

June/July 2012

# VANISH

International Magic Magazine

**STEVE  
VALENTINE  
INTERVIEW**

**THE RISE FROM  
MAGICIAN TO  
TELEVISION AND MOVIE  
CELEBRITY**

**CRUISE SHIP MAGIC  
BY NICK LEWIN**

**ANDREW GERARD SHARES  
A CLOSE-UP EFFECT**

**TELLER SPEAKS**

edition  
**02**

Steve  
Valentine

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ILLUSION DESIGNER MARK PARKER  
SHARES HIS VIEW ON REASONING &  
LOGIC OF AN ILLUSION

**2** **MAGIC TRICKS**  
LEARN MAGIC FROM MENTALISM TO  
CLOSE-UP TO STAND UP ROUTINES

**3** **PRODUCT REVIEWS**  
THE LATEST MAGIC  
TRICKS AND APPS  
ARE REVIEWED

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June/July 2012

# VANISH

International Magic Magazine

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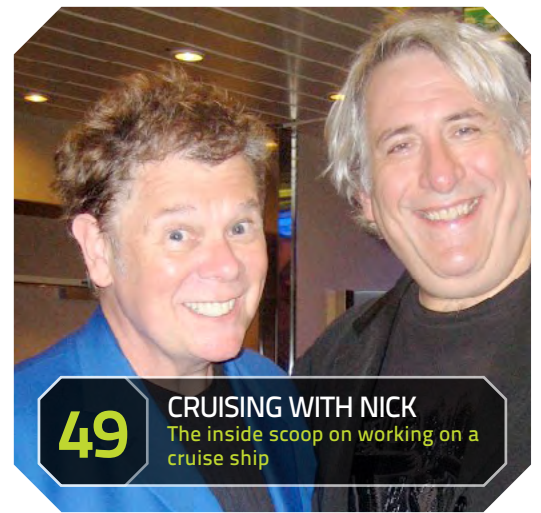
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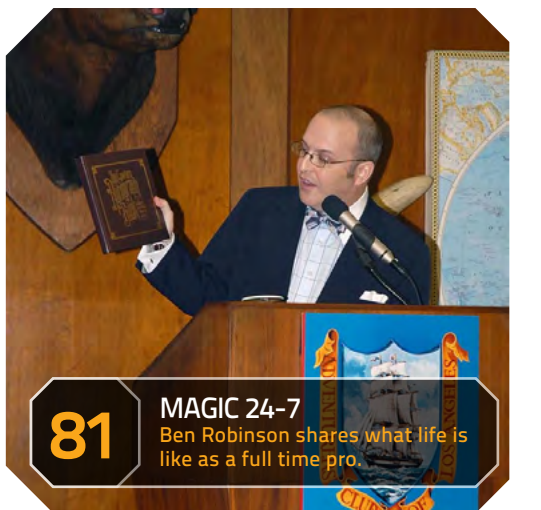
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# FROM THE EDITOR

Downloads of the first issue reach over 30,000! The response has been overwhelming.

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

*"Just wanted to say I just received my free download and I'm very impressed! Great Magazine!" - Bill Malone*

*"I think it's great! Definitely directed at the performing magician - which is a niche not covered by any other publication." - Bill Abbott*

*"I just read a copy of Vanish magazine and in a word, "WOW"! It looks great and I am floored by the number of excellent articles by a variety of writers with great photos. I cannot wait to read the next issue, Bravo!" - Carl Andrews*

*"After reading vanish for the first time I committed myself that this will be the only magazine I need to read. This is a number one, extremely well produced magazine, and will be hard to top. I love it and it's about*

*time we can read a class act magazine by a class act person. Congratulations, I rank this a TEN." - Neal Scryer*

The response from the first issue of Vanish has been overwhelming, with over 30,000 downloads in the first month. The server hosting the magazine had to let me know that the amount of downloads exceeded my limit. This led to the creation of the new website dedicated to VANISH. You can visit [www.vanishmagazine.com](http://www.vanishmagazine.com) for updates, and downloads. Over the next month our plan is to put up video footage to go along side the tricks and articles that we publish.

Everybody has commented on the quality of articles, and how much information the professionals are sharing. I am glad people have picked up on these points. It has always been my goal to put together a magazine that contains articles that are relevant for today's performers. To do this I knew I would need contributors who are out there doing it, and at the top of their game.



**Paul Romhany**  
[info@paulromhany.com](mailto:info@paulromhany.com)  
[www.vanishmagazine.com](http://www.vanishmagazine.com)

I am very pleased to introduce a new series by Danny Weiser on keeping fit while on the road. As a performer who is constantly on the road, or on cruise ships I know the importance of staying fit and eating healthy. As far as I am aware no other magic magazine has ever had a series on this topic, which is one of the most important for any working performer.

If you would like to get a price list for advertising rates then send me an e-mail. With such a large number of downloads we know that this form of magazine will be the way everybody will want to promote their products. With the development of the website we plan on listing all contributors as well as advertisers. As one of our main advertisers recently told me, *"the beauty of this magazine is that if I wanted to change my ad a day prior to it going out, I just need to phone you. There is no magazine that is as current as yours!"*

Thank you to Chipper Lowell for taking time to interview Steve Valentine. Steve gives up some valuable information on what he had to do to make it in to the movie industry, as well as some great close-up tips. I know both of these guys are incredibly busy, so thank you to them both.

The day this issue goes live I will be enroute to China for a one off performance, whose guests will include The Royal Family of Monaco. The idea of editing a magic magazine, and performing full time is something I only dreamed about as a kid. It just shows that if you work hard enough, dreams can come true. (Cue music)

*Paul Romhany*



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# MAKING NEWS

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



## MAGIC DIRECTORY UP AND RUNNING

Vincent Marra from The Magic Network sent us this note recently.

*"I wanted to let you know I have big news that I want to share with the magic community. I am launching a Magicians Directory as a branch of The Magic Network.*

*Feature-wise, it is the best magicians directory on the web. Each listing includes a video, a map, 4 photos, and links to the magician's website and social networks. My mission is to make it the best directory for finding and contacting magicians on the web!"*

[www.themagicnetwork.com](http://www.themagicnetwork.com)

## THE CEDRIC TAYLOR EXPERIENCE

If you are looking to watch something a little different then be sure to catch Cedric Taylor who runs a parapsychological/mentalism show every Friday on the GTN Network! Cedric performs his magic in a street type style that is refreshing to watch.

[www.ghosttalestv.com](http://www.ghosttalestv.com)

## TONY BLANCO FIGHTING CANCER

My good friend, and well known magician Tony Blanco is fighting cancer. Tony was based out of Las Vegas for a few years, then moved to Fresno where he worked for Paul Gross at Hocus-Pocus. It would be great



Paul Romhany & Tony Blanco

**“Tony Blanco unwell - let's send him our support.”**

to have everybody's support and let Tony know we are all thinking of him. You can e-mail get well messages to: [blanco93722@gmail.com](mailto:blanco93722@gmail.com)

Tony is one of those performers who can do it all, and do it well. He is a great juggler, mime, and magician.

His "Medicine Show" comes complete with the most amazing traveling bike I've ever seen. This just shows his dedication to our art. You may recognise Tony from



the famous book cover on Clowning. Please take a minute out of your schedule to send a message to Tony.

## DAVID COPPERFIELD HAS SCHEDULED AN AMA

This stands for "Ask Me Anything." It is a very popular forum for celebrities who

answer questions from reddit users.

Copperfield will start June 4th according to the AMA page schedule of events on the right side of the page.

Check it out here: <http://www.reddit.com/>

## PAUL KIEVE, THE REAL DUMBLEDORE

A great article about illusionist Paul Kieve's in creativity-online. Paul is the magician behind effects for 'Ghost,' 'Lord of the Rings,' and 'Harry Potter' stage shows.

Kieve, 44, is a bonafide illusionist, fresh off the success of his work on the Broadway resurrection of "Ghost," the 1990 Patrick Swayze film that was turned into a musical by Bruce Joel Lubin.

He was also responsible for making Frodo and Bilbo disappear on stage in the "Lord of the Rings" musical. While it's apparent why a magician's sleight of hand might be particularly useful for live performances, Kieve's tricks have played a crucial role on screen, where you'd expect the effects and postproduction to have it all covered. Kieve worked on levitation tricks for Martin Scorsese's "Hugo," and created the self-folding Marauder's Map in "Harry Potter and the Prisoner of

## NEW COMEDY CLUB AT TROPICANA

Murray SawChuck (limited engagement) at the Laugh Factory's new comedy club at The Tropicana Hotel. Murray will perform a first-of-its-kind magic challenge in the round for audiences 7 nights a week at 7pm. The resident show is entitled, "Laugh Factory Presents: Murray 'Celebrity Magician.'"



Murray at the Laugh Factory

# JACK KODELL



Born, John Edward Koudelka at Mankato, Minnesota **Nov 4th 1927-May 17th 2012.** With his fathers influence to do something different, by the age of nine, he had learned to fly a Taylor Cub Airplane. At thirteen he became the Soap Box Derby Champion. (The biggest deal for a young boy, back in 1930-40's). At thirteen he has his first professional gig and from that point on toured the world.

During his tours, he played almost every major variety venue in the world, including the London Palladium, and the Hippodrome.

Jack Kodell caused a global sensation, because he was the first person ever to perform a full act that exclusively used birds, specifically Parakeets. Not only that, but these intelligent little creatures would perform the effects because they wanted to.

The Parakeet act, unlike dove acts, included small scale versions of large stage Illusions. They would make their initial appearance perched on Jack's fingers, looking to the entire world like living, breathing, fluttering billiard balls.

The birds then performed substitutions, vanishes, color changes, etc. using clear plastic apparatus.

## “The passing of a legend in our craft.”

The handling of the birds has been published by Jack Kodell in Frances Marshal's book "*Parakeet Magic.*" At the age of 20, Jack became the first magician ever to work in what is now the magic capital of the world, Las Vegas. Jack retired from magic at age 33, however he continued his love for magic and shared his passion with younger magicians and later in life was a fixture at Wizardz Magic Theater.

There are 3 editions of an excellent book on the life and times of Jack Kodell that every magician should own.

For further details or to Pre order this wonderful work contact Jeff Pierce - <http://jeffpiercemagic.com/store/>



The MAGIC birthday cake..



Adam Steinfeld and his assistants.

Azkaban.”

To read the full article visit:

<http://creativity-online.com/news/paul-kieve-the-real-dumbledore/234609>

### **ABRACADABRA: Super MAGIC LIVE!® Birthday cake, after show**

We received a great photo from Adam Steinfeld showing his birthday cake.

Says Adam, “...NOW THAT'S A SURPRISE!, After the show tonight, my lovely dancers & crew, (Francis, Perlita, Walid & D.J. Ninja) brought in an original home-made MAGIC cake, they baked themselves, with a little help from Francis' mom. Best gift ever!, hilarious, check out the mini-Barb-MagicBabe being sliced-in-half, at the top. THANK YOU! IT'S PERFECT GIFT, better than Cakeboss!”

SEE MAGIC LIVE!...Comedy show, starring Adam Steinfeld, and his lovely Sirens of Magic, 9pm nightly, at the WESTIN Resort, Aruba, theater-of-illusion showroom, the 200 seat intimate theater is located just off, Westin lobby, tickets at the door. MORE INFO: [www.MagicLive.com](http://www.MagicLive.com)





## **JC SUM**

JC Sum is one of the top professional illusionists in Asia and is a world-class designer of original illusions and mega illusions. The Straits Times acknowledges him as "Singapore's Most Famous Magician" and he was recognized as "one of the most celebrated magicians in Asia" by AsiaOne.

J C is also one of the most prolific modern illusion designers in the world having authored five original books on illusion designs and presentations as well as produced the best-selling "Behind the Illusions" DVD.

**[www.illusionbooks.com](http://www.illusionbooks.com)**

# SIX THINKING HATS FOR THE MAGICIAN

## JCSUM

This is a series of articles written for the commercial magician - that is magicians who charge a professional fee for their shows & services.

Creativity guru, Edward De Bono uses his "six thinking hats" approach as the basis of his creativity techniques. This is not a direct application of De Bono's work to magicians but I adopt a similar approach when choosing illusions and material for our shows.

If you are a magician, entertainer, storyteller or move maker, you might find the thoughts insightful and useful.

"Revollusion" is one of my original illusions that features a large industrial fan as the central prop and is one of the most popular illusions featured in my book "Urban Illusions". You can watch the illusion online here:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qe4uQxrkG\\_w](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qe4uQxrkG_w)

I had worked on an illusion with a giant industrial fan for quite a few years, starting in 2003. After years of conceptual designing, I finally built the illusion that took about 4 months to put together. It was one of the most complex builds because of the combination of mechanical and electrical engineering coupled with the actual illusion design. Weight, stability, safety and power were all things we had to factor in while building the illusion.

When Ning and I presented the illusion in our permanent illusion show "Ultimate Magic" that ran for 13 months, the illusion sparked a fairly intense debate on a local magic forum. The question some magicians and magic enthusiasts seemed to think is very important and need to know the answer to is: "Is "Revollusion" an appearance or a penetration?" They seemed to be against the possible notion that it is a penetration illusion because it did not look like traditional fan illusions they have seen on YouTube.

I wrote a response in the thread, not as a rebuttal or clarification to anyone. I respect and believe everyone is entitled to his or her opinion. That is the point of a forum. But, unfortunately some

points of view expressed by several were not entirely sound because they were not founded on good logic.

I wrote the post because I thought there would a small handful of people reading it who are looking for help in producing a show, choosing magic for their act or simply improving their craft. Sharing my thought process may help offer different points of views that these aspiring magicians did not consider. This ultimately may help them achieve their personal goals in magic.

So, "Is "Revollusion" an appearance or a penetration?"

While I personally do not understand why this is a subject of debate, the answer is dependent on which "me" you ask. Each "me" will give you a different answer, based on that "me's" different thought processes and needs. Some answers are identical but are arrived at in a completely different path. In Edward De Bono's system, the purpose of applying the six thinking hats in creativity is to look at problems with different "hats" on to think from different perspectives to brainstorm ideas from all angles. This is the similarity of my approach here but I use different kinds of "hats".

So, here are my thought processes when applied to the Revollusion illusion.

### The Artist

As an artist, the goal is to create a piece of work that is open to interpretation by the viewer. Everyone experiences a piece of art differently. Magic is difficult to be interpreted in different ways, as it is hard to create magic that is vague yet clear in effect. After all, as Dai Vernon remarked: "confusion is not magic".

