great, or The Tarbell Course in Magic. Also excellent are the books by Nick Einhorn. Street Magic by Paul Zenon is also an excellent book, as is Pete Firman's 'Tricks to Freak Out Your friends'.

CHRIS CROSS NOT CROSS ENOUGH!

Oh, Magicseen! Excellent article on Chris Cross – but there were no swearwords, and barely anything offensive! Has Chris finally cleaned up his act? I love the guy, but tell me he hasn't dumbed-down!!

Steve Fearnley, Middlesbrough

Fear not Steve, we had to edit out more than fifty four-letter words, and several explicit references to sexual acts! So, to answer your question, Chris is just as loveable as ever!

YANN FOREVER!

Great to see Yann Frisch on the cover. Long live the cups & balls, long live Yann Frisch, and long live Magicseen!

Karen Hardy, via email.



LEO GOES MAGIC!

A short interview with the popstastic Leo Sayer – you remember, the guy with curly hair who used to dress as a clown or something like that.

How long have you been a magic fan?

Since I was a kid. It seemed in those days that there was always magic or speciality acts on TV – and there was barely a talent show in sight!

What are your earliest memories of magic?

I was a fan of Paul Daniels – mainly when he did the close-up magic, and I also watched and loved Wayne Dobson, because I liked the way he did comedy, Tommy Cooper, and I also liked all the big illusion acts.

Ever done any magic?

I've used a svengali deck and one or two other gimmicked tricks - but sleight of hand? I would love to have the time to spend learning more skilled tricks but I'm too busy.

What did you have for breakfast?

A donut and a coffee. Is this wrong of me?

What was the last magic you saw on TV?

I actually watched a clip of Lance Burton on Youtube doing his dove act. I hate dove magic, I really do, but when you see someone so skilful at it, you just have to admire it. Even with a rewind facility it's still impossible to detect the moves. That's why I stuck to singing.



Comedy.. .it's no laughing matter!

By Graham Hey



STAGE
DOOR

This issue, we reveal the TOP MISTAKES you must avoid making, thanks to the good folks at Virginmirth.co.uk. If you take any of the following advice, you're doomed to have less success than the England football team!

Don't Learn Your Act

It can be highly amusing to watch a new act struggling to remember the next bit of their act - but not in the way he/she intended. To be certain of confirming the audience's suspicions that you don't care enough about them to learn your material, simply toss a few ideas around in your head without once committing them to paper. Don't even think about making a list of keywords and memorising them. No way should you try to link the image evoked by the last gag in one section with the first gag in the next section. The audience are a forgiving bunch and will gladly wait patiently while you trot out those highly original "savers" like "So...what else can I tell you?" or "I know this - really!". And

for the icing on the cake, pull out your scrappy hand-written sheets of A4, peer at them in the dim stage light and shuffle them frantically while keeping a fixed inane grin on your face - it will be fine, really!

Don't Greet The Audience

Why bother saying "Hello", "Evening" "Hiya" or any other greeting - this might well introduce you to the audience in a friendly way and get an immediate response - who needs that!? Dive into your material, don't pander to the plebs with populist attention-getting devices, they've come to hear your gags, not your pleasantries. And while we're on the subject...

QUICK GAG!

This is great if you have two people on stage with you. (Or can be done if you are doing close-up, too!)

Get two people to stand side by side, and then say to one person: "Put your thumb up in the air..." (as if this is going to be part of a trick). Then say to a second person: "And will you put your thumb up as well?" (Again, do this as if it's going to be part of a trick...). Once they have done this, simply take a camera out of your pocket and say: "I'll just take a photo for my website of two people enjoying themselves at one of my shows!" Then you simply go into the routine you had planned. This always gets a really good laugh!



Don't Say Goodbye and Thank You

Look – they've heard the gags, they either like you or they don't. It's no good thanking them for their attention, especially if they didn't give you enough of it – tell them what you really think of their half-arsed attempts at understanding the depth and substance of your hand-crafted material. That way they'll appreciate your honesty – even if they're 100% honest with you about whether they ever want to see you again!

Don't Care How You're Introduced

With an act which has such unique character, instant appeal and a turn of wit that beggars belief, you don't need to even hear what the compere says about you – never mind ensuring that it sets you up in the right way! He may introduce you as a one-legged ballet dancer from Bulgaria, or just as a sh*t new act whose name he can't even be arsed to read out from the scrappy chewed up bit of paper you gave him earlier. A true comedian can work with any introduction, no matter how demeaning or confusing, it's just the power of a master improviser on display. And even if it takes five minutes for the audience to recover from a poor intro and begin to understand what you're all about, well – they'll know next time!

Don't Give Them Any Quick Relief

Absolutely no need to offer your audience a quick first gag, something that is consistent with your stage persona or the theme of your act. This might only give them the impression that you're worth listening to and might even give them another few laughs

later, too. Far, far better to plough straight into your first supremely clever 5 minute piece of comic genius full of intricate counterpoint and obscure references to 20 year old episodes of Star Trek. If the audience aren't sophisticated enough to appreciate a true artist who cannot be constrained by hackneyed formulae of yesteryear, well, darling – stuff 'em!

Don't Learn How To Use The Microphone

The mic is simply a tool, which cannot enhance the quality of an act with high fidelity sound. You know audiences will always readily forgive that acceptable half minute of fumbling with the mike at the start. Even if you drop it, they'll wait patiently and give you the benefit of the doubt. Should you be holding it too close to your mouth, they'll just hear you all the better, and the distortion introduced thereby will give it an authentic "club" sound. If it's too far away from your mouth, then more of your unadulterated aural ambience will add a natural ring to the sound (and allow them to continue their undoubtedly important conversations in peace, without the constant interruption of rip-roaring gags). So don't ever think of practising mic technique – leave that to the androids.

Don't Make It A Double Act

Look – you've sweated blood over your act, practised it over and over until it's word perfect. It's timed to the millisecond and, frankly, you don't need it to be interrupted by constant sounds of amusement from people who obviously don't give a damn that you're on a tight time slot and you simply have to get through this material

right to the bitter end. If they miss the next gag because they're still laughing at the first (probably because the fools were too bloody thick to understand it within the allotted 0.4 seconds you generously allowed for "objective audience response") – well, their loss!