So, "Revollusion" is a fantastic illusion from this point of view because it apparently inspires different interpretation, conflicting thoughts and healthy debate. Wow! A goal for many artists.



Is “Revollusion” an appearance or a penetration? It is up to the spectators to decide for themselves. And no one can or should interpret that definition for them or influence them otherwise. But, in reality, based on experience and feedback, no lay audience even questions the differentiation of the effects. In addition, all artists know they cannot please everyone.

### **The Magician**

The magician’s goal is to create wonder and the art of astonishment (Paul Harris’ profound singular philosophy). Magical idealists perceive themselves as merchants of wonder (a term coined by the Princess of Monaco) and their only goal is to evoke that feeling of impossibility, amazement, and wonder in their audiences. To put simply, to make them go “wow”.

When I see dozens of eyes (some days hundreds) open wide and several mouths open 6 days a week when I rip away the cloth to reveal myself at the climax of “Revollusion”, I know I have achieved that magic goal.

Is “Revollusion” an appearance or a penetration? It is not important, the question the magician asks is “Is it good magic?” which in the strictest fundamental sense means: does the illusion create an experience of wonder in the audience?

The litmus test to that question has got to be the reactions from the audience you are performing for; in my case, a lay paying audience. If the experience of wonder is not created, the reactions from the audience will be muted (polite applause at best). You will also catch audience members exchanging glances with

each other with raised eyebrows of uncertainty. When you are greeted with a spontaneous ovation consistently, you know that the magic is good. And the job of the magician is done.

Can the magic be strengthened, improved etc? Of course, nothing is perfect. If it is perfect, it is not magic, it is a miracle. But the measurement of the strength of the illusion bears no context in this intellectual exchange.

### **The Illusion Designer**

As a designer, my goal is to design original illusions that will work in real world conditions. I essentially design for my own shows although many of my illusions are described in my books for other illusionists to build and perform in their shows. The designer’s goal is to try to create something new and unique. This, in turn, differentiates the illusions that we present in our show, which in turn helps us stand out in the industry.

The truth is, many illusionists perform the same illusions world-wide with the exact same props and presentations, many times pirated. Currently, I see John Taylor’s “Suspended Animation”, Mark Kalin/ Hans Klok “Fire Spiker” (in fact, most of Klok’s repertoire), Jim Steinmeyer’s “Origami” and Dan Summer’s “Compressed” being performed in practically every illusion show. So, personally, as far as possible I try to avoid all these common illusions, especially at this stage of Ning & my careers.

There are very few fan illusions being performed. The most popular is “Windshear” created by Jim Steinmeyer/ Andre Koke and built by Magic Ventures. I think it is a sound illusion that can

be very dramatic and exciting if presented well, but too many performers worldwide currently perform it, again many pirated.

Other proprietary fan illusions being performed include Andre Kole's "Jet Turbine" that Brett Daniels, Jan Rouven and Erix Logan perform, Steve Wyrick's "Walking through a 747 Engine" (designed by Steinmeyer) and "Copperfield's "The Fan" (designed by the in-house Copperfield team). Franz Harary has a brilliant rotating fan that he appears from. Andrew Mayne also described a fan illusion in his "Solo X" book.

So the design goal was to create a fan illusion, without reinventing the wheel. So, I created "Revollusion" an illusion using a giant industrial fan but with a departure in the traditional effect/ presentation. It is designed as a penetration/ appearance; specifically described as the surprise appearance from a fan.

To find out what our audiences thought of "Revollusion", we conducted a survey several times with this specific question to the audience members. "If you were to describe the act with the giant fan to a friend, how would you describe it?" All the answers were along these lines "J C appeared from the fan", "J C came out from the fan", and "The fan was inspected and turned on Suddenly, J C appeared out from no where from the fan". This gave us quite an affirmative answer on what the general lay audience perceived the effect as.

For the record, only magicians or educated magic audiences have questioned whether the effect is a penetration or an appearance. And this is simply because this group of people has a preconceived notion that illusions with fans must be a walk-through, because all other illusionists who present such illusions do a walk-through. But, it is because ALL other illusionists do that, did I purposely design a fan illusion that did not have a traditional walk-through that is almost expected.

As the designer of an illusion for the target audience being a lay commercial crowd, my goal was achieved after learning the perceived effect from laymen. Of course, if my intention were to design the illusion for magicians at a magic convention, I would have failed miserably, as evidenced by feedback from magicians here.

Is "Revollusion" an appearance or a penetration? It is both.

### **The Show Producer**

The job of the show producer is to weave all the different illusions and acts together, design the music, create the show order and basically create THE show as an entire full experience for the audience. All elements of the show must be viewed in the "big picture" as they must fit together to create a good show.

"Revollusion" is great for the show in the context that it fills the stage, looks impressive, is very dramatic and visually spectacular. It has audience interaction (as how we perform in the live show, TV was choreographed just for TV), visual elements, and a strong magical effect. It is also very different from the other acts performed in the show and as a bonus is different from any other fan illusion that other magicians might be performing.

Is "Revollusion" an appearance or a penetration? It is not important. What is important is that it fulfills its function in the show as a big highlight that gets strong reactions from the target audience and is talked about after the show.

### **The Business Manager**

Show Business is two words. A professional illusionist who wants to earn a living doing magic has to be continually booked and paid to do shows. In other words, he has to pay attention to the business, as much as the show. While there are many reasons why some illusionists are more successful than others, two determinants are the scale of the show and the originality of the illusions.

"Revollusion" is not the biggest illusion around but is not considered small by any means. Its sheer size makes it impressive and a marketable highlight of the show. Once again, for bookers who have seen traditional fan illusions, this stands out as different. Although honestly, more than a handful of clients see all fan illusions as the same. Just as they see any illusion where a girl goes into a box as all the same. But I digress.

The fact is, an illusion like "Revollusion" gets bookings and draws people to the show.

Is "Revollusion" an appearance or a penetration? It is not important, as long as it brings in the dollar!

### **The Storyteller**

I view myself as a storyteller and try to have all my illusions/ acts tell a story. Some may not be as apparent as others but all my routines tell a story. There is always a beginning, middle and end. Ning had the good fortune of attending Oscar-winning screenwriter Syd Field's master class last week. He stressed the exact same thing when writing a screenplay. He also stressed the importance of creating a dramatic premise. Many movies have same dramatic premises but are dressed differently, with different characters.

To give no-brainer clear cut examples:

Take a guy, put him in a building with bad guys & hostages and have him save the day "Die Hard" (Bruce Willis).

Take a guy, put him in a ship with bad guys & hostages and have him save the day "Under Siege" (Steven Seagal).

Take a guy, put him in an airport with bad guys & hostages and have him save the day "Die Hard 2" (Bruce Willis).

Take a guy, put him in a sports stadium with bad guys & hostages and have him save the day "Sudden Death" (Jean Claude Van Damme).

Same dramatic premises, different characters (referring to both the human characters and locations)

So consider this: A magician shows a box (opening = introduction of characters). He then shows it empty and asks a spectator to examine it (middle = occurrences and incidents). He then makes

a girl appear from the box (End = resolution and conclusion). Illusion? The Tip Over Trunk. Does that sound like a fundamentally sound illusion act? No doubt, most will say "yes".

Now, take the above dramatic premise and substitute the box for a giant industrial fan. A magician shows a giant fan (opening = introduction of characters). He then shows it all around and asks a spectator to examine it. (middle = occurrences and incidents). He then makes a girl appear from the fan (End = resolution and conclusion). Illusion? Revollusion. Does that sound like a fundamentally sound illusion act. If you agreed to the above, your answer will have to be "yes".

Some magicians (and only magicians) ask a very strange question, why does it have to be a fan? Why not a wall of fire or a brick wall or a sheet of cloth? Because, as a storyteller, I chose to use a fan. It is, after all, my story. Another storyteller may choose to use a brick wall. Questioning the reason of the use of a fan is like questioning why Die Hard was in a office building. Why not a condo? A school? An army camp?

Is "Revollusion" an appearance or a penetration? It is whatever the audience perceived it to be to enjoy the story. If I engaged them with the dramatic premise and execution of the story so that they were entertained, that is all that matters. The fan and effect are just vehicles to tell an interesting and memorable story.

If you have bothered to read this far, you would have gained some insight into how I think about magic and my show. You will also probably realize that in the case of "Revollusion", in my opinion it is not really important what the effect is defined as. Although, surveys showed what the lay audience thinks the effect is. And this serves as a non-absolute but general guide.

When I choose to put an illusion/ act in the show, whether it is an original design, marketed effect or licensed illusion from another creator, I wear all the above hats to achieve multiple goals with a singular act. In the case of "Revollusion", its existence in the show fulfils the objectives of all the different "mes".

This is NOT the right way or ONLY way to approach illusion/ act selection. It is MY singular approach that I personally feel is as comprehensive and sophisticated as I can make it within my abilities and intellectual faculties. And, it has served me well and allows me to avoid being a starving professional illusionist.

Of course, I can't claim all the credit. The process is refined with feedback obtained from people I trust. By that, I mean, I only seek people who understand my goals, context of performance and are in a position to give constructive criticism. This is in no way suggesting that the people I do not ask for feedback from are inferior in any way. It simply means that that is not their area of expertise and experience.

For e.g., If I'm looking to build a plane, I will look for an aeronautical engineer; a baggage handler will not be of use, even though they are both in the aviation industry. Likewise, if I need flight information, I will seek a customer service officer from that airline; the most qualified or experienced engineer will do little to help. It is not expected or even reasonable to expect that someone not qualified in a particular field be able to give answers that they are not trained to answer.

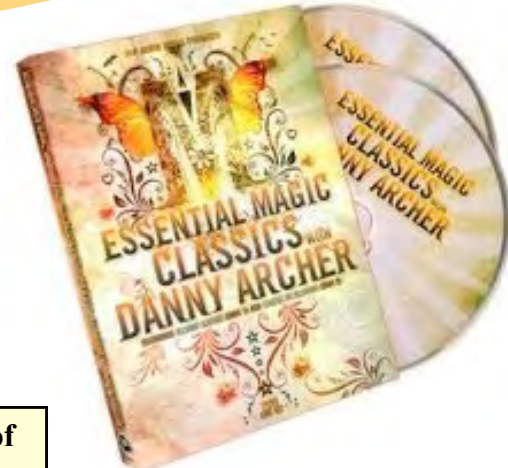
I actually have more "mes" but I think this is enough for now.



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I am so pleased with the material presented and the overall quality of this 2 DVD set and I think you will be as well. If you are interested in taking advantage of this special offer, you can send payment through PayPal ([danny@dannyarcher.com](mailto:danny@dannyarcher.com)) or [click here](#) or call 303-321-6267 for credit card orders.

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Pick a Coin... Any Coin...  
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Eight the Hard Way  
There it is Again

#### DISC 2

Illegitimate Sponge Bunnies  
Anniversary Waltz My Way  
PurseFly  
Ballz  
Dye and Dye Again  
MemDeck Trifecta  
(inc. The Archer Shuffle)

Disc 1 Running Time 1hr 5min  
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**STEVE  
VALENTINE**



# STEVE VALENTINE

## BY CHIPPER LOWELL

First thing you notice about Valentine is that he's tall. Taller than most. Next is his wide smile, which comes off quite charming. But then he opens his mouth and you find yourself quite willing to listen to anything he has to say. It's his Scottish accent, plain and simple. But this actor/magician also happens to know exactly who he is on stage, and he has the uncanny ability to be handsome, lanky, goofy, serious, and even a slight touch of mocking now and then, all within a single performance.

One calls to mind the often repeated quip of Robert Houdin's which states, "A magician is an actor playing the part of a magician." Steve is exactly that. His magic routines are slightly veiled acting exercises of being "in the moment" and truly finding the unexpected connections between the material, himself, and his audiences.

These days he is known for being a bit of a "double-threat." He is both an accomplished magician with fantastic close-up dexterity and wit, and a terrific character actor with over two decades of TV and film work under his belt. He has guest-starred in literally dozens of television shows, including "House", "Monk", "Chuck", "Will & Grace", "Boston Legal", and "Just Shoot Me", and appeared

in a variety of movies. He also starred in the long running series, "Crossing Jordan", which ran for 6 seasons. Valentine has even hosted a few series and specials along the way. A new audience of young fans has recently been introduced to him as the star of "I'm In The Band" on the Disney Channel, in addition to a parade of guest-starring roles in TV movies for Disney.

On the magic side, he is a regular performer at the Magic Castle when his busy acting schedule doesn't get in the way, and was twice honored with "Close-Up Magician Of The Year." His newest project is a card routine he created that is currently hitting the magic scene called "THREE". This is not simply a one-move trick and you're done, but a well thought out, complete card routine that is geared to the working professional -- be it walk-around, strolling, or tradeshow environments. Good, solid practical magic.

He and his wife, Anna, are currently enjoying the birth of their first child, and he's up to his ears with a handful of television projects, a few of which, seem to blend his two passions together perfectly. One, in particular, explores the unique friendship between Harry Houdini and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Theirs was



a fascinating relationship full of conflict and stubbornly, divided opinions. The Skeptic and the Believer, working together in this retelling to solve crimes. On second thought, maybe we should label Valentine a “quadruple-threat” as he adds the monikers of ‘producer’ and ‘writer’ to his list of ever growing accomplishments.

CHIPPER: Thanks for taking the time to chat a bit, Steve. You must be going nuts these days.

STEVE: It’s been a little crazy. We’ve got three pitches this week, and one is for a movie and I’m used to pitching mostly television projects, so the process for pitching a film is slightly different. The movie has to be encapsulated in full during the meeting.

CHIPPER: Those pitch meetings can be pretty stressful I imagine. I’m trying to remember when we first met. It’s been such a long time now.

STEVE: I believe we first met at Knott’s Berry Farm (theme park in California, USA) working private and corporate events together.

CHIPPER: Wow! That’s right! You were doing close-up strolling at the time.

STEVE: Yes, there was a large picnic area for corporate events, and we performed outside in the boiling sun...in a tuxedo.

CHIPPER: (laughs) Correct! I was doing magic and juggling back then and we worked several of those gigs together when we were in our early 20’s.

STEVE: And then we worked inside the theme park as well, and that was strange because we were trying to entertain people who really just wanted to go on the rides.

CHIPPER: You have a much better memory of that time than I did.

STEVE: It just came all flooding back right now. (laughs)

CHIPPER: Well, let’s start at the very beginning for you. You’re well known as both an actor and a magician these days, so there’s the proverbial question of which came first? -- The chicken, or the egg?