Don't Look At Your Whole Audience

Come on, who still believes that old garbage about people who avoid your gaze being shifty and untrustworthy!! People haven't come to be admired and appreciated by granting them the respect of glancing at them occasionally, they've come to appreciate raw comedic and magic talent. They surely don't need the reassurance of a mutual gaze which forms an unspoken bond between the performer and the audience, and is the best known precaution against heckling.



GARY DELANEY ONE LINERS...

"I took four Es last night. That was a tough hand at Scrabble."

"Technically, shoplifting from the Apple store only counts as scrumping."

'Made in Dagenham', a film about the struggle for equal pay, is a big hit. Producers said 'It was cheap to make too, as it's mostly women'.

MAGIC SEEN ONLINE!

By George Luck

This month I am taking a look at something that you may well have heard of (and if you haven't, in approximately four words you will), The Academy of Magic. This is an online magic venture that was created back in 2009 by London based magician, Tom Weil.



The Academy of Magic is what started the concept of presenting lectures online, via a live internet stream, meaning you have no convention fees and can be sitting in the comfort of your own home.

The team consists of Tom (as you may have gathered) as well as other London magicians, Lee Hathaway, Neil Henry and Daniel Young.

We had a chat with the man himself, Tom, so I shall leave you with what happened...

WHAT IS THE ACADEMY OF MAGIC ABOUT?

The Academy is about embracing the digital era of magic. We have a huge amount of amazing technology at our fingertips, which only a few people seem to be utilising to further our art. This is what The Academy is all about. Over the last couple of years we've custom developed loads of technology that could really benefit the learning process of magic across the world.



Our goal is to create a centralised web platform for learning magic, making the process easier, cheaper and more effective. The Academy has 3 main unique aspects:

1: Live Streaming

We did beta launch this (admittedly a little prematurely) in early 2010 in order to stake our claim before EMC, to enable lectures, filmed and streamed live online, to be watched from the comfort of your home while still allowing the viewer to interact with the lecturer.

Previous lectures included the likes of Etienne Pradier, Steve Dela, Anthony Jacquin & Paul Gordon. The Academy can be used by anyone, anywhere, to host their own lecture – from a convention, local magic club or your front room - and practically no technical knowhow is required. This is a great opportunity for up-and-coming magicians to get their work recognised internationally at the click of a button.

Live streaming does receive a negative response from some, for encouraging laziness,

but we feel that it offers such a huge opportunity to see those lecturers that you wouldn't ever be able to see in the flesh. Some of the greatest teachers don't travel and a lot of keen magicians can't attend conventions or lectures, either for financial or health reasons. The goal is not to replace the physical lecture, but support and expand their effect.

2: Video On Demand

We wanted to improve the efficiency of video learning, so we came up with our video on demand system. A lot of sites are now calling short tutorial videos 'on demand' but ours means it in the truest sense of the phrase. You can watch & pay for just the parts of a video that you want to see. So if you're researching a particular move or effect you can browse all the videos in the catalogue and watch just the relevant parts of multiple videos. Like a 'best of' DVD but for whatever you want to learn! Our ultimate goal is to have every magic video available on one system. A kind of iTunes for magic, but without the inevitable trademark infringement that would involve.

Whilst centralising all the tutorials would make it much easier to learn a specific effect instantly, it would also give the option to broaden your knowledge-base by watching around the area you are interested in. This can't be done currently without the expense of purchasing several DVDs or books. On The Academy, for the same price as one physical DVD, you could watch over an hour of several digital video explanations and, what's more, the creator gets paid for every second you watch!

3: Security

The other thing that is really important to us is the security of the video content on The

Academy. It is the most secure way of distributing magic tutorial videos in the world. If videos can't be copied then they can't be fileshared. Secure streamed video and video watermarking means it's pretty much impossible to steal any video - which means the creators don't lose out and ultimately the quality of the content of tutorial videos will improve. We think it would be cool if EVERY magic video had this security.

WHAT ARE YOU CURRENTLY WORKING ON?

The sad thing is we have come across a number of brick walls, mainly through fear

and lack of understanding. However, taking inspiration from Copperfield, we're going to plough straight through the middle of those walls! It's an expensive and relatively daunting prospect to try and change how people learn an art form; that is why we're trying to make this a collaborative process to build the library of content available for our On Demand service. There is more information about our vision and plans and for how you can get involved, visit www.academyofmagic.com

YOUTUBE CHANNEL OF THE MONTH: www.youtube.com/theacademyofmagic1

COMPETITION WINNER FROM LAST ISSUE: Jack Stephens.

THIS MONTH'S COMPETITION: Film a funny video that is linked in some way to magic and send it to me at geoluck@hotmail.co.uk and the winner will receive a prize...which we have not yet decided on but will be good. **PROMISE!**

RICHARD SANDERS

MIRACLE WORKER

According to the sandersfx.com website, in 15 years as a full time, professional magician, Richard Sanders has found 16,000 freely selected cards; vanished \$24,000 worth of hundred dollar bills; caused 916 borrowed objects to float in midair; and entertained tens of thousands of people at corporate events, conventions, trade shows, comedy clubs, cruise ships, and more! What sandersfx.com doesn't tell you is the stunning reaction his original magic receives. His marketed effects are highly original, ultra-clever, and each one is lovingly crafted to create high-impact, memorable magic. Earlier this year Richard visited the Magicseen stand at Blackpool for a chat, and we are pleased to report that not only is the fellow a creative genius, he is also a very funny and likeable guy... Graham Hey asks the questions.



Richard at the Magicseen stand in Blackpool earlier this year.

What got you started in magic?

I got into magic when my Grandfather took me to a local magic shop when I was 16. Behind the counter, a guy showed me a silver ball that took flight under a hank. Then he took a silver cup and caused a little red ball to appear and vanish from under the cup and then BAM...there was an orange!

Then I saw this quiet guy in the corner of the room doing something with playing cards that made my heart stop. I was watching aces materialize under his hand literally "like magic!"

When I left the shop I didn't have a zombie ball or silver cup, instead I had a copy of "Basic Card Technique" by Anthony

Norman. I studied it voraciously. I studied the pass, the double lift and all kinds of techniques. The book had one or two line drawings per move, I really had no clue what I was doing but I didn't care.

I was the king of card magic...IN MY OWN MIND...and it was a blast!



Years later, after much searching, I finally learned the miracle that I saw in the store years earlier, it was Paul Harris' "Invisible Palm" routine.

That effect changed my life!

Were you a magic geek?

By geek are you referring to a boy who was so shy and introverted that in early high school a girl once called out his name and he blushed beet red for about ten minutes? If so, then yes I was an UBER GEEK.

I was a very shy and introverted kid. My parents were divorced at a young age. I grew up with my Mom and 2 younger sisters. I was not the sociable type. I took pleasure in things I could do on my own. I had two choices and magic was the choice that didn't make me blind. It allowed me to dream, practise and create all by myself. The real beauty of magic however, is that magic ultimately calls you to task: eventually you must do this stuff for another human being.

"I was the king of card magic...
IN MY OWN MIND...and it was a blast!"



“Magic is the perfect way to meet girls if you have no other options. I know this because I had no other options.”



"Jay was a real inspiration - having to keep up with Jay kept me on my toes and forced me to expand my own skills."

For years my humans were my 2 sisters. By week two, I had already sucked the love of magic right out of them!

Earliest job as magician?

I think my first real job as a magician other than kids parties would have been my time as the 'Hostess Munchies' Magician. I was about 16 and still introverted. My father somehow managed to convince someone he knew to hire me on as the magical entertainer, where I would perform magic along side the 7 foot, orange, furry mascot. I was decked out in a full black tuxedo complete with a powder blue ruffled shirt and a bow-tie. I considered this a good style choice (please refer to the previous question, "would you consider yourself a geek?").

I would spend the majority of my time walking into corner stores with the giant fluffy mascot and harassing people with cards tricks as they attempted to purchase things like milk and cigarettes. Without sacrifice there can be no growth. That summer I grew a lot.

Did you ever use magic to meet girls?

Magic is the perfect way to meet girls if you have no other options. I know this because I had no other options.

Early on, magic allowed me to interact with girls who I would have never had a chance in hell of interacting with otherwise. The problem was that after the trick finished so did my social skills.

I realised very quickly that no matter how amazing I made him sound, women just weren't interested in Fantasio.

Tell us about creating unique effects...

I have been best friends with Jay Sankey ever since I was 16 years old.

We used to get together at his Dad's office in Toronto and create magic. We came equipped with a deck of cards, paper clips, coins, matches and anything else we could get our hands on. I believe oven mitts were part of one session. Jay was a real inspiration - having to keep up with Jay kept me on my toes and forced me to expand my own skills.

One of my first creations was called "Twig from Ear." (Nice title eh?). As I talked with the audience they could see the edge of a twig sticking out of my ear. I slowly pulled it out - a 2 foot tree twig! This was my start!

Your favourite effects?

Interlace and Extreme Burn and Identity and Fiber Optics and Ultra Gum....stop...I can't pick a favourite!!!

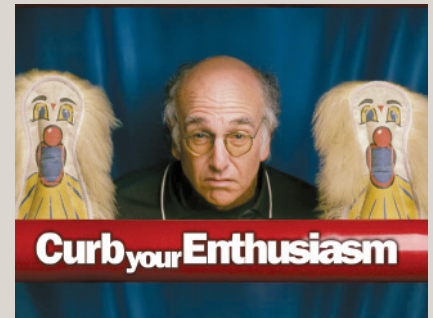
Seriously, I really work hard at creating all of the magic that I market.

Every effect has a little of my blood, sweat and tears in it (don't worry, all the DVD

QUICKIES!

Last time you shouted?

A month ago while alone in the car.



Favourite TV show?

Curb Your Enthusiasm, 30 Rock, 24, Flight of the Concords, Fringe.

Fav comedians?

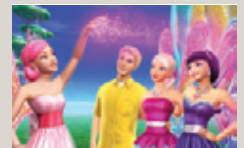
Bill Mauer, Steve Carell, Will Ferrell, Monty Python, Woody Allen, Mitch Headberg, Zach Galifianakis.

What did you have for breakfast?

I am trying to cleanse my body. I am eating only fruits, veggies and nuts. So I had fruits and nuts. I miss meat!

Last Movie you saw?

Barbie: A Fairy Secret. (Shut up, I have a daughter!)



Secret hobby?

Graphic design

Personal thing?

I am a LOUD snorer.

Best Venue?

5 years of working cruise ships. A cruise ship is a fantasy job.



You are spoiled like a passenger with the added responsibility of performing 2 shows a week for people that love to laugh and have fun. Awesome memories!



“If you enjoy seeing and making people laugh then by all means make this part of your magic. Humour in magic should be an extension of who you are naturally.”

Are you a solo creator?

I am a solo creator but in fact I love working with others.

This year I released an incredible effect called Ultra Gum, where I worked very closely with Spidey and Deven Ye, two very creative guys.

I have projects planned with Cameron Francis, Ben Williams, Spidey and more. In fact this year Sanders FX is on the lookout for magicians with original effects and/or ideas. I will personally work with you to help bring to market a cutting edge, top notch effect. The creative process is much more effective with more than one person at the helm.

Sense of humour!!?

I think humour is very important in your magic....IF YOU ARE FUNNY!

I think a sense of humor is a wonderful thing to have.

If you enjoy seeing and making people laugh then by all means make this part of your magic. Humour in magic should be an extension of who you are naturally.

People always say that if you aren't funny then don't try to be funny on stage.

I disagree with this. I think the important question to ask is: “Would you love to make people laugh?” If the answer is yes, then go

boxes were sanitised before shipping!). I love each effect for a different reason.

Most of my magic has a visual slant for a reason. I grew up in Montreal which, when I was a kid, was primarily English. As I grew up it transitioned into a French city. Unfortunately my French was not up to standard and I had a problem communicating. I got around the communication problem by performing mostly visual magic. This became my trademark...to this day.

Best magic books?

Sankey Pankey, Art of Astonishment and Williamsons Wonders.