STEVE: Well, it was all very much everything at the same time actually. I guess the very first trick I ever learned was the vanishing knot. I was about 7 or 8 and this kid at high school was performing this trick and I bugged him endlessly to the point that he was either going to beat me up or show me how it worked. And he showed me.

And then my uncle had a magic book and he could do the back palm. He would do this thing saying, “I’m going to put the card over here,” and he’d secretly back palm it. And then he’d pull it out from somewhere else in the room. And he would do this for years! And it bugged me. Really bugged me. He was doing this since I was 5 years old, and I’d tell him he had two, duplicate Ace of Clubs. He’d have me choose another card and then do the trick again. Then finally one day he relented and showed me the back palm. I was blown away.

He had *The Royal Road To Card Magic* book. And that’s when I started really getting into it, but at the same time, my

buddy at school, around 7 years old, was going to dance class. So I joined him and got hooked on the dancing and that led to being part of a theatrical company. And I soon realized that if I incorporate magic as well, I would get an additional 10 minutes in the shows we put on.

CHIPPER: And how old were you?

STEVE: This is still all around age 7. I’ve got pictures of me really young, dressed as a magician, and others that have me dressed in some kind of cat suit for musicals.

CHIPPER: Pre-dating Andrew Lloyd Webber musicals!

STEVE: (laughs) Yes! Then when I was 15 or 16, I started doing this “Mime & Fire” magic act with a floating skull. Ended up opening for some rock stars and it was fun,



A young Steve with dancing cane

AT THE MAGIC  
CASTLE WITH  
MARTIN NASH  
STANDING IN  
FRONT OF THEIR  
CARICATURES.



“Then I’d get burnt out doing (magic), and would get a job being a deejay in Yugoslavia, before the war.”



but there were many times when I almost set fire to the stage, because I was using flash-paper that didn’t burn that quickly, and it would land on some carpet and start a flame. Had a table that produced these 8 spring-loaded fire torches. Spectacular! Except you can’t blow the damn thing out! Because every time you blew one out, the heat from the others would re-light it! Always had to hand it to someone and as the curtain closed you could hear the guy backstage blowing on them like crazy. (laughs)

CHIPPER: That’s hilarious!

STEVE: Pretty cheesy, definitely! So, the timeline on both a magic and acting career have been sort of parallel for the first part of my life growing up. In time, I would do a cruise ship until I got burned out with

that, and then I’d go do a play. Then I’d get burnt out doing that, and would get a job being a deejay in Yugoslavia, before the war.

CHIPPER: What made you go to Yugoslavia of all places and be a deejay?

STEVE: I wanted to get out of town. I had just done this holiday hotel called Butlins in Scarborough, which is sort of equivalent to the Catskills in upper New York. Sort of a vacation place. It was exhausting. You didn’t make a lot of money, and we did shows, danced with the old ladies there, and even called Bingo games.

And I saw this ad in the newspaper that said, “Run your own nightclub!” in a resort. I was 18 at the time. I met with the guy who placed the ad, and it was all very shady. He said, “Yeah, if you can do two 20 minute spots a night, and you can DJ...,” which, back then, was basically saying on the mic, “And now, Whitney Houston!”, and you’d simply drop the needle onto the record and that was it. He said that he’d pay a certain amount per week, which wasn’t much but still great for someone my age, and I said okay. I wound up spending two years over there.

CHIPPER: Two years?

STEVE: Two years. And I soon had like 10 different acts. I was doing close-up. Stage work. I was doing stupid ‘competition’ type stuff up on stage, like “Sexiest Legs Contest” – You know, stuff like that. What made it interesting is that it was



From the mime & fire act

another unique opportunity to learn your craft, polish it, and more. A place where you got to make mistakes, and learned from them.

CHIPPER: Yes. Definitely. It’s a valuable opportunity, because many people today talk about how there’s really no place out there where you can be ‘bad’ anymore, as you’re learning the ropes.

STEVE: Yes, and this place was great because, well, who goes to Yugoslavia? (laughs) It was kind of a big seaside resort, and I was the only foreigner who lived in this village. There were two hotels – That’s it. One that was new and modern, and then there was the older hotel where I was working at. And that’s why they wanted the nightclub, in order to compete with the newer hotel. And it was really designed for British speaking tourists. That was my audience. So it was very successful, but then I also got into all kinds of trouble within the village because I was only 18 and I was running





*Performing for Michael Jackson*

the bar! That's a free bar tab for two years! You can only imagine! It was crazy.

I would try out different material on stage – I even tried closing my show with the "Rice Jar" – You know where you stab a knife into a jar full of rice, and you're able to lift it up into the air without the jar falling? I found a great piece of music from the film, "Romancing The Stone" and it just killed! People would start applauding, and I'm like, really? This is impressive to you people? It turned out to be a great closer. (laughs)

CHIPPER: That's great! I'm wondering – How much of the great reaction would you contribute to the music you used? For instance, Kevin James' "Snowstorm" is a beautiful routine, but one also has to give credit to Danny Elfman's musical score from "Edward Scissorhands"...

STEVE: Right. Because of the emotional quality that music carries with it. Plus, without that music you would have heard the motor humming away. "Whrrrrrrrrrrrrrr..."

CHIPPER: (laughs) True, true! After two years there, why did you leave?

STEVE: Well it wasn't by choice. I had to leave because the war broke out. If that hadn't happened, I would probably still be there today. But the war broke out, and all my Croatian and Serbian friends started fighting, and it was recommended that I leave before the situation escalated. So, I returned to England and started doing shows for the "working mens clubs" which were brutal.

CHIPPER: Wow, yes. I've heard about them, but we don't really have similar things here in the states.

STEVE: Yeah, it's mainly blue collar - corporate factories. These big places that have bars for their workers, where beer is super cheap and entertainment is going on every night. In some ways they sort of become 'aficionados' of variety acts. Which is very strange, and they don't really give a sh\*t about you. And, if you suck within the first 30 seconds, they're vicious. It was a great place to really hone and build up your thick skin, really.

I remember once I was onstage in the middle of the act and this guy walks right up and grabs the microphone, and says, "Does anybody here have a white Cortina?" And I say, "uh yeah, it's mine actually." "Well,



*From the TV show "Don't Shoot Me"*

you're parked in the Chairman's spot." And I replied, "Well, I'm in the middle of my act." The guy yells back, "No, you gotta move it now!" So I turn to the audience and say, "What do YOU guys think I should do?"; thinking they'll side with me. And they all shout, "Move your car!" I put the mic down, moved my car, and then came back and continued the show where I had left off. Amazing.

CHIPPER: When you're performing for those kinds of places, did you find yourself changing your personality a bit in order to



*On the set of Monk*



fit in with that type of crowd?

STEVE: Actually at that point I had a very thick, east London accent which helped me get away with being just a lad from their view point. But I was certainly much harsher during my shows than I normally would be. Your lines and patter had to be faster, more vicious, and ready to destroy.

Which was quite a shock when I came to the states and performed. I'd be using British heckler lines on American audiences and everybody got so offended! (laughs) And I'd be like, "But he yelled at me first!" but they didn't care. You had to have more control over your remarks and not lash out. But yeah, you do – You change your personality somewhat to suit where you are.

CHIPPER: With all the wide variety of gigs you've done, including Yugoslavia and clubs like these, do you ever get to a point where you feel you've 'seen it all' and you can handle anything that gets thrown at you?

STEVE: No, I don't think so. I'm still surprised. I just did the Close-Up Room at the Magic Castle for the first time in years. I had a room full of drunk Russians which is something I've never experienced before. And they were loud and they were yelling. But, they were having a good time. So I encouraged it, laughed with them, we went off on tangents separate from the routines. You do that yourself, Chipper. I've seen you take a loud audience, and yet you get them on your side, and you all wind up having fun together. Everyone still has a great time.

CHIPPER: I think there's a misperception among some performers, that if an audience is being drunk or boisterous, that it's a bad thing or a negative. In fact 90% of the time, it's actually a positive. As you said, they're still having a good time.

STEVE: Right. And if you can handle that, and appreciate that, and make them feel like they're not 'bad', that's really the way to go.

CHIPPER: You're absolutely right. So you worked cruise ships, and that eventually brought you over to the U.S.?

STEVE: Yeah and then I was in Los Angeles and in Vegas. The main reason I came to L.A. was I wanted to pursue the acting. I moved to an apartment in L.A. and asked the landlord if they had ever heard of the Magic Castle, and they thought I was nuts because it was literally right across the street. They pointed right at it, "That's it! Right there!" (laughs)

So I was able to go up there and find out about the Castle and the whole private party circuit, which is the thing that kept me in L.A. for years while I was also going on acting auditions. The party circuit there was really affluent and well paying back in the 90's.

CHIPPER: I remember a story of yours that a producer once saw you performing magic, so they didn't take you seriously when it came to getting an acting job. Is that true?

STEVE: Yeah, it's a weird thing. Thankfully it's more accepted now to be doing more than one skill, but I would go for auditions with producers who I had previously done their kid's Bar mitzvah and



Scene from "I'm In The Band."



From *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity!*



From *Sci-Fi's "Estate of Panic"*

they had THAT in their head. The big one was when Ray Stark, an amazing producer who did things like "Night Of The Iguana" and other great films, saw me perform at the Magic Castle one night. He said, "I want to have a conversation with you. Here's my card – Call me."

So I called him. He says to come to dinner because he has a movie he wants to talk to me about. Fantastic! So I go to his house for dinner and after we ate he handed me a script about Houdini's life. He was talking to Tom Cruise to play Houdini. I look through the script and say, "I'll play anything you want. Would love to do it." And he says, "No, I want you to be the magic consultant." I reply, "Yeah, that's great. I'll even do that for free, but I'd love to play a part in the film." And he replied, "But you're a magician! I saw you at the Castle, kid. Stick to what you're good at."

CHIPPER: Wow!

STEVE: And that's when I stuck all of my magic into boxes up in the attic and was done with it. I equate it with someone who says they're an "actor-mime" or "actor-librarian". They can't take you seriously. You really can't hyphenate – at least not early in your career. Now it's different and I can do both.

CHIPPER: Because you're now fully established in both careers. That makes sense. Wanted to ask you about your accent and coming to the states from another country. I think it's great because it immediately sets you apart from everyone else. How has that helped or hurt you in your acting and magic careers?

STEVE: As a magician it was great because in Los Angeles it got to the point that people would simply say "Get me the tall English guy." (laughs) For acting, it was interesting. Tim Curry once said to me, "Oh you're British – You'll have a great career playing Maitre d's and villains." And I understood what he meant, because for me, every role I went up for was either assholes or rock stars. What I liked about going up for a role in "Crossing Jordan" (TV series), which ran for six seasons, was that Tim Kring (creator) liked that the character was British, but didn't want to make it all about his 'Britishness'.

CHIPPER: In other words, it was a character that really could have had any background or ethnicity.

STEVE: Yes. Also in Boston where the show was set, you've got a big Irish and British constituency. So that to me I thought was rather groundbreaking - in that you have a character who just happens to be from another country and it wasn't the main

focus. I could use the Britishness to be quirky, but...

CHIPPER: ...We never saw you working in the lab wearing a monocle and a bowler hat, and carrying an umbrella.

STEVE: No! (laughs)

CHIPPER: Now, back in the day you had long straight hair, so you really had a unique look going for you that, again, set you apart from everyone else.

STEVE: I had that same bloody haircut for almost 30 years.

CHIPPER: But I thought it really worked for you.

STEVE: Yeah, it did. Every time I got a part I wanted to cut my hair, and producers would say, "No! We like it the way it is!" So that hairstyle became synonymous with me, and my image. What was really interesting was when I cut it all off after "Crossing Jordan" ended. It was something I needed to do – to shake it up a bit. But the next show I get is "I'm In The Band" for Disney, and I'm now I'm playing a rock star with long hair, and I have to wear a wig! I just can't escape it. (laughs)

CHIPPER: By the way, my son and I have caught the series many times. There is a great amount of physical and slapstick humor mixed into the show.

STEVE: Thanks. I enjoyed that it was very different from "Crossing Jordan." The other reason I did that show is because the old show had an older demographic and I wanted to get a younger audience. So

for the last four years I've done "The Band" show along with four movies for Disney, including the newest TV movie called "Teen Beach Musical".

CHIPPER: I understand you're the villain in this one. An obvious villain?

STEVE: (laughs) This one is so completely the obvious "bad guy." He's a real estate developer with a pencil-thin mustache who wants to take over the beach. This is a nod to the 60's beach movies. He wants to get the meddling kids off the beach and turn it into a big resort. So he's in a top hat, tails, mustache, extremely British and over the top. And that was amazing fun. I even had a song and dance number in the film, called "Tomorrow, The World!" which was brilliant to shoot.

CHIPPER: That's sweet!

STEVE: And what was nice was getting in touch with the younger fans, and it turns out there's also teens who also watch the Disney Channel, and college students, and even grown adults who will stop you in the street to tell you how much they love the shows and movies. And I'll say, "Oh, you got kids?" And they say, "No..." (laughs) So, it ended up being a much wider demography for me than I thought it would be.

CHIPPER: You have done so many guest-starring roles and some of them involved you playing the part of a magician. How do you feel about the perception of magic and magicians in general on television?

STEVE: There was a point when I refused to do the magic, and I also refused to even play the part of a magician. I did do a part on "Don't Shoot Me." (tv sitcom) as a magician because he was purposely such an overboard character that it was really fun to do. And then when "Crossing Jordan" was over, I was more open to the magic stuff. My agent calls me and said, "Look, don't bite my head off, but there's this role on "House" (drama), and I thought it would probably be some horrible cliché, but it wasn't. It was so well written and such an interesting story with the theme being "Do you really want to know how magic works?" What's behind a mystery, and are you better off not knowing? I loved that idea.

I also worked on "Monk" (comedy/mystery) which was completely opposite in style and character. This was the evil or bad magician, but with a twist because he was smuggling drugs inside the secret compartments of his illusions. I thought it was quite clever, too. There has to be some sense of reality to base a magic themed script on. For instance, on "House" we did the "Card on Window" where the card appears behind the glass while the magician is in bed, sick. But still you can kind of feel that he might have set it up with a nurse, in order to fool others. You try not to fall into the "too perfect" theory.

CHIPPER: Absolutely. There has to be some trail of logic, so it doesn't seem like an "easy fix" to a script problem. The idiotic "magician waves his wand" and problem solved.

"Tim Curry once said to me, "Oh you're British – You'll have a great career playing Maitre d's and villains."