Influences?

Jay Sankey for incredible creativity. Bill Abbott for effortless skill as a performer. Dave Williamson and Bill Malone for comic genius.

If I was in charge of magic world...?

A public “Troublewit” burning!

Public hangings for anyone that starts their show with “people often ask me, what’s the difference between magic and illusion...well tonight we are going to find out!”

On a serious note, I wish we would stop critiquing other magicians and instead, use that energy positively to create magic for ourselves.

Best Advice?

“Have fun and love your audience!” I forgot who told me this.

1. Audience
2. Customer
3. You

(in order of importance): Colin Magor

out and try to do it. Making people laugh comes naturally to some, it takes work for others and it just isn't a good fit for others. If you never try, you will never know. Experiment with people. Try to crack a joke during your magic set. Try using a funny routine. Try an open mike night at your local comedy club, etc.

I used to be a very quiet, polite performer when I started but by working at it over and over (and taking a few chances here and there) I became funnier and funnier. The funnier I became the looser I got and the funnier I was able to be. Eventually I became a funny guy. This may not be the route for everyone but if it is something you truly want then by all means go out there and try it.

Who was I 10 years earlier and how have I changed since?

I performed primarily at corporate events and private parties. I am still doing that today but as a person I have changed. I am much more comfortable with who I am and who I am not.

With another 10 years of performing experience under my belt, I have a lot more confidence in myself as an entertainer.

I am free to do things that I would have never done ten years earlier.

Example: At the recent Blackpool 2011 convention I performed on the close-up show. The show was performed for a group of about 500 people in one large room complete with a large video screen. I had my show prepared but after sitting through all the magic acts I just couldn't stand to show everyone another card or coin routine so instead, last minute, I decided to trust myself, and wing it.

I was armed with an opening joke and a quick closing trick but other than that I had no clue what I was going to do.

I walked up to the close-up table with nothing but a trust in the universe and a trust in myself. The show was a mish-mash of improvised magic, bits of business and situation comedy. I literally had no clue what I would do next throughout the show.

Fifteen minutes later, the show was over and I received a standing ovation from 500 people in the close-up room.

Richard's Favourite Effects...

INTERLACE:

A borrowed finger ring appears hanging from the loop of your shoelace. I love Interlace for the strength of the effect. The idea of a borrowed ring appearing on the loop of your shoelace always struck me as an impossible organic miracle that would be remembered long after the effect is over.



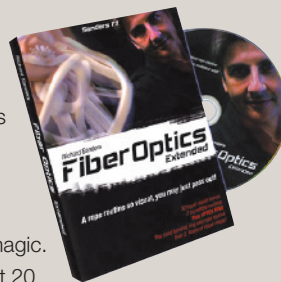
ULTRA GUM:

Unlike traditional effects like this, (bill in lemon for example), the spectator gets to see the bill in the impossible location (the lemon) only after it is cut open. With Ultra Gum the spectator gets to see his bill trapped inside an impossible location WHILE IT IS STILL IN THE IMPOSSIBLE LOCATION.



FIBER OPTICS EXTENDED:

I love this for it's pure visual beauty. This is hardcore, high octane visual magic. There are about 20 visual magic moments in a span of 3 minutes!



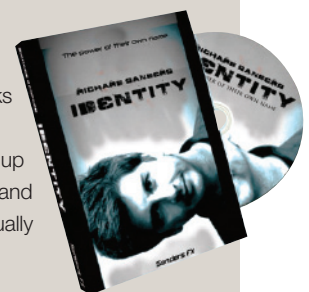
EXTREME BURN:

With a shake of your hand, paper visually changes to money. I love this because of the visual changes. With no moves and no cover your own eyes see money or paper transform. The magic is undeniable!



IDENTITY:

A full out card routine where marks jump from card to card until they end up on the selection... and then the marks visually change into the spectator's name.



It was an amazing experience but an experience that I could never have done without the aid of 20 plus years of performing experience.

Do you like mentalism?

I love mentalism done well.

I am writing this article from my hotel room in Las Vegas where last night I saw Gerry McCambridge's show. What an amazing surprise. He combines a comedian's sense of humor, powerful effects and very clever psychology.

What makes him really shine is his ability to convince the audience that what they are watching is the real thing. What I found really interesting is that he is funny as hell and at the same time people are actually scared of him...a very difficult combination to pull off.

I love Identity for the killer ending where the marks change into their own name. The transformation of the marks to their name at the end of the effect is like a sucker punch to the solar plexus..

sandersfx.com

brooke ken



‘Return’ of *a magical legend*

by Steve Cook



On February 26th 1983, the magic world mourned the loss of probably its most colourful, charismatic and controversial character...the legendary,

Ken Brooke.

On February 26th 2008, in order to commemorate precisely, twenty-five years since that very sad day, Steve Cook officially publishes his long-awaited book: *Legend: An anecdotal tribute to Ken Brooke*.

The main aim of the book is to keep alive the name of Ken Brooke for future generations of magicians. It is important to highlight ‘magic revolutionaries’ like Ken, who has been described as the most influential man in magic; a man who constantly strove to elevate magic into a real art form.

“There are no tricks in the ‘Legend’ book but some wonderfully funny, as well as some very poignant stories”, says Steve, “there are also some great gags, ‘bits of business’, plus lots of priceless advice and a wealth of excellent photos”.

It seems incredible to think that a quarter of a century has vanished since Ken passed away. Today, in the opinion of countless magicians, there is still nobody in the world of magic who comes close to matching him as ‘the greatest magic demonstrator of all time’.

He was often outspoken, controversial and sometimes vehement in his opinions on magic, magicians and show-business, which is almost always the case with real innovators and ‘torch bearers’. Naturally, such outspokenness and

controversy often brought him into conflict with the magical hierarchy but, if Ken thought he had a genuine grievance, then he’d usually air it: contumacy is a natural progression for any sincere ‘barrier-breaker’.

Ken Brooke was responsible for having a major influence on the careers of many of the biggest and most respected names in magic; Paul Daniels, Wayne Dobson, Tommy Cooper, Al Koran, Fred Kaps, Johnny Hart, Terri Rogers, Pat Page, Gaetan Bloom, Juan Tamariz, Slydini, Dai Vernon, David Berglas, Maurice Fogel, Ali Bongo, John Fisher, Jerry Sadowitz, Alex Elmsley, Doug Henning, Channing Pollock, John Calvert, Ricky Jay... to name but a few!

Ken should publicly have been a star; his desire not to pursue that route, led him to being content within his own special magic



arena doing what he did best, and what he did best, was demonstrating his exclusive range of magic. 'Demonstrating' is actually a weak description: it was a 'complete performance'. He was also a superb salesman: top notch, the best! In fact his sales technique was so subtle, that the punter invariably bought from him unconsciously! Ken knew instinctively what worked for an audience. He cared passionately about his art, as a dealer, demonstrator and performer. Being a professional cabaret performer himself, he understood completely, the rigid demands of the professional, as well as acknowledging the criteria sought by the dedicated amateur: in short, he knew the magic business inside out and back to front!

His written instructions were unique, and respected throughout the magic world because they explained every nuance, bit of business and offered a wealth of professional advice with every effect he sold. The message was delivered in a relaxed, humorous and intimate style.

Some magicians found Ken to be a problematic character who often alienated and indeed occasionally offended some of his acquaintances and customers. To be fair, the problem was probably with the people who took offence, in that they failed to comprehend the man's humour, which at times could be cutting, off-beat and satirical. A few people have mentioned that Ken loved to pull gags on others, but didn't like it when the roles were reversed. This may in part be true, however, it must be understood that he was so charismatic, that his character actually commanded attention: he was always the life and soul of the party... always!

Let's be honest, there's a selfish streak in all performers and extroverts; the need to show-off, to be accepted; to be the centre of attention. It's probably Freudian: an inherent

shyness or some other childhood insecurity. The fact is, that if performers didn't possess the attention thing, then they wouldn't perform. Period. Which is the greater loss? Without doubt Ken Brooke had a wicked sense of humour, which unfortunately was often misinterpreted. He was the sort of guy who'd push you in the river, then jump in after you... sometimes... he wouldn't!

If however, Ken took a liking to you and eventually came to trust you, then you had a true friend for life. If that trust was abused then God help you! Also, if he saw you do something which, magically, he thought wrong, then he'd tell you so in that brusque Yorkshire dialect, but he'd also help you to put things right. He could be embarrassingly generous and thoughtful too, often when he couldn't afford to be... the mark of a true humanitarian.

Born in Leeds, West Yorkshire, on November 3rd 1920, Ken became fascinated with magic as a very young schoolboy. As a young boy, he was selling Svengali decks on street markets under the auspices of pitchmen, such as the legendary, Joe Squinters. Such experiences certainly helped formulate both his no-nonsense attacking magical style and his acute and subtle salesmanship, which were to serve him extremely well in later life.

Ken served in the RAF during the Second World War in North Africa, the Western Desert (around Cairo) and Italy. During the campaign he was involved with ENSA and helped organise many shows for the troops. He also met many magicians, who later were to become famous in their own right: Tommy Cooper, Robert Harbin, Pablo, Jack Gwynne, among others.

Post-war Ken ventured into magic dealing, and initially worked briefly for Alan Milan and later for Paul Veroni in Bradford, West Yorkshire. He eventually set up a magic business of his own in that city but, he went bust and lost everything... even his furniture!

Shortly afterwards, the well known magic dealer, Harry Stanley brought Ken to London to manage the Unique Magic Studio in Soho. Both men were responsible for advancing the careers of many big names in magic by bringing them to British shores in order to lecture, especially magicians from America such as; Dai Vernon, Slydini, Don Alan, Johnny Paul, Al Goshman and Ricky Jay plus, from Holland, a man acknowledged then as the greatest magician in the world... Fred Kaps.

In 1966, after encouragement, persuasion and finance from his friend, Frank Farrow, Ken decided to set up Ken Brooke's Magic Place in London's Soho. Eventually the business settled in Wardour Street (Soho), and over the years, the studio became world famous and a magnet for visiting magicians from all over the world.

Ken's words of wisdom

Below is a small selection of the priceless advice from Ken, which is included at the end of the book in a chapter entitled: Gold Dust. It's a cliché to say this but, without doubt, this chapter alone is worth many times the price of the book. The advice is just as relevant today as it was then:

“It is the journey that counts, not the destination. Throughout any trick, the action should be kept enjoyable. No use having a five minute build up to a ten-second climax!”

“You may have a perfect sleight but, if your timing is off, you'll get caught out; whereas, if your sleight is poor but your timing is good, you'll get away with it every time. Timing is everything!”

“It is essential that within a few minutes of starting your performance, both your character (performing persona) and the nature of your act are established to your audience. They have to instantly warm to you because, if they think they'll like you as a person, then they'll almost certainly like what you do!”

“When practising a move... sing! Occasionally, change the song, say every ten minutes, but keep singing! You might be a lousy singer but, your efforts will take your mind away from the 'moves'. I wish more magicians would sing more often: it's a natural thing to do. Now, change the song for talk, any talk, just keep talking to yourself for a further ten minutes or so. Being natural is 99% of the battle: it's the keynote to success!”



The Ken Brooke range of magic sold there was an exclusive collection of top class commercial items. It was the only magic dealership in the world which offered a money back guarantee on every item it sold! Many of the biggest names in magic gave Ken the exclusive marketing rights to some of their pet effects; great magicians such as: Fred Kaps, Gaetan Bloom, Finn Jon, Wayne Dobson, Scotty York, Johnny Thompson, Ali Bongo, Roy Johnson, Terri Rogers, the list goes on and on and on!

Unfortunately, with ever-increasing rents, problems of piracy from some of his competitors and Ken's failing health (he was a real 'workaholic'), he had to end his association with the studio after many successful years.

There really was no place like it! If you ever attended a convention where Ken was dealing, then you couldn't miss his stand: it had the biggest crowd around it in the hall! He held the crowds all day and he has often been

known to have sold out in a matter of hours! If you were in Ken's company, you just didn't want to leave... such was the charisma of the man... now that's a real star!