"Uncharted 2" video game

STEVE: And magicians are often portrayed as being arrogant, cocky, cheesy... Like something from the 70's. Television executives in general still have that view, and as soon as you pitch them "magic", their eyes roll. Last time I pitched a show, I gave them a history of magic on television... From Mark Wilson's landmark shows with huge ratings, Paul Daniels in England, Doug Henning, Copperfield being around for 20 some odd years and always got massive ratings. And even Criss Angel, no matter what you think of him, was incredibly successful. David Blaine, too.

STEVE: So I'd be pitching to the TV execs, and giving them this history and I'd say "Before you roll your eyes on 'magic show'... (laughs) But it's always a very hard thing to sell when it comes to magic. We also live in a world where audiences are far more sophisticated. Everyone is very aware of how things get made. It used to be a mystery and now that's gone. We all know who the costume designer is, or how a special effect was achieved.

CHIPPER: My son, at around 6 or 7 would watch a sci-fi or fantasy movie, and he would turn to me and proudly say, "Dad, that was cool CGI!" (Laughs)

STEVE: Right! It makes me sad at the same time because you really want them to look at a movie and think, wow, that monster was terrifying! So, to be scary you have to be more 'Hitchcock' and add more suspense and tension.

CHIPPER: With regards to your magic career, I've heard some really nice things about your new card routine you recently put out on the market.

STEVE: It's an interesting thing. I've never put out a trick before and my wife was reminding me that I had all this material from over the years so why not put some of it out? So I thought I'd start with a packet trick...and now four years later! (laughs) It was fun to do, but I was surprised by some of the critics on magic forums. Slanderous comments popped out of nowhere, which were crazy and wrong. So I decided to attend the Magic-Con convention this year in San Diego with the sole purpose of showing the routine to others, and it's been getting some great reviews, thankfully.

CHIPPER: And more importantly, it seems like they are reviews

from legitimate people who have seen it and are true professionals in the business.

STEVE: Yes. People like Gregory Wilson and others who loved it. Had a great time doing the trick for Richard Kaufman, editor of Genii. He said, "This is fantastic. One of the best 'Monte' routines I've seen." Made me feel really good, and that there was some justice. It's now out through the major distributors worldwide and I'm very proud of it.

CHIPPER: And that's the key - an effect that professionals will use for its practicality.

STEVE: True. And it resets instantly. In addition to this routine, I'll be bringing out future effects in the coming months that were real 'workers' for me. The next effect will be a book test that can be done in people's homes if you're doing a private party, which gets a huge reaction. You can use a book right off their shelf, too.

CHIPPER: That's always more believable to me - using their own books. With your years of experience performing live, are there any tips you'd care to pass along to other artists and magicians?

STEVE: Well, with regards to close-up, I was always big on looking for effects that could be done within a minute. If they took longer, I dismissed them. You only have so much time to impress the clients, especially in walk-around situations. However, having said that, there comes a time when the event starts to die down, people are leaving, and you're still on the clock. Now they've gathered around you and they know you. That's the time to bring out the longer routines because they want to be there and the performance is now more of a close-up 'show' versus a few effects done while strolling.

CHIPPER: I think that's so important. There will be strolling moments, then table moments, and moments when the group grows while you're in the middle of a routine, etc.

STEVE: Yes. Routines like Ambition Card are perfect for being a series of quick segments and you can stop at any moment if need be. And you have your longer routines for when you know the audience has a longer attention span. Still, it's interesting when you work alongside some amazing 'pros' in magic, and find that

they are doing spongeballs and Invisible Deck in real working situations -- because they work! Those standard effects are still quick, fast, and are 'real workers' after all is said and done for the general lay audience.

CHIPPER: (laughs) The "real workers" work for a reason, don't they?

STEVE: Yes. There are some amazing sequences with cutting edge coin routines and Okito boxes, but you often don't have time for them in most "real world" situations. I have boxes of gaffs at home that I can't really use in most gigs because they're not practical for a variety of reasons.

CHIPPER: How much do you perform these days?

STEVE: I only do the Castle about once a year now, and everything else is what I'm carrying with me when I'm out and about, and 'on set', and in meetings, etc. I really don't work anymore as a fulltime magician. I was getting so burned out doing shows back in the day, but now it's great. I always have 3 or 4 tricks on me and maybe I'll do one of them or all of them, but I have that choice. And I love that!

CHIPPER: When I was doing close-up early in my career, I always remember how hard that initial approach to a group of people was, or walking up cold to a table. And I jokingly likened it to meeting a new girl each time in hopes of a date. You know you'll either be shut down, ignored, or hopefully they're interested. Did you relate?

STEVE: (laughs) Yes! I hate that. I was never good at walking up to girls in bars, and I loathe going from table to table. There's a few ways around it. The idea of a tent card on the table that explains who you are and if you'd like a magician you can request him is great.

I remember walking up to groups of people and before I could even say my opening and self-deprecating line: "Hi! I'm the magician they've hired and I've come to bore you with a few tricks..." some guy would say, "No! We don't want to see it!" Or there were times when one guy would speak for the entire table, while the rest of them actually did want to see some magic. Very awkward. Or it's a couple, and the guy thinks you're hitting on his girl. Or they're in the middle of an argument and you really didn't notice anything wrong until you strolled right up to their table. (laughs)

I found, though, that if I got to that one table that was great, I would say, "Would you guys do me a huge favor? I'm going to stand back and I'm going to fan the cards like this. And when I do, if you'd all give a huge cheer and a round of applause, I will leave. And everyone else will think I'm really good! And I'll get paid at the end of the night!" And everyone laughs and I stand there, posed, and they applaud and go "Whooo!" and now everybody else in the room wants to know who you are, and it helps a lot.

CHIPPER: That is a fantastic way to help jumpstart a

night of strolling. Nowadays, your career has splintered into several directions in that you're not only performing live or in front of the lens, but you're also now producing behind the scenes. What have you been working on lately?

STEVE: Well, we spent the last two years developing a script involving Harry Houdini and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (author of Sherlock Holmes) that was picked up by NBC. If it doesn't go into production as a series, we also have interest in turning it into a movie. It was a way of retelling Houdini's story without the usual things that everybody knows about him already; a way of looking at him, through his relationship with Doyle. If it wasn't real, and you didn't have letters proving it, you wouldn't believe it. And we kicked it up a notch and made it sort of "X-Files" set in the 1920's. We're very excited about it.

CHIPPER: Fascinating. I was always amazed by Doyle's life. Here was a man who wrote about logical deduction through his character, Sherlock Holmes, and yet still believed in mediums, séances, and contacting the dead.

STEVE: True. He once wrote, "Why not believe that there's more?" Isn't it a better life or world that there might be something else? And that was always the conflict with this guy -- That he created this super sleuth in Sherlock Holmes, and yet believed every séance he went to. Even if they caught the guy doing tricks, Doyle would reason it away with, "Well, you can't be able to do the real thing every night because it must be exhausting." (laughs)



Steve as a Villian in latest Disney Movie "Teen Beach Musical"



I mean, you gotta cheat every now and then – only makes sense! (laughs) And of course that makes no sense whatsoever.

Our take is that both Doyle and Houdini essentially wanted the same thing: The truth. In Houdini's case, he wanted to find something that he couldn't easily explain. So we were searching for the common ground between them, and the bickering served to be quite comical. We had a really good time writing it. We didn't want to do a 100% historically accurate piece, so I came up with the idea that Doyle has a doctor's bag that is full of early prototypes of crime-solving items and inventions that people have sent him who want him to put the gadgets into his Sherlock Holmes novels. Sort of like early product placement.

CHIPPER: Love that!

STEVE: We had this idea that Houdini had this belt that has spikes pop out of, and when he's wrapped in ropes, this belt would cut through the bindings. Then later on when they're being chased by the bad guy, Houdini throws the belt across the road and the spikes pop up and explodes the tires of the car pursuing them. And Doyle turns to him and says, "You know, you should sell that to police departments!" (laughs)

We also have a single camera comedy in the works that looks at a magician on the downside...If David Copperfield and Charlie Sheen had a baby, it would be this guy. Wanted to explode the magic scene and show in a satirical way that some of them are just as f\*\*ked up as anyone else out there.

CHIPPER: Very funny concept. Looking forward to seeing it along with the Houdini/Doyle series, which is just fascinating. I think it's safe to say that you've come quite a long way from your "Fire & Mime" days! Thank you so much for your time, Steve, and your friendship. Continued success on all your upcoming TV shows in the near future.

STEVE: Thank you, Chipper! It was a pleasure!

Chipper Lowell is a comedy magician and writer, based in the U.S., with a wife, a kid, and a mortgage.

[www.ChipperLowell.com](http://www.ChipperLowell.com)



## Teller Suing Dutch Magician Gerard Dogge

**B**y now you may have heard this over the grapevine, as it were, but I felt it important for you to have news directly from me as quickly as possible.

You may be acquainted with my signature piece, “*Shadows*,” in which I slash the shadow of a rose, and the actual leaves and petals fall where the shadow has been cut. It is the oldest piece in the active Penn & Teller repertoire, in continuous use in all our major runs from Broadway to international touring, to Las Vegas. It is an icon for our show and the piece I hope to be remembered by in magic history.

I created “*Shadows*” in the mid-1970s, copyrighted it in 1983, and since then the magic community has shown me wonderful ethical support in allowing it to remain virtually untouched by copyists.

# TELLER SPEAKS

**Magic tricks are indeed copyrightable as “pantomimes,” and the magician’s chief challenge in this regard is making sure the works are “fixed in a tangible medium of expression from which the work can be performed,” as the U.S. Copyright Office requires.**



Unfortunately, a few weeks ago, I was alerted to a YouTube video of a man (his name is Gerard Dogge, stage name Gerard Bakardy) selling equipment for emulating my piece. This was done without a single attempt to contact me, seek permission, or arrange a license agreement.

I had my attorneys contact YouTube, and the videos were promptly taken down for copyright dispute. I contacted Gerard Bakardy/Dogge and let him know that my U.S. Copyright and E.U. Droit Moral entitled me to take legal action for what he had posted. I attempted to resolve the problem by discussion and negotiation, but he did not respond satisfactorily to that approach.

This forced me to exercise my rights as copyright holder, and file for copyright infringement on April 11, 2012 in U.S. Federal Court. For your information, I include a copy of the legal documents below. I hope we will not have to add contributory and vicarious infringers in the action should third parties attempt to aid the infringer in selling his infringing product.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me. I want to assure my friends and fans that we intend to enforce our rights vigorously. And if you become aware of any further infringement of my copyrighted work, I'd be very, very grateful if you let me know at your earliest convenience.

If you should have anything to communicate pertaining to my suit, please use: [shadow@penn-teller.com](mailto:shadow@penn-teller.com)

To view documents click here  
<http://www.magicnewzealand.com/email/teller.pdf>

*The following page shows part of the original routine as Teller had written it up in 1983.*

## ACTION:

The stage is dark.

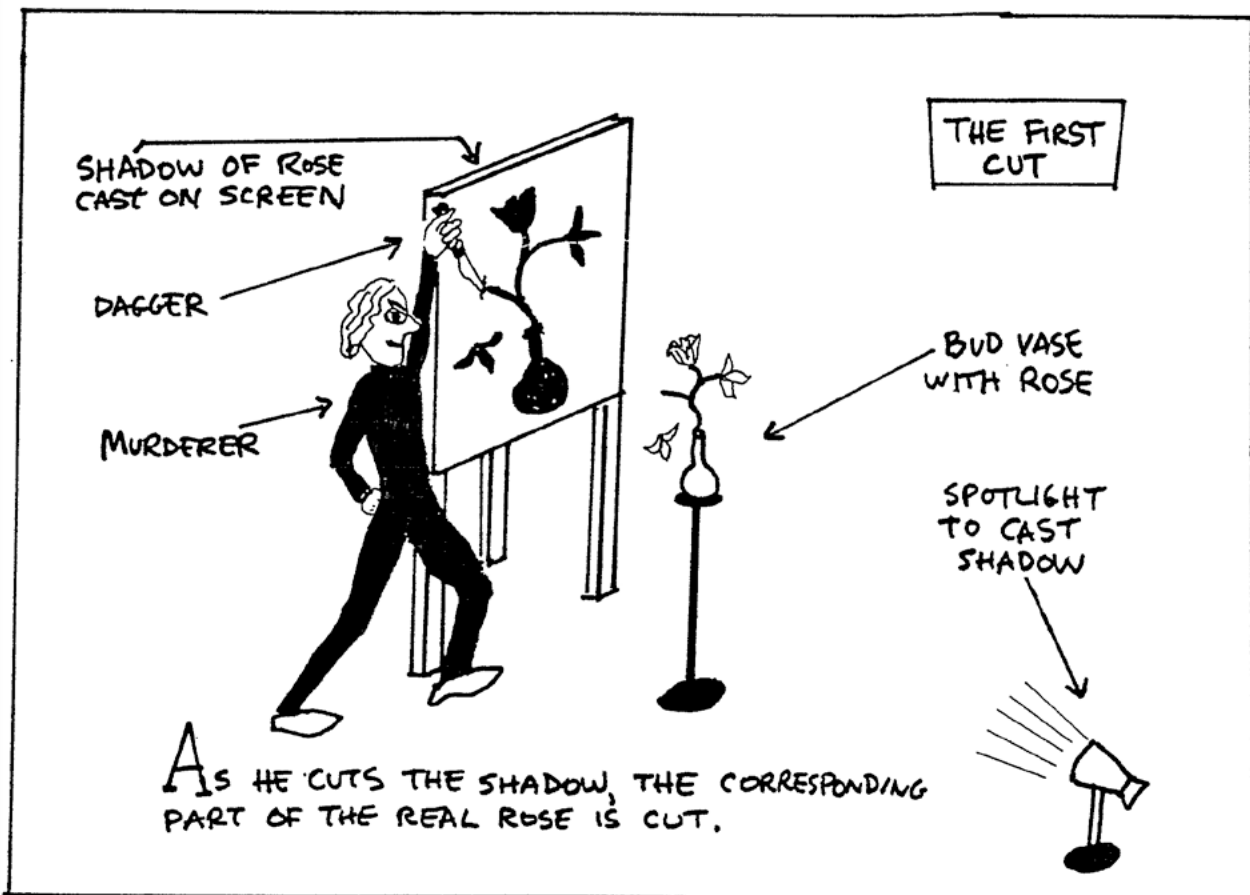
The spotlight is slowly illuminated, revealing the rose and the vase, and casting their shadows on the screen.

The Murderer becomes visible, lurking stage right, turning his dagger thoughtfully in his fingers.