In 1981, Paul Stone arranged for Ken to visit America to collect (after considerable delay), a Special Fellowship Award from the Academy of Magical Arts. During this time, Ken was recovering from a serious stroke and his speech was badly affected. Despite this, he still managed to win over many people with his undiminished charisma. He was often reduced to tears by the response of his generous hosts. Those great showmen, Siegfried & Roy, hosted a party at their beautiful home in honour of Ken. He was treated like Royalty: such was the esteem in which he was held by his peers.

During the last few years of his life, Ken was nursed with dedicated care by his partner, Barbara McNaughton. Listening one evening to Barbara open her heart and describe how

some of his 'friends' let him down badly both prior to, and after, his death, is heart-breaking. He didn't deserve to finish his life that way.

After suffering several strokes Ken Brooke finally succumbed, and passed away probably due to hereditary circulatory problems. Ironically, that weekend was the Blackpool Convention.

In February 1980 (three years before Ken's death), at the Blackpool Magic Convention, a Fiesta of Magic was held in his honour, with all participating performers giving freely of their services. A testimonial fund (inaugurated some time before the event), raised a substantial amount of money for Ken in recognition of his services to magic and his impending retirement. Ken, humble as ever, was overwhelmed. The list of contributors to this fund is listed in the Legend book... that list speaks for itself, and only serves to highlight his tremendous popularity. **MS**

Legend: An anecdotal tribute to Ken Brooke

is crammed with anecdotes about Ken and lots of fascinating facts and photos. Fifty-two contributors provide an intimate portrait of the man, these include: Wayne Dobson, Gaetan Bloom, Ali Bongo, Alan Shaxon, Terry Herbert, Martin Breese and many, many more!

It is published in hard back (220 pages), in a 25th anniversary limited edition of only 1,000 copies worldwide. Once gone... they're gone! To be officially released on 26th February 2008. Two charitable projects will benefit from some of the profits from the book. Price: £30-00 (plus £5-00 p&p - UK). Overseas enquiries welcome. Reserve your copy by calling Steve Cook: 01472-349753 or Email: steve.cook243@ntlworld.com Copyright © Steve Cook 2008

Finally, here are a few anecdotes from the book. These don't even scratch the surface... there are scores and scores of them. Ken's close friend, Barry Stevenson, alone wrote close on 8,000 words about the man!

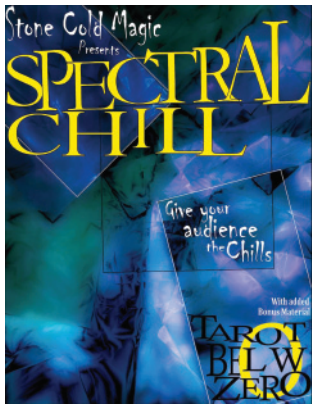
"He once gave me a nice bit of routing with a Vanishing Birdcage and a Jumping Stool (in fact, I still use it today). He would walk on holding the cage and say: "Can you see it at the back?... No?... Just a minute..." He would then exit and return with the stool and say: "I'll stand on this". He'd start to get onto the stool, it would jump up into the air and, as he reached out to catch it, the cage would vanish! He'd look around and say: "Where's the bloody cage?" I love it! **(Pete Biro)**

"Ken never lost his sense of humour, even when he was seriously ill, and due to his illness, he could only eat a meal slowly. Once during this period, we both went for a meal and when Ken was settled in the restaurant, we ordered, and he said to the waiter: "Leave the keys... we'll lock up!" **(Remo Inzani)**

"Ken had many sight-gags, but the following always impressed me, no matter how often I saw it. He would hobble along the street apparently in great pain, until he caught someone's attention (which never took long), then he would stop and say: "It's no good I can't go on..." (or words to that effect) He would then remove the offending shoe and tip from it a large stone or a piece of brick, which hit the floor with a resounding thud, then he'd say: "No wonder...! Or "That's better!" etc.

People looked at him as though he were mad, but it got a great reaction and I dare say that it endeared him instantly to total strangers!" **(Barbara McNaughton - Ken's partner)**

"One night in a pub, Ken bet a guy that he (Ken) could leave his pint of beer on the bar, then walk out of the room and drink the pint without walking back into the bar! Of course, the guy took the bet! Ken would then walk out of the bar and after a few seconds would walk back in, but on his hands! He'd drink the beer and the guy would honour the bet! He didn't do it for the free beer but for the laugh because the bar was full of people who knew nothing of the bet and, as Ken walked in on his hands, the expressions on their faces was 'gold-dust!' I don't think we paid for another drink all night!" **(Barry Stevenson)**



SPECTRAL CHILL

An E-Book by Jeff Stone

Available from
www.stonecoldmagic.com

Price: \$25 (approx. £15.50)

Jeff Stone's presentational updating of the old 11 card principal is here applied initially to playing cards and transforms an old card trick into a great conversation piece, but more for a casual setting than for a formal show. That's an important point as it's better if the audience doesn't associate this with a card trick and it becomes more about the skill of 'reading the cards'.

The 11 card principle is one of those strange self working mathematical miracles, the origins of which are now becoming lost in the mists of time. Martin Gardiner, Henry Christ and Jon Armstrong have toyed with it and another more recent sighting is Paul Gordon's What a Triple Kick. Check John Scarne's Mathematical Finder in Scarne on Card Tricks for a basic version or Giobbi's Numerology in Card College 3.

Mathematical principles can often be boring because it will inevitably mean a lot of dealing or counting and guess what, that's just what happens in this trick! Keeping the presentation lively with some sprightly dealing will help those moments when all that happens is a lot of counting. The trade-off is a self working routine that becomes more inexplicable the more you do it. What we have here is essentially a mathematical dealing trick, although an intriguing one where whatever number is arrived at by the randomness of the dealing

process you will always know the identity of the card at that position.

\$25 would be verging on theft for just this underwhelming premise, so Jeff Stone has cloaked the mathematical method and moved the presentation away from a card trick into the vague and misty area of card reading where it becomes something a little more real to lay people. With the addition of thinking on your feet and presentational plays about the methods of fortune tellers who reveal links between the cards and the spectator, it becomes the sort of thing they want to believe even when it's slightly off the mark!