He looks up and sees the rose. He takes a few steps towards it.

He notices the shadow, and takes a few more steps, bringing himself to the (stage right) edge of the screen.

He looks down at the (stage right) branch of the rose. He looks back at the shadow of that branch. He raises the dagger.



He places the tip of the dagger on the paper screen, just at the point where the shadow of the branch joins the shadow of the leaves. He stabs gently through the paper.

The (stage right) leaves of the real rose fall, breaking from the stem at exactly the point where the shadow was cut.

Copyright 1983 by Teller

# WORKING WITH FEMALE PARTNERS & ASSISTANTS

## MAGIC BABE NING



'Magic Babe' Ning is an international illusionist and one of the most celebrated female magicians in Asia. She was called "The sexiest woman in magic" by magicseen magazine and is a FHM Singapore cover girl.

Elegantly defying all traditional stereotypes in the male-dominated art, Ning has elevated the status of females in magic through her breakthrough mega escapes & illusions. Her eye-catching and mesmerizing performances have yet to be equaled by any other female magician in Asia.

[www.magicbabening.com](http://www.magicbabening.com)

**S**tage magicians and illusionists will at some point, seriously consider having an assistant or performing partner be part of their show. This could be an effort to increase the scale of the show, making things look bigger and more lavish, or to be able to employ magic methods and techniques that utilize one more person.

Besides my solo show, I also perform in an equal partnership role with a male magician. JC Sum & I work with assistants (male and female) as well as female dancers. In this article, I will be sharing my perspective as both a female stage performer & an objective audience member watching male magicians work with their female partners and dancer/ assistants.

### **Define the Role of Your Female Partner/ Assistant to the Audience**

So how do we first begin? Well, the very first thing to do when working with a female partner is to be extremely clear what role she plays in the show.

Clearly define: Is she your stage equal? Is she a stage assistant or stage hand? If she is your stage equal, she must hold an equal role and not just be billed as an equal. It is essential that she have an equal time being the protagonist on stage and hold the stage as

strong as you would. Her costuming must be as loud or attractive as yours so that both of you shine as brightly as stars, together.

If she is an assistant, however, her principle role is to support the show and not pull focus from the show and you, the magician. Her position on stage should always be a step behind you and her actions must compliment yours. Her costume must not be too loud so that it pulls focus away from you every time she steps on stage, because you are the star.

Now, if her role is that of being your stage hand, she must be invisible to the audience. Ideally, the audience should not even realize that she is on stage, so her movements and dressing must be completely understated so that she performs the role of supporting your show discreetly. Think professional kabuki performers or stealth ninjas "wink".

### **Recruiting your female partner/ assistant**

If you are lucky enough to have a supportive wife/ girlfriend/ sister who is willing to be part of your show - congratulations! You are a very lucky guy :) But FYI, this can be the best thing or worst thing for your show because it has the potential to go both ways. As your partner off stage, they will be dedicated to your show and want to make you look as awesome as possible. But! It is also



important that they know what they are doing and are properly trained to partner or assist you in a professional way.

If they have any kind of on stage role, they must look appropriate for stage, be it physical appearance or dressing. They must know how to move on stage and must physically and theatrically compliment you when performing together. In other words, have them go for lessons to be stage ready. They need not be professional dancers but the ladies should at least know how to stand, pose and move on stage.

In case you aren't aware, your wife/ girlfriend/ sister may not be completely crazy about what they are doing on stage but are doing it because of you. If this is the case, for the sake of your show and reputation as a magician, it may be better to consider another alternative. Seriously, not only does it not help your show in the long run, it will also ultimately sour your offstage relationship.

If you are looking for a professional female partner/ assistant, I'd suggest working with a trained dancer; someone with performing experience and training will know how to pose, present, move and look their best for you and your show, on stage. With communication and over time, they will also know how to react if something goes wrong on stage and can assist to misdirect as you recover.

#### **Play on Your Female Partner's/ Assistant's Strengths**

The next important step is working out and identifying your female partner's/ assistant's strengths so that you (both) can design specific roles that best suit her strengths. If your female assistant is not a flexible petite lady, PLEASE do not try to force her in small boxes. Contrary to popular belief we aren't compressible like doves \*shifty eyes\*

Now, if your female assistant is good in understanding magic psychology and knows how to perform deceptive moves like loads and steals (believe it some of us have the natural knack for these things), do take advantage of that. If she is a good actor/ dancer, incorporate that into your show or act to give emotive texture to the performance.

On a related note, appropriate dressing and costuming is essential. Don't make her wear "the usual" stage costumes just because you see other women wearing them on stage. Choose outfits that flatter her figure and dress her to compliment your show and not just like the typical cookie cutter showgirl. Allow what she wears to holler her unique character and personality.

#### **Use your Female Assistant Only As Necessary**

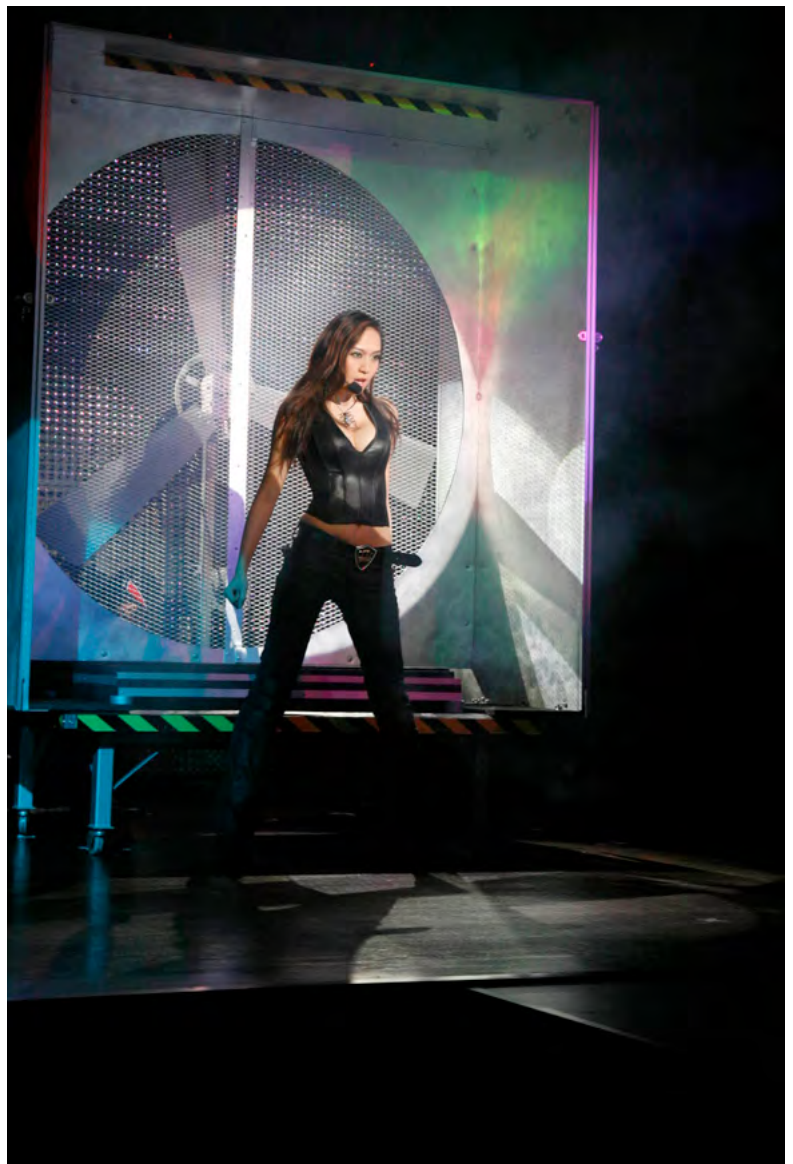
Some guys don't realize this and I've noticed this happening more often than it should :( If your lady's role is not that of your equal stage partner but she is just your assistant, please do not overuse her for every small thing. She is a utility and should be used only as necessary. This is where she can be most effective as a deceptive magic tool. Also, if you use her for every small task, it makes you look like an old school chauvinistic performer and that does not sit well in today's forward thinking society. Food for thought.

If you perform larger stage acts and illusions, my sincere suggestion would be ... Please don't do that cheesy cliche dance thingy at the end if it is not crucial to your act or adds zero value to the performance. The dancing and posing before and after an illusion is a dated (1980s... That's like 30 years old) piece of choreography and looks especially unflattering if you don't know how to dance well or move pose gracefully like a dancer.

#### **Listen to Your Partner/ Assistant**

Gramps used to tell me there's a reason why God gave us two ears and only one mouth. When I just started University (way before I turned professional), I did a one off illusion show with a local aspiring magician (let's call him Mr. X). Two other guy friends, also magicians, helped out as stage hands for this big event. Sadly, it was a tragically unpleasant experience because Mr. X would not listen to our suggestions for show content, choreography or the presentation of the acts.

Though Mr. X was uncertain (he was watching VCDs of World's Greatest Magic) and had no prior experience of how certain things should be done or presented, his ego permitted him from listening, discussing or opening himself to potential ideas. His own acts were under-rehearsed and under-researched and

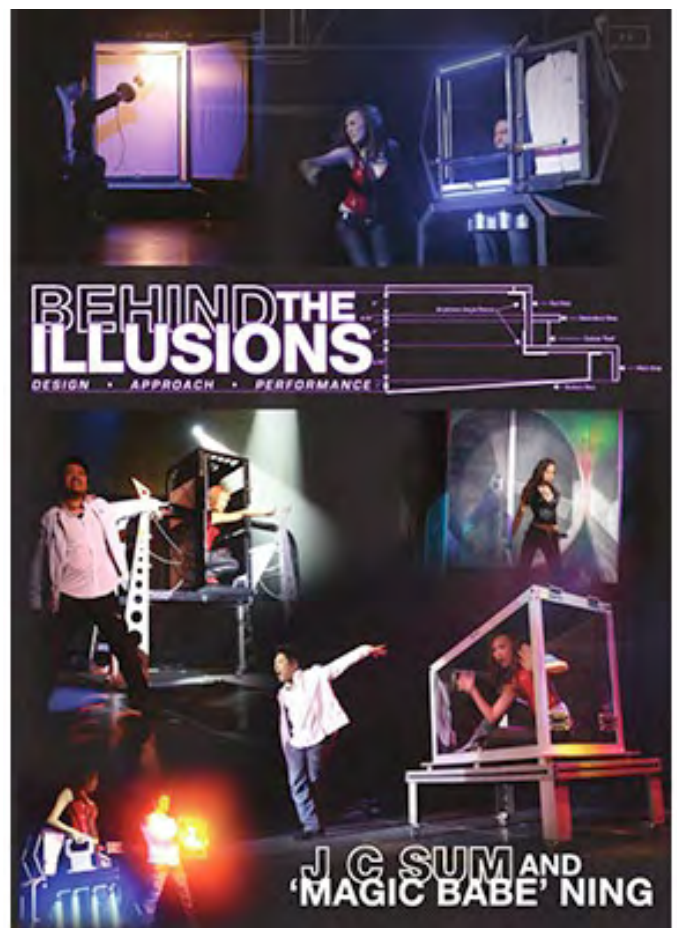


the three of us realized Mr. X really thought himself as the star instead of team effort as it was supposed to have been. One example of being unprepared was his part of the execution of the classic sword basket illusion. Mr. X did not rehearse his part well enough and I was the girl in the basket. When I got into the basket in position, I suddenly felt the cold metal blade of a sword roughly shoved down the back of my pants (and panties). Being nervous, he had been clumsy and just stabbed the blade in against my bare bottom skin!

But that's not it ... Mr. X's show opener, a customized torn & restored act, was also a disaster because the clipped pack of papers with the client's key messages fell from his jacket the moment he ran up on stage. He had refused my suggestion of getting the words professionally silk-screened on cloth, despite the backing of the other guys. His reason? Cost. So he hand-wrote everything with a marker on cheap sheets of paper. Well it certainly cost him the show because the client never touched base again. It cost him our friendship too, because no one wanted to work with him after this horrible experience, more so when Mr. X kept a thousand for himself and everyone else got a few hundred bucks, when the contact wasn't even directly his. Sigh. For obvious reasons Mr. X isn't doing magic anymore.

Anyway. It's important that when you work with a partner/ assistant, you should listen to hear their perspectives (be they male or female) unless you have worked out with 100% certainty what is to be done exactly. As the magician, you are the chief executive officer and must provide leadership and direction. If you can't, you need to be willing to see your partner/ assistant as a collaborator. Quite too often, magicians have tragically let their ego rule their judgment instead of a clear logical head.

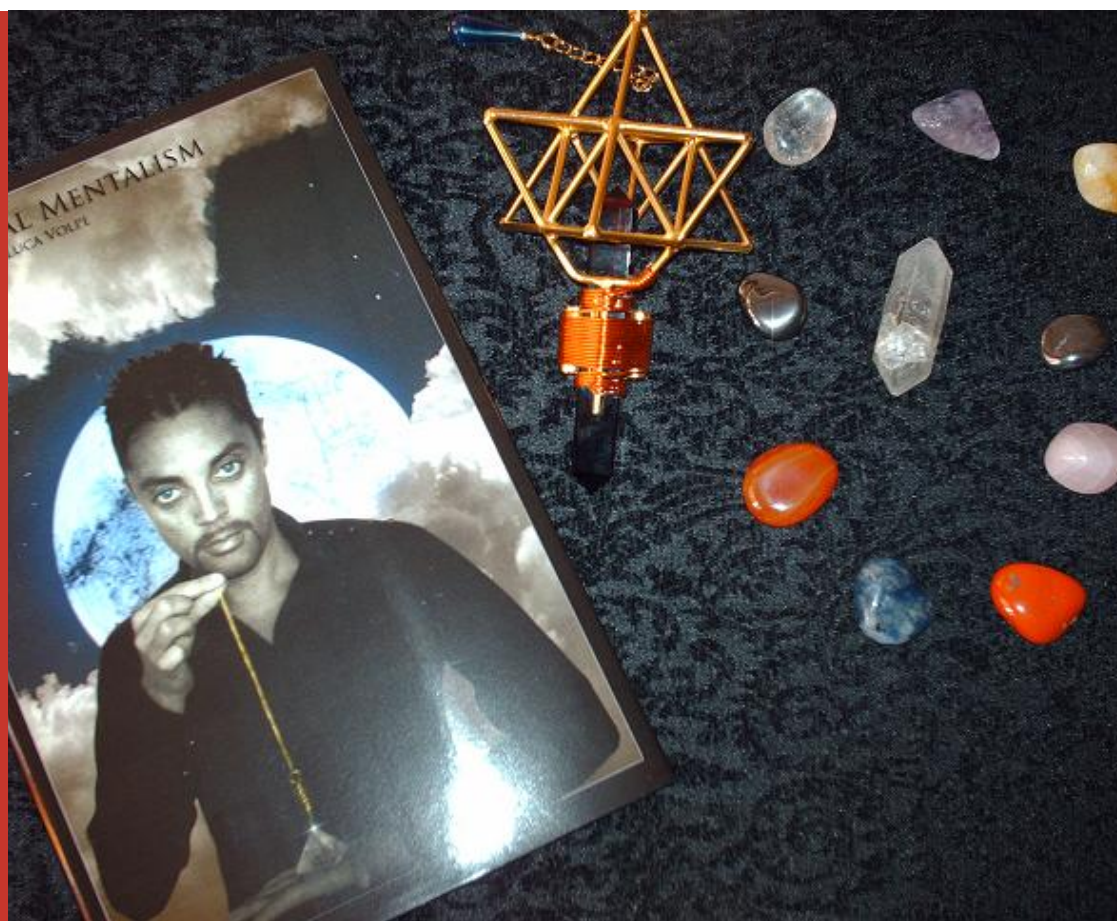
Having a stage partner or assistant with the same chemistry as you can add tremendous value and production value to your show. However, you have to work well with them to maximize their value. Treat her well and you will be rewarded with a team member that ultimately benefits your show. Best of luck with that:) Wishing you all the best with this exciting journey!



# EMOTIONAL MENTALISM

*I am a big fan of Luca's work, his creations are brilliant. He is one of mentalism's innovative thinkers. Luca has stepped out of his boundaries on his latest release in a dimension that you would not believe. He has created presentations here beyond anyone's imagination. Lets just say he has created a masterpiece, the Rembrandt of mentalism.*

*Neal Scryer*



## New book from Luca Volpe

**"EMOTIONAL MENTALISM"** contains the full Psychic Parties show, as performed by Luca Volpe over the past five years! A mixture of mentalism, energy work, crystal therapy and much more!

This book is available as limited release in hard back with dustjacket, of only 100 copies worldwide, with signed and numbered bookplate and the first 50 orders will receive a free chakra set!

Here is what Richard Webster says about the book:

I read "Emotional Mentalism" in one sitting, and was so excited I immediately read it again.

Luca has written a wonderful book full of fascinating rituals and experiments using color and crystals. Luca explains everything extremely well, and in great detail. It's obvious that he's performed everything in the book many times. As well as complete instructions, he provides a complete script for every effect. His presentations are convincing, and technically easy to do. My favorite effects are Crystal Psychometry and The Energy Portal, but over the next few months I'm going to experiment with virtually everything in this book. This book is essential reading for every mystery performer, and everyone who wants to create what Luca calls "unforgettable moments of wonder." Highly recommended.

**PRICE: \$113 includes FEDEX shipping worldwide**

The book is also available in pdf format for only \$55

To purchase, please send payment via paypal to: [info@lucavolpe.com](mailto:info@lucavolpe.com)





# BAMBOOZLERS

## DIAMOND JIM TYLER

### CARTESIAN CATSUP



**TRICK:** A small ketchup packet is placed inside an enclosed plastic bottle that is filled with water. Upon the magician's command the ketchup packet floats to the bottom of the bottle and then back to the top. The magician can even cause the ketchup packet to remain suspended in the middle of the bottle if he wishes.

This old scientific stunt is called the Cartesian Diver. In the old days it was done with a glass bottle filled with water, a medicine dropper and a cork. Once the medicine dropper was placed inside the bottle and sealed with the cork all one had to do was to place pressure on the cork to cause the dropper to float up and down inside the bottle.

**SECRET:** I love spins on old classics and this is a good one. Simply place a small packet of sealed ketchup inside a plastic bottle filled with water and then put the lid on tight. It is important that the bottle be completely filled with water. Now all one must do is squeeze the bottle to cause the packet to float down to the bottom of the bottle. When the pressure is released the packet will float up back to the top of the bottle.

With a little practice you can cause the packet to float up or down to any position in the bottle you wish. The squeezing action should be done covertly. Hold the bottle as in Figure 1. If it doesn't seem to work then you might try a different packet of ketchup.

**Diamond Jim Tyler is an award-winning magician, based in Dallas, TX, and is best known for his books *Pockets Full of Miracles* and *Bamboozlers* series. He's performed at the Improv, the Magic Castle, the Magic Circle, on TV and in twenty-two countries.**

[www.djtyler.com](http://www.djtyler.com)

# IMPOSSIBLE PREDICTION

## LUCA VOLPE



Is it possible to predict what a randomly chosen spectator will be wearing and how much money he will have in his pocket?

... The answer is YES!

This is a routine that I have developed for my show many years ago and now I have decided to share it with you!

### EFFECT:

At one point during the show, you randomly select a spectator that will be your helper on stage. Give him (or her) an envelope sealed with a clip, that you explain contains a prediction. Tell the audience that before the show, each member received one half of a RAFFLE TICKET with a number on top and ask everyone to have their tickets ready.

Show your helper a raffle ticket pad that contains the other halves of the tickets that correspond to the tickets that the spectators have received and show that they are all different. You now give him a playing card, ask him to insert this card at any point he wants into the raffle pad and look which ticket is chosen under the card. Let's say he chooses the number 50...

Call the audience member that has the number 50, ask him to come on stage. When he comes on stage ask him to count how much money he has in his pocket, let's say he has 20 euro...NOW

START THE INCREDIBLE....

Ask your helper to open the envelope and he will find two other envelopes that are marked with the numbers 1 and 2. Tell him to

open the envelope number 1 and to read what is written on the piece of paper. He will read:

*"I predict that one spectator, randomly chosen tonight, will be wearing BLUE JEANS, GYM NIKE SHOES, RED T-SHIRT, a WHITE HOODIE and a necklace with a kind of TRIANGLE SYMBOL!"*

(Here the audience are already going crazy!)

Now ask your helper to open the envelope number 2 and to read what is written. He will read:

*"Oh I forgot...the spectator will have, in his pocket, 20 euro!"*

Say thanks to your helper and to the spectator and give them a big round of applause!

### METHOD:

Like most mental effects this is based on a very easy principle and combines many methods that are already well know. But the strong part is HOW these methods are mixed together, to create a strong reaction from the audience.

### BEFORE THE SHOW:

One of your assistants will be at the entrance of the theatre, at the box office, and he (or she) will give each person, that buys a show ticket, half a raffle ticket. When he reaches the number 50 (or any number you choose) he has to remember what this person is wearing. He can also write down some special characteristics, like strange shoes, a necklace, a colorful tie, etc. IT IS IMPORTANT that the description is as accurate as possible because it is easy to find a lot of people that wear jeans and gym shoes!

If you want, instead of giving out tickets at the entrance to the theatre, your assistant can give the tickets out to the audience members, AFTER they sit on their chairs (this to avoid people swapping tickets). It is IMPORTANT that your assistant tells the people to KEEP the ticket for themselves and to NOT give it to anyone else, because this ticket will be part of an important experiment during the show!

After your assistant has concluded his 'mission', he will tell you what the spectator is wearing and you can write your prediction on a piece of paper (this needs to be heavy paper or light cardboard).

### THE ENVELOPES:

You need 3 envelopes, one big (A5 size) and two 'Manilla' envelopes (easy to find at STAPLES) of approximate size 9 x 8 cm (a little bigger than a playing card).

Mark the two manilla envelopes, with a black marker, numbers 1 and 2.

Insert into envelope 1, the spectator 'wears' prediction and close this envelope (DO NOT SEAL).

Take envelope number 2 and cut a little window into the bottom right side on the back (PHOTO 1) and insert into this envelope another piece of light cardboard (the same size as the other one, about the size of a playing card). On this you will write :

*"Oh I forgot...the spectator will have in his pocket... Euro!"*

As you can see there is a space before the word "EURO" and this space has to be in the same position where you cut the little window on the back of the envelope. Close this envelope (DO NOT SEAL).

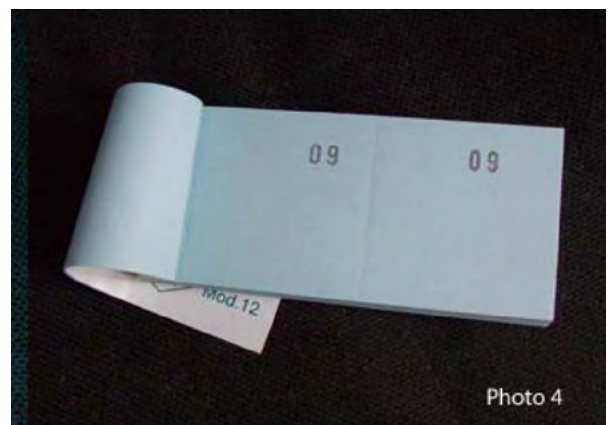
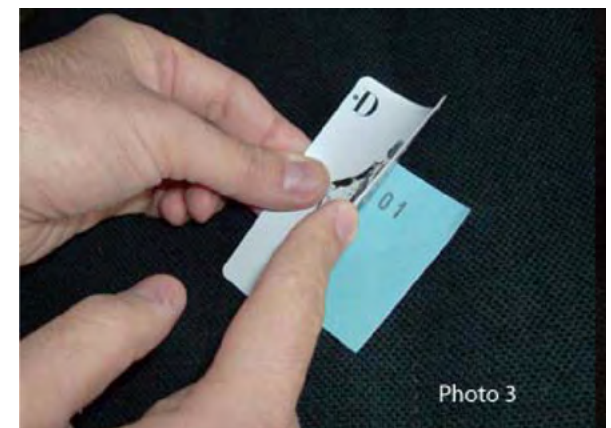
Put these two envelopes in the big one (1 on top of 2) and seal this envelope with a big clip.

(It is obvious that the envelope number 2 is already prepared before. In fact, before the actual show, you will have time just to write the prediction about what the spectator will be wearing.)

### THE RAFFLE PAD AND THE GIMMICK:

You need two identical raffle pads (the ones that they use for lottery or charity tickets, which you can find in any stationery shop). Take from one raffle pad, the ticket number 50 (or any number you prefer) and glue the left edge of the ticket to the bottom left, on the back of the playing card (you can use any kind of card you like, it can also be a business card). If you can see that the ticket edge overlaps the card, the ticket can be trimmed so that it can't be seen (PHOTO 2 - PHOTO 3).

The other raffle pad (the one that was used for the audience) at the moment of the performance, will have just half of the tickets inside.



### THE EXTRAS:

You need to have in your right pocket a Nail Writer (personally, I use the Vernet Thumb Writer). It is obvious that the prediction has to be written with the same pencil as your nail writer (or big pencil if you use the Grease Marker Nail Writer, anyway the prediction will only be seen and read by the helper on stage). Prepare on your table the gimmicked playing card and the half raffle ticket pad and take your prediction!

### THE ROUTINE:

Choose your helper in a random way (one that you like best!) and ask him to come on stage. Give him the prediction to hold and also show the half raffle ticket pad. Tell him to insert the playing card where he wants. IN REALITY YOU will hold the card (back face down on the table) and you will say:

*"Here I have the other halves of the tickets that correspond to those of the audience members. Now you have to choose randomly one of these tickets, please insert this card at any point of the raffle pad just to mark the cut (the card is in your hand!) ... tell me where you want...here? Are you sure? Up ... Or down? You choose!"*

As soon as the spectator stops you, insert the card (face up) in the pad and make sure that the glued forcing ticket, on the back of the card, is aligned with the other tickets along the bottom.

Lift the card (still keeping the card inside) from the right side and show to your helper the ticket underneath. He will think he is seeing the ticket where he has marked the cut, in reality he will see the ticket that is glued on the back of the playing card! He will say the number...

Ask to the spectator that has the number 50 (or any number you force!) to come on stage and ask him to count the money that he has in his pocket. Take the prediction, remove the clip, put the clip in your right pocket and put on the Writer!

Tell your helper to open the envelope, YOU reach inside (with your left hand) and take the two manilla envelopes, explaining that there are two prediction. Give the envelope number 1, to your helper and ask him to read the prediction.

NOW, meanwhile he is reading, you will have all the time to thumb write the amount of money in the little window on the back of the envelope!

After he has read the first prediction, take the paper and the envelope from him (with your right hand) and put this in your right pocket (leaving the writer inside your pocket). Now YOU open envelope number 2 and ask your helper to take the piece of paper from inside (hold the envelope face down, number up, and leave the piece of paper to fall out a few millimetres)...he will read the other prediction!

After that, put both the paper and the envelope in your pocket and you are clean! If you want, you can also put in your pocket the gimmicked playing card, after your helper has read the number. Personally, I leave on the table, both the card and the raffle pad, as the people forget.

### IMPORTANT NOTE:

The raffle ticket pad has to be a single line book, so that no other numbers are visible (PHOTO 4).

### BONUS TIP 1:

If you want, instead of the gimmicked playing card, you can use a transparent forcing bag to force the ticket. You will need to prepare it in this way:

In the front pocket, put the other halves of the tickets that are folded in half.

In the back pocket, put about 20 tickets, ALL with the number 50 on top, also folded in half. (In this case, you need to buy 20 more raffle pads!)

When your helper comes on stage, ask him to reach in the bag and to take two or three tickets, just to check that they are all different. When it is the moment to force the number, tell him to turn away and without looking, ask him to put his hand in the bag and to choose just ONE ticket (in this case, you let him put his hand in the back pocket!).

This method is also more visual and in some way can be more 'clean'! (I have used both forcing method)

### BONUS TIP 2:

If you don't want to use a window on the back of the manilla envelope, you can put a piece of carbon paper inside the back of the envelope, on the same side where you will write the amount of money.

In this case you need just a nail writer without pencil or you can write with your nail.

### FINAL THOUGHTS:

I have worked with this routine for several years and every time I had a great reaction from the people.

I'm sure that you will get the same reaction...maybe more! Just one final thought ... what happens if the spectator swaps the ticket with someone else? (Anyway it has never happened to me in the last 8 years...DON'T WORRY!). It is not a problem because anyway you have the money prediction that will work ...a good 'real' mentalist can fail sometimes.

## ABOUT LUCA VOLPE

Luca Volpe is one of the most valued Italian mentalists in the world. The famous entertainer Neal Scryer, has described him as "The Rembrandt of mentalism". This is thanks to collaborations with famous mentalists worldwide and his publications, which have received much praise and many awards.