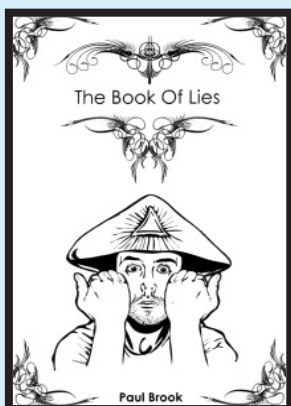
Following this, Stone then adapts the whole principle to a routine with Tarot cards in which Tarot readings are weaved into the presentation. This will be easy for those already familiar with the Tarot deck but will take some getting to know for the uninitiated. For this, and the previous routine with playing

cards, you will need to develop some cold reading skills, but given the arcane nature of Tarot cards with their esoteric characters, it's fairly easy to attach meanings to the cards as they come up! This has the potential to be quite a powerful presentation in the right hands, although you will need to get to know the Tarot deck well in order to have some credibility with the Tarot version.

At its most basic, this is a self working card trick which has been taken to a completely different level and made into something a lot spookier. For fans of the Tarot or just the spookier end of card magic, this is a powerful presentation, but despite its near 50 pages, it's maybe a little pricey for a downloadable E-book. **PP**

WHAT'S HOT: modern day presentation for an old card trick!

WHAT'S NOT: a pricey download?
★★★



THE BOOK OF LIES

Paul Brook

Available from
www.heknows.co.uk

Price: £65

Running to 252 pages, The Book of Lies is a collection of mentalism effects and ideas from the mind of Paul Brook.

Broken down in to chapters, the book covers ideas for Impromptu, Stage, Psychokenesis and Media, along with a chapter entitled Some Concepts.

If you have read any of Paul's other books then you will be familiar with the format. Each effect is fully scripted leaving nothing out. The book could actually have been half its size if not for the scripting but Paul is often praised for his detailing

and, I have to agree, it's nice to see how Paul would perform each effect even if you choose not to use the scripting.

With around 45 effects it is impossible to mention all of them, but highlights for me include:

'BI-FAW'. This is a method of making a billet index inside a regular wallet.

'Watch Your Money'. Paul takes you step-by-step in how to create, what he calls, a James Bond style watch which can be used to tell which hand a coin is being held in. And it will only cost you around £10, plus an old watch.

'Imp-Ossible'. A drawing duplication effect with an added Thought of Word revelation using a clever dual-reality method.

There is some good solid material in this book - some needing preparation, some you can do on the fly but anyone who performs or has an interest in mentalism will take something from this book.

Recommended. **PS**

WHAT'S HOT: Some great effects. Thoroughly explained.

WHAT'S NOT: A bit pricey.
★★★★



THE TOPSY-TURVY SODA BOTTLES

Walt Anthony and Michael Mosher

Available from: www.practical-magic.com

Price: £49.50 + £5.75 P&P

Here is the classic Topsy Turvy Bottles done with Coca Cola bottles. The effect is the time tested one. Two tubes are shown, the performer having one and a spectator the other. Each takes a full bottle of coke and holding it the right way round, covers it with their tube. With their palms covering both ends, the tubes are turned upside

down, then back, then upside down again. When the tubes are lifted the spectator's bottle is upside down but the performer's is still the right way round. This is repeated a second time with the same mis-match. Then on the third attempt the bottles magically end up matching. At which point the performer produces a third bottle which he gives as a gift to his volunteer.

The tubes are very sturdily made and will survive even heavy handed treatment. One of them is gimmicked and therefore cannot be shown empty at any stage. The bottles are regular half litre coke bottles which are supplied empty in order to make mailing the trick lighter, so you will need to fill the bottles with coke or with correct coloured water so that the bottles match the supplied gimmick. Having the bottles full also makes the trick easier to handle.

The instructions I found somewhat difficult to follow. The concept of how the trick works is easy enough to understand, but the way that this is expressed in the instructions by the originator leaves a lot to be desired. The supplied patter is provided but it's hard to work out exactly what is happening at any given point in that patter. As if acknowledging this fact, there is an extra bit of handling instruction given afterwards in which what you do is broken down into three stages, but even trying to follow it with tube and bottle in hand, I still got a bit confused! And then the extra bottle production is skipped over fairly quickly in a 'Notes' section at the finish. I really think that these instructions could have been put together far better and I think it spoils what is otherwise quite a nicely made outfit.

One way to make things a bit clearer is to watch the video dem that Practical Magic have on their

website. This shows a single tube routine with a completely different patter story to the one in the instructions, and although the originators say it is not the 'official' dem of the product, I thought the effect was actually much better than the supplied classic one!

If you have always wanted to do the Topsy Turvy Bottles and are looking for an up-to-date set, these props will do you fine, especially if you already have a handling that you are familiar with. If you are coming to it for the first time, be prepared to work through it until you can figure out what is supposed to be happening, because then eventually you will have a trick which would make an ideal act opener or be suitable as a quick interlude for a compere. **ML**

WHAT'S HOT: the well made props

WHAT'S NOT: the somewhat inadequate instructions

★★★



CELEBRITY MAGIC

David & Karen



Seeing as Britain's Got Talent has just recently finished, we thought we would ask one of the finalists a few questions. We decided to chat to the brilliant impressionist Les Gibson....

What's your earliest memory of seeing magic on TV?

Paul Daniels when I was a kid.

Paul Daniels or David Copperfield?

David Copperfield.

Best thing that's happened to you because of the show?

Best thing that's happened from the show is the recognition before a gig and in the street.

Last magic you saw on TV?

David and Karen on BGT - very, very good.

Most positive aspect of BGT for you?

Recognition and experience of a life time with the tour.

What are you working on at the moment?

At the moment I'm doing a lot of fly backs for top holiday companies and cruise. Also voice

overs, had a lot of this in before BGT, but now the huge recognition makes the work more exciting.

What's coming up for you in the next 12 months?

The next 12 months has more of the same work but with a bigger profile, BGT is a great platform for my kind of act.

WE WANT YOUR BEST IDEA!