The famous "chair test routine" has sold over 15,000 copies and is a prized piece in the repertoire of many professional mentalists.

# MARK PARKER

## LOGIC AND REASONING

Many illusions employ the use of swords, blades, tubes, spears and spikes, etc. I have noticed a trend amongst many performers when using such items. In my opinion many performers often lose sight of the true function of these props, and in turn fail to convey the intrinsic potential that lies within its technique of use, rather than the ability of use itself. Showy moves and ostentatious gestures become paramount instead. If only performers would put more focus on honing their technique in producing convincing acts with these props, it would certainly bring any illusion performance to a greater level of believability.

For example:

An assistant is trapped inside a tight-fitting illusion prop with no possible means of escape. She is now faced with the threat of impalement from a rack of sharp, menacing-looking spikes entering through one side of the prop. The performer then takes hold of the spikes, and upon following a dramatic music cue, loudly slams them through the prop with ease. Up till this moment, the performer, I am sure, is utterly satisfied with his very precise timing and relishes the full drama of the crashing spikes. For him, this is a success. However, in my opinion it is merely complacency in his thinking that this "suffices to satisfy" the innocent audience as a spectacular 'Magic Show'. He is very much disillusioned himself, if he underestimates the already heightened sense of curiosity of the audience.

Now, doesn't that effortless ramming of the spikes indicate to the audience that the assistant must no longer be inside the prop, and that she has by now moved out of the spikes' way? Bear in mind that the performer's real motive is to convince the audience that the assistant is indeed being impaled inside and that they are all bearing witness to this horrific torture.



One should be led to believe this, especially upon catching sight of the assistant's hand still dangling from the prop.

However, the act of ramming the spikes with not a single trace of any resistance, wholly defeats the purpose of this stage illusion. Instead of displaying the mastery of the act, it conversely portrays the illusion to be extremely ridiculous. Surely the idea here is to convince the audience that the assistant was genuinely in some form of immediate danger, having been brutally pierced by the spikes?

Also, if the performer is supposedly executing an impaling torture upon his assistant, shouldn't this warrant a form of struggle for him to physically accomplish this tedious feat? Yes, admittedly the idea is for the audience to be entertained, but do not forget, they are consciously expecting to be equally baffled. Even if everything has been executed perfectly, isn't this unmindful choreography stripping away a convincing layer from the actual magical effect here?

After all, it is essentially the slightest but convincing details within any magic and illusion effect that delivers it towards its immaculate culmination, rendering the performance much more powerful. The ultimate goal surely is to lure the audience onto magic's mystifying trails of deception. Yet in the meantime, magicians themselves are sneaking down the short-cut to arrive at this goal. Why would you rather run the danger of presenting a half-cooked routine, only to incur a massive forfeit in the quality of your performance?

There are indeed some exceptions where this does not hold relevance. However, with regards to most illusion performances, I believe one should pay the utmost attention to these little details, to ensure that the audience will be put in no possible vantage of gathering any clues, theories or suspicion as to how the illusion is accomplished. Once again I must emphasize:

***Attention paid to even the smallest details in a show makes a very substantial difference any stage-performance.***

Working alongside numerous performers in the field of illusion designing, I am often asked to lend advice on their shows. It highly surprises me at times to learn that some hold little or no knowledge at all of the classic writings of magic. It seems that they actually consider such materials to be entirely irrelevant to their show genre. Even so, the fact is that these ingenious resources, particularly that of Dai Vernon, amongst many others, will not only broaden your knowledge of the art, but will provide a fresh perspective on your stagecraft approach.

This would then allow the performer to execute specific secret moves without drawing unwanted attention to those crucial actions, that are instrumental to the illusion. It would be highly captivation for an audience to enjoy the entire performance without being distracted by any sudden deliberate movements. Having adopted this thinking in his magic, Vernon's audience, I am sure, must not have anticipated what was coming until the climax of his

magical performance hits them smack in the face. Similarly, if any performer adhere to these basic principles, it is certain that his audience will be having much more difficulty in de constructing the magic they have just witnessed.

Logical thinking is another key to determining an upstage or downstage performance. Consider this: The objective of any illusion-performance is to display the brilliance and ingenuity of its effects. So why, if it weren't necessary would you perform an illusion more upstage? Performing further away from the audience will only weaken the illusion's impact and even worse, arouse unnecessary suspicions. I have seen this oversight recur on numerous occasions without any logical reasoning. Bear in mind that the stage backdrop for a show should not be treated as a comfort blanket. Performing an illusion as far downstage as possible is vital, the perception of the stage floor area behind any apparatus in relation to the stage back drop can easily be misjudged, therefore arouse unwanted suspicion if it is too close. Audiences can very quickly develop their own wild theories as to how an illusion is accomplished, with statements such as 'she just sneaked out of the back somehow' so the goal is to avoid these assumptions at all costs & purvey complete mystery on-stage.

The next time you are tempted to rotate a pedestal prop, despite risking unwelcome suspicion in the process of filling time, or maybe leave a sawing-in-half illusion stranded in half too far apart for far too long, step back and consider if any of your actions are detrimental to your desired outcome of the illusion effect.

My intention here is not to lay down any rules; these are simply my humble opinions. I sincerely wish to inspire the reader to delve into serious contemplation when contriving 'illusion-gestures/ stage-choreography'. Putting yourself in an audience's perspective may be a decent place to start. Recording your act and also placing colleagues in the audience will give you a deeper understanding of how you are perceived on-stage. It is very important to be honest with yourself, usually if you feel something is not quite correct or that you are compromising in some way, then the chances are that this is exactly the case and changes should be made. A good use of logic and reasoning is your guide to effectuating a more refined illusion act.



Charles Bach, Paul Romhany, Mark Parker



# HOUSEKEEPING?

[WWW.CUPSANDBALLSMAGIC.COM](http://WWW.CUPSANDBALLSMAGIC.COM)



**BRIAN WATSON**

» Okay, so what do I mean by house-keeping? Have you ever watched a performer and thought for some reason that they could do better but couldn't quite put your finger on it? The performance was okay and the magic was strong but there was just something...

Have you ever thought that a performer looked lost or didn't seem to have their finger on the ball (no pun intended) even though they were competent as magicians?

If so then there is a chance that you are probably relating subconsciously to bad housekeeping.

What I mean by bad housekeeping is the way in which objects and props are arranged and placed during a routine, whether that means cups, balls and wands on a table or balls and final loads in the pockets.

While we may not consciously recognise a performer constantly re-adjusting a cup and a ball on the table in readiness for their next sleight or move, our subconscious picks up on it as "a feeling."

This, I believe, has a direct affect on how confident the performer is perceived to be...

## **Confidence**

"That feeling" is perceived by an audience as a lack of confidence, either in the material, self confidence or their ability to perform (or possibly all three.) Of course the performer may be very confident indeed and road testing some new material, however the blocking should at least be worked on before giving new material an outing.

A quick search on the net reveals many performers searching pockets for final loads, shifting props about because they did not set them down in the correct position for the next part of the routine

and passing things from hand to hand in order to carry on.

It seems that there is some congruence missing, a lack of familiarity...

### **Familiarity**

When I examine and think about things like this, I often wonder... "Am I being over critical here?" Well, I've given this a lot of thought and I don't believe I am, I truly believe that it matters.

I spent roughly twice as long blocking out my cups and balls routine and giving motivation to the moves and an internal dialogue (both of which I will briefly cover later on) than I actually did working out the actual routine itself, and with good reason.

If I touch a cup, ball or wand once and place it down in the perfect position after it is used and I don't ever have to fiddle or re-adjust anything then I am projecting the correct attitude and the magic appears to just happen.

### **Projection**

The last thing I want is an audience feeling sorry for me as a performer, or even emphasizing with me or my situation. I want them to be entertained and I want them to be lost in the magic and I truly believe that they get lost in the magic when I do and because I project that to them.

The best way for me to be lost in the moment, the magic, is to not have to worry about where things are, what comes next or is the load in the right pocket? Only then can I project magic instead of confusion

and that is done because I have worked on my blocking.

### **Blocking**

If you have ever worked with a professional dancer you will know that they can hit any spot on the stage at any time asked because they know exactly what they are doing at any given time and, just as any pro will walk the stage and count how many paces it is to their table, to the wings, the treads etc. you must know where every object is to be positioned perfectly during the whole of your routine.

For instance I changed the whole final sequence of my own cups and balls routine because it meant that I would have had to place a cup towards the leading edge of the table and then bring it backwards towards the back edge of the table for a final load.

It was not only incongruent but illogical and telling and meant that I would have placed the cup down, only to pick it up, move it backwards and then place it towards the front of the table again.

Sure, with misdirection the audience might not have noticed but something in their subconscious would have caught it. As it happens I now have the whole routine blocked out so that every object is placed down where it needs to be, the hands don't cross the body and nothing is passed from hand to hand in order to facilitate the routine.

Items are placed down and left until they are needed again and everything has a

reason...

### **Reasoning**

Reasoning, motivation and an internal dialogue are important to me as a performer and I hope it shows in what I do. For instance, I mentioned the final sequence above, well I changed that by rolling the cup back to reveal a ball had vanished. After the cup rolls back it stays where it is, at the rear edge of the table ready for the final load, however the motivation (and therefore internal dialogue) for it is to show a ball under the cup, not to load a larger one.

### **Mirroring**

A quick point on mirroring when performing the cups and balls as I believe it relates to blocking. It is well known that it is preferable for the clean hand to mirror the dirty hand when palming because it doesn't alert the subconscious to the difference in the hands.

I have been playing with this theory for a while now and I have been applying it to cups also. I feel (and it is only personal opinion) that it also works very well when loading cups.

For instance, in the sequence I used as a demonstration where I roll a cup back and leave it at the edge of the table in preparation for a final load, I also do the same with the cup I am not loading and the symmetry created really seems to help make the final load psychologically invisible.

Reasoning,  
motivation  
and an internal  
dialogue are  
important to me  
as a performer.



FOR MORE ON CUPS AND BALLS VISIT:  
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# MAGIC REVIEWS

## PAUL ROMHANY & FRIENDS

Based upon top selling products from magic retailers and wholesalers, as well as consulting with over a dozen professional magicians, Paul Romhany reviews tricks, DVDs, books and Apps.

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With an audience of over 30,000 readers your product will reach a wider audience than any other trade magazine.

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# 1 Collateral by Diamond Jim Tyler



## THE AD COPY:

The magician removes his ring and asks to borrow a spectator's ring. The magician places his own personal ring into a small coin envelope and asks the ring-less spectator to place it into their pocket as collateral. After performing DJ's Ring & String routine or any borrowed ring effect- their ring is made to vanish! The spectator hands over the envelope only to discover that their own ring is inside! Includes two leather laces and the other necessary props.

## WHAT YOU RECEIVE:

- DVD - 45 minutes
- Two envelopes - only one is used for the routine, the other is an extra.
- Two leather laces - these are two bonus laces to use with Ring On String Routine, which is a bonus on the DVD.

## MY THOUGHTS:

Diamond Jim has been performing this routine since 1986, which tells you that this has been tested in literally thousands of performances. I have seen this performed live, and sold out at two different magic lectures by Diamond Jim, which also tells you that magicians who have seen this know it is a strong, and very commercial effect. As soon as I saw it I knew it was something I would add to my own act.

The Ring on String routine has always been one of my favorite walk-about effects, however I never really had an ending that would pack a punch. Thanks to Diamond Jim I now have an ending that is stronger than any Ring On Key Chain trick. What really makes this strong is that the spectator holds on to the envelope containing YOUR ring the entire time, only to turn in to THEIR ring that you were using for your routine. This makes the perfect climax to ANY ring on string routine, or any routine where you use a borrowed ring.

Because this has been in DJ's act for over 25 years, you know that every nuance and move is extremely well thought out, making the mechanics easy to learn so you can concentrate on the performance.

Another aspect of this routine that makes it a winner is that the re-set is instant, so it is perfect for those working walk-around or restaurant gigs where you don't have time to re-set tricks. This is always an important consideration for those working in most close-up venues.

The bonus material on the DVD includes a live performance at The Magic Castle, as well as a tutorial on DJ's Ring On String Routine. If you don't already do a Ring On String then learn DJ's because it one of the best. It contains all the elements that make a strong routine, and by adding his Collateral you will have an incredibly strong piece of magic that you will perform all the time.

## QUALITY OF INSTRUCTION:

The production value on this routine is one of the best I've seen in a magic DVD. I particularly liked the performance section where we get the chance to see DJ perform the exact same routine in different venues. The editing is first class, making this an enjoyable DVD to watch and learn from. His quality of instruction by DJ makes this

## DIFFICULTY:

The actual Collateral effect is very easy to learn. The handling is natural, and the heat is off you at all times. If you already have a Ring On String routine then you can add this to your act pretty quickly. This would suit those who are fairly new to magic, but I also see seasoned professionals using this.

If you don't have a Ring On String routine then DJ explains his. This will take a little practice, but once mastered you'll have a strong piece of magic for life.

## FINAL THOUGHTS:

A highly commercial addition to any routine involving a spectator's finger ring. If you are looking for a strong walk-about routine using a spectator's finger ring this should be your first choice. Included are two leather laces, which are really nice to work with. The addition of DJ teaching his Ring On String makes this great value for money.

**COST:** \$25.00

**Wholesale:** Murphy's Magic - [www.murphsymagic.com](http://www.murphsymagic.com)

**Available from magic stores world wide.**



## 2 SLOMOTION BY JOE LITVINCHUK



### THE AD COPY:

His effect, Slomotion, is the cleanest version of Psychokinetic Energy we've ever seen! The performer uses a lifesaver and straw, both can be borrowed, and threads the lifesaver on the straw. Then, at the performers command, through apparent psychokinetic energy, the lifesaver starts spinning. But, then the performer can stop the spinning at will and reverse the direction! When finished, the objects can be left behind, because everything is borrowed and completely examinable.

Perform using actual items found available in a live setting (coffee shop, bar, etc.) to confirm you are not using trick items; they are fully examinable. Spectators will not believe their eyes when they see this up close! Hands are shown empty before and after. This effect can be repeated immediately.

- Perform wearing casual attire (no sleeves required)
- No magnets, threads, or wires
- All objects are borrowed
- Instant reset; no set-up necessary
- Perfect for close-up, walk around and street performers
- You will perform immediately right out of the package
- Easy to perform
- No static electricity
- Supplied with instructional DVD
- Works automatically

### WHAT YOU RECEIVE:

- Instructional DVD
- Lifesaver

- Wooden Stir Stick
- Cloth bag
- Gimmick plus extra battery

### MY THOUGHTS:

This was released early last year and the entire stock sold out within a few months. I loved it so much that I bought TWO. It has just come on the market again exclusive to Hocus-Pocus.