The Masterclass Award for 2011, which consists of a cash prize of £250 plus a special certificate, will be presented to the person who contributes the best trick published in the Masterclass section of Magicseen during Volume 7. Wayne Fox is the next to contribute - so what can you offer to wow our readers even more to put you in the running? Please send your contribution to the Editor at markleveridge@magicseen.co.uk as soon as you can. Four issues of Volume 7 are already gone, so you have just 2 issues left to stake your claim to the cash! So don't delay, show how creative you are and let us tell the world for you.

A FINE CHANCE

by Wayne Fox

This really does pack small and play big, in every sense of the word. I perform this 'close up' and on stage with spectators. When I want to make an impression with mindreading, this is the one I use. I came up with this idea when we as magicians are asked the tiresome question, "Do you play cards", and "Do you gamble". This is a simply wonderful way of answering these questions and the outcome seems totally impossible as you end clean. More important to this, the magic happens completely in the spectator's hands.

Effect: You bring out an envelope which is in full view at all times, and explain that when you go to a casino you leave the whole experience to chance. Firstly you show a list of the games you like to play, Black Jack, Crapps, Roulette and so on, these are numbered 1 to 6. You then show five different coloured chips. The spectator rolls a dice and cross-references the number on the list and finds that they have landed on Roulette.

They then choose a chip colour, 'white'. The envelope is opened by the spectator and there is your prediction, a photograph of you sitting next to a Roulette wheel holding white chips.

What you need: There are several ways of presenting this

depending on what props you can lay your hands on.

Five different coloured casino chips. Fig.1. These can be found online and indeed most big department store sell them, costing a few pence per chip. If you do not want to use chips you can use different value coins, or indeed cut coloured card into discs.

A large die (large enough to be seen by all at the table)
A prediction. This can be a photo of you by a Roulette wheel holding the chip of your choice. Fig.2. This can be easily done on Photoshop on most computers. Just scan your image onto a roulette wheel. However you could simply Google images of a roulette wheel with chips. Failing all these you could simply have a written prediction stating your prediction.

Six lists produced on small pieces of thin card which are about the size of credit cards. These are laid out as in Fig.3. Roulette is at number 1 on the first list, on the second list it is at number 2, on the third list number 3 and so on, rotating the other games on the lists on the way.

Set Up: Take your six lists and arrange them in a known order in the credit card slots in your wallet. This should enable you to instantly grab whichever list you need following the selection with the die.



FIG 1.



FIG 2.

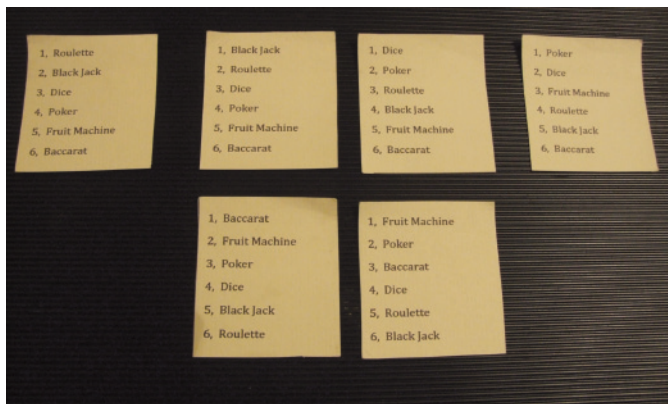


FIG 3.

Make up the prediction to your specifications, and put this in an envelope which gets handed to a spectator to hold.

Put the five chips and dice in your trouser pocket and you are ready to go.

Performance: Tell your spectator that gambling is a game of luck, and that when you gamble you leave the choice of game to chance, even the chip colour is left to the odds of possibility. Hand your prediction to the spectator.

You tell them that firstly you would want to know what game to play at the casino, and opening your wallet with the inside facing you, pull out any one of the lists inside. Show the audience this briefly then draw it back and read just some of the games in a random order off the list and tell them that each game is numbered. By not showing them the numbers they will not be able to remember an easy position of one of the games, such as the top one. Slip the list back into the wallet which you close and place down in view.

Your spectator is now asked to roll the die a few times to show it's not a 'loaded' die. They stop rolling wherever they want, let's say '4', and you now remove the list from your wallet which has 'Roulette' in the fourth position, and pass it to the audience member to read off what is at number four.

You now bring out the chips and lay them out on the table. You now need to force the white chip by using a version of the Roy Baker 'P.A.T.E.O. (Pick Any Two Eliminate One) Force'. It goes like this.....

The P.A.T.E.O. Force

The spectator chooses any two of the five chips and you eliminate one, simply making sure that if they choose the white one as one of their two selections, you eliminate the other one. The remaining chip is put back with the other three.

You now point to two of the chips. You can select any two chips except the white one you

want to force. The spectator eliminates one of these which you remove and place to one side, returning the other chip to join the remaining two.

This leaves three chips. The spectator selects any two and you eliminate one that is not a white chip.

That leaves just two, the white and one other colour. Ask him to hand you one of the chips. If he hands you the white one place it down next to the games list as his selection. If he hands you the other colour, drop that chip on the pile of discarded ones and slide the remaining white one over next to the games card. Either handling appears logical given the way the chips have been handled and eliminated up to that point.

All that remains is to recap on what has happened so far and then get the spectator to open and reveal the prediction.

CELEBRITY MAGIC - JAMES EARL JONES



We decided to ask top US actor James Earl Jones currently starring at the Wyndham's Theatre in Driving Miss Daisy, a few questions about magic. This is the transcript of our phone call at 9pm...

....the phone rings...

MS: Oh, hello. Is James Earl Jones in?
THEATRE: Which department does he work in?
MS: No, he's the star of the show!!!
THEATRE: Ahh, James Earl Jones! He's performing right now...
MS: Any chance we could have a quick word with him while he's standing at the side of the stage or anything?
THEATRE: No...
MS: I'm ringing from Magicseen – you know,

the world's number one magic magazine. Will that get me through to him?
THEATRE: No. We've never heard of it. Can you ring tomorrow and we'll put you through to the marketing and promotions department?
MS: Have you heard of Ian Keable?
THEATRE: No.
MS: OK, good bye and thank you for your expertise.