This has been the ONE item that I carry with me all the time. Over the past few years I have spent hundreds of dollars on other similar effects where I had to strap bulky gadgets on my wrists, and have wires running up and down my body. What makes this version superior from most others, is that there are no wires, nothing to strap on your body, and can be performed naked if you so desire. Or at least in short sleeves without a toe switch.

I have performed this under all types of conditions, from walk-about to on-the-spot type situations where I was asked to perform a trick. If you have a straw or wooden stir trick you can perform this. While the instructions show a Lifesaver, I prefer to use a borrowed finger ring. I also discovered that I can cause the ring to travel horizontally along a straw, as well as have it spin in any direction.

The prop is very well made, and never seen by the audience, yet it's right in front of them. I have used the same one now for over a year and it has stood up to daily use.

### QUALITY OF INSTRUCTION:

The DVD explains everything you need to know about how to perform this, with a few extra ideas and tips. This didn't really need a DVD because the method is so easy.

### DIFFICULTY:

This is definitely one of those rare occasions when the dealers advert actually matches EXACTLY what it reads. When I first opened the package I put the gimmick on and was able to perform the routine - it was that easy. I do suggest though you watch the instructional DVD to get more insight to the finer points. Once you get comfortable with the gimmick you will find you can experiment with other objects such as a finger ring and even a nut and bolt!

### FINAL THOUGHTS:

Here is a routine that can be performed anytime, anywhere with borrowed objects. It is perfect for both formal and informal style gigs. The re-set is instant making this a very practical prop for the working professional, as well as those who perform magic as a hobby. This works on a different principle than most of the very expensive versions on the market, and I think is a much stronger and versatile effect.

**COST:** \$49.95

**AVAILABLE EXCLUSIVELY FROM** [www.Hocus-Pocus.com](http://www.Hocus-Pocus.com)



# 1 Premium Vanishing and Appearing Wine Bottle



## THE AD COPY:

Imagine taking out a wine bottle, pulling out the cork, pouring a glass of wine and toasting your audience. Next, you place the bottle into a paper bag and finally, you make the bottle VANISH! Or, Imagine, producing a bottle of wine from THIN AIR!

All of this is possible with the Premium Vanishing and Appearing Wine Bottle!

The Premium Vanishing Wine Bottle is different than other vanishing bottles currently on the market. This is a VERY realistic looking Bottle! Every detail has been thought of, right down to the cork.

The premium Vanishing Wine Bottle contains silicone and semi-permanent Beca, this causes the bottle to fold flatter and snap back into shape much faster and last much longer than previous marketed models. Also, you can pour liquid (wine, juice, etc.) from the bottle before vanishing it due to a removable bladder (included).

## WHAT YOU RECEIVE:

- 1 vanishing / appearing Wine Bottle
- 1 form fitting bladder
- 1 cork
- 1 set of large labels (front of Bottle)
- 1 set of small labels (neck of Bottle)
- 1 VERY sturdy storage tube

## MY THOUGHTS:

This bottle offers some rather unique features, that make it different enough to sell as another vanishing bottle routine. The main difference is the material this is made from. It is much more durable than any other bottle I have seen, and certainly looks like a real bottle once the labels are put on. It is good enough to perform in an intimate working conditions. Another great feature is the ability to take out the cork, and pour a glass of wine from the bottle. It is these little extra touches that make it more like a real bottle.

The material the bottle is made from also lends itself to using this as a production item. It holds it's memory well and will pop open very quickly from a folded position.

Another nice feature is that the bottom of the bottle is rounded, making it appear more like a bottle should when it sits on a table. I had this on my office desk, and my wife asked what type of wine it was! If she thought it was a real bottle then you know it must look VERY REAL!

My only comment would be the label does need to be replaced, but they do supply several labels, and so that isn't really an issue. You could always use your own label from a real bottle of wine.

## QUALITY OF INSTRUCTION:

A one page sheet with photos that show you how to use insert the special bladder and a basic routine. There really isn't need for anything else as everybody would have their own personal favorite routine. This is more of a tool that you would use in your own routine.

## DIFFICULTY:

If you can hold a bottle then you can easily use this, however, I do suggest you treat this as a real bottle. Practice holding a real bottle to see where, and how you hold it. Then take this bottle and hold it exactly the same way. To sell the illusion the audience must believe, as you do, that the bottle is real. Nothing is worse than watching a performer pick up a 'rubber' bottle as though it were jelly. At least with this version the material is stronger, so it will help you treat it as though it were real.

## FINAL THOUGHTS:

A great product that is very well produced and packaged. The container it comes in is sturdy enough to keep the bottle in, and if looked after will last a very long time.

If you perform a *Vanishing Bottle* routine already, then I think you might want to seriously look at this version. It would also make a great addition to other bottle routines such as *Multiplying Bottles*, if you wanted to vanish the last one.

**COST: \$47.00**

**Wholesale:** Murphy's Magic - [www.murphysmagic.com](http://www.murphysmagic.com)  
**Available from magic stores world wide.**



# APP REVIEW



## Show Cues by Carl Andrews

Available for iPhone/Pad/Pod Touch to control and play your show soundtracks.

### Features

- Fade Out
- Play/Pause
- Auto Pause
- Real Time Clock
- Unlimited Playlist
- Large Track Title Display
- Countdown Timer With Warning And Alarm
- Indicator Light Buttons Showing Playback State

Show Cue works manually or with a remote control (remote sold separately). It plugs in to any sound system.

**My Thoughts:** Without a doubt the BEST App for any performer who wants to run their entire music from their iPhone or iPad. You can spend thousands on other devices that do exactly the same thing as this App, so this is something that will save you a lot of money and time. I have used various other apps, and systems to try and work the music for my entire show, but nothing compares to this one. Carl Andrews is not only the software developer, but also one of the busiest professional magicians around today. He has created the best tool for a working performer, because he knows what is needed.

The remote system, which is sold separately turns your iPad or iPhone in to a full remote music machine, so you can run your entire show at the click of a button. Plug your iPhone/Pad in to your

sound system and run the entire thing by yourself! The remote is the perfect size, and I've never had issues with it not working.

There are two different versions, one of the iPad and the other for the iTouch/Phone.

One of the features I love is the countdown, so you can easily see when the music is about to stop. With my iPad it's so easy to read from a distance. Moving from one track to another is a breeze, and it's great if you want to add sound effects to your show and need to get to various tracks quickly.

The only negative aspect is that you can't control the volume with this App. If some tracks are at different levels than others you will have to control the volume manually.

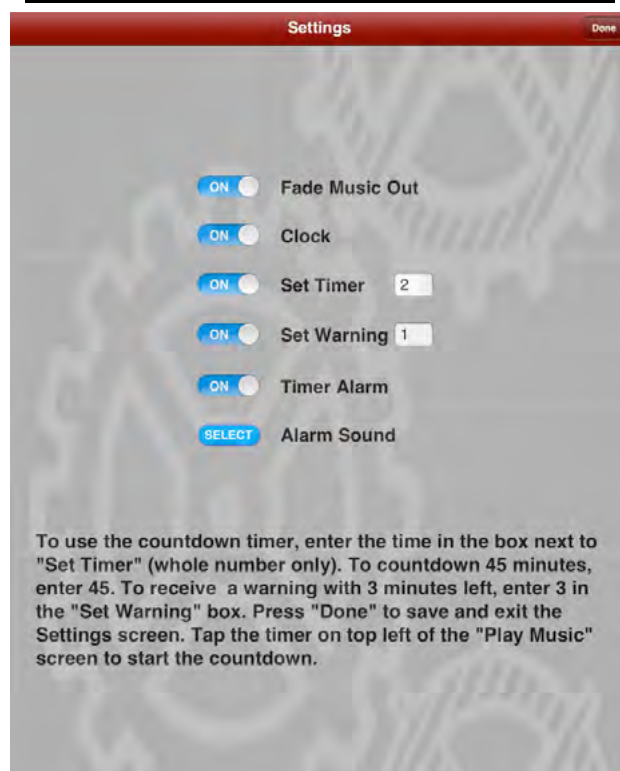
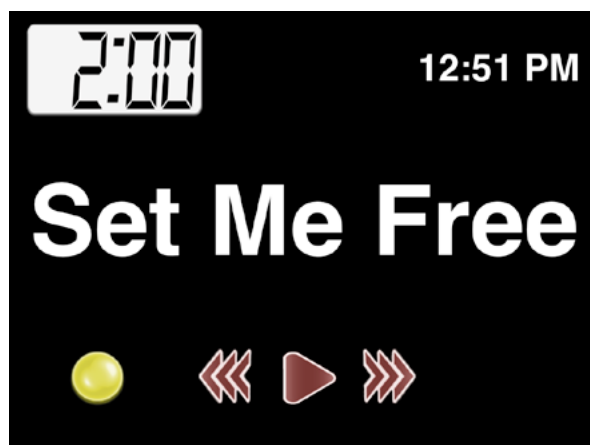
As far as Apps go they really don't get any better than this!

**COST:** \$94.95 for iPad

**COST:** \$79.95 for iPhone

**AVAILABLE FROM THE iTunes STORE**

<http://mojosoftwareonline.com/showcues.htm>





## UBT for Professional Mentalists and Magicians V1.1

By Steven Skindell

### DESCRIPTION:

UBT is known as the *Ultimate Book Test*. It is a sophisticated tool used for professional mentalists and magicians. The app is used to view on an iPod/iPhone the same information that a spectator is reading in a selected book and page (there are 7 books a spectator can choose from -- Dracula, Frankenstein, Of Mice and Men, Animal Farm, Robinson Crusoe, Persuasion and War of the Worlds -- all paperback books are old well known classics).

On the screen the mentalist inputs the book, the page number and presses the Go button ... the text of that selected book and page then starts scrolling on the screen like a teleprompter. The mentalist can then read what is on the screen without user input and guide the spectator to look at specific section on their selected page .. and then the mentalist talks about an image he/she is getting from the spectators mind.

### A LITTLE HISTORY ON THE APP:

The *Ultimate Book Test* was first published in 2007. It was developed using a Windows Phone. Five Classic Books were used and it was a complete package that sold for \$1100.00. The program would display on the screen inputs for the book selected by a spectator, the page number and the line number.

The windows phone was embedded in a clipboard paper well ... the papers at the bottom of the clipboard would have a hole in it where the phone would reside.

The phone was covered by a few blank sheets of paper. The paper and clipboard was used beforehand with real writing with a pen to condition the audience that it was a normal clipboard with paper.

The latest version of the book test was developed for the iPhone/iPod/iPad and the Android devices. Based on some great recommendations from Max Krause this version uses NO line numbers. Paragraph markers are used to navigate the spectator to a

section on the page where you want them to start reading. A teleprompter like display scrolls the page on the screen. You use a pen/stylus to navigate the book, page number and the area where you want the spectator to start reading.

UBT Version 1.1 for the Apple devices includes the following seven books in the software: *Animal Farm*, *Persuasion* (a love story), *Frankenstein*, *Dracula*, *War of the Worlds*, *Robinson Crusoe* and *Of Mice and Men*. This version is available now for Android devices with 480 x 800 screen resolutions. You will need to purchase your own physical books as well as your own device.

### MY THOUGHTS:

In my opinion the best use of an iPhone/Pad/Touch application is when the trick doesn't happen on the device. I much prefer using it as a hidden tool to get the information I need. With this incredible book test application you can do exactly that. The instructions show how to put your device in a pad of paper so it is never seen. I have an old iTouch I never use, so it has now become dedicated to this trick.

Imagine a spectator having a free choice of book, any word, any line and you know exactly what they are looking at. I really do feel this could very well be the **ultimate** book test. It is so easy to use, and the information is instant. It's what you could call 'real' time reading. What the spectator is reading in their book, you are seeing on your device. If it were any better then you'd really be able to read their minds. The updated version means you don't need them to tell you the lines they are looking at.

Another aspect of this that really excites me is that some top professionals are using it, and coming up with amazing routines. Imagine not even having to see what book they have chosen, yet still be able to use this application. The possibilities are endless, and Steven seems to be adding more books.

### WHAT ELSE YOU WILL NEED:

You will need to supply the EXACT books for this to work. The ISBN numbers are supplied, but it is important you get the correct ones. All the information you need to purchase these from Amazon are in the help file. The books can be purchased for as little as a few dollars each. Remember, these are REAL books that aren't gimmicked in any way.

A nice bonus is that you get access to a private forum where others who have purchased this app talk about their own routines, share tips and hints on using it. Some of the ideas are groundbreaking for mentalism. What is nice about the latest update is that it includes feminine style books, as well as masculine. I think it is important to have books that appeal to both sexes.

**FINAL THOUGHTS:** This very well may be the ultimate book test. I have added this to my own professional repertoire, and it has become a highlight of the act. Not only do the audience love it, but I love performing it. It is easy to use, and with the free choices it is as close to the real deal as you could get. With this application you are only limited by your imagination.

**COST:** \$79.99

**AVAILABLE FROM THE iTunes STORE**  
<http://www.ultimatebooktest.com/>

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## Here's Just a Small Sample of Testimonials for Randy Charach:

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# NICK LEWIN PRESENTS ...

## The Magic of Cruising How to make a great living performing magic on cruise ships

I am often asked about the best way to get work onboard a cruise ship. Curiously enough I am almost never asked about what to do when you have got your first job working on a luxury liner. It is a very different world out there on the high seas, and it needs to be approached carefully and systematically to ensure that you get booked back again.

I wrote a very tongue in cheek column for the Linking Ring a couple of years ago on this topic. I got some wonderful reactions from pros that were involved in this kind of work. They appreciated how much real information I delivered between the lines in the article and enjoyed the way I turned the topic on its head to achieve my goals.

However, I suspect that I may have been a little oblique for others reading the piece so I decided to remove my tongue from my cheek and retackle the subject in a more straightforward manner. There have been several books published on this topic but I can't help feeling that they often stressed the obvious at the expense of the practical. I will give you the 'Nick Lewin Crash Course' in the next few paragraphs.

Cruise ships are the nightclubs of this era of entertainment. In the old days a performer would schlep around the country to different cities so that he would be able to work to different audiences. Now the ship does the schlepping and the audiences change because of the itineraries. The perform-



Nick and cruise legend Elliot Finkel



er still has to get to his venue of course so sign up for your frequent flyer clubs.

I performed on my first cruise ship in 1969 and have continued to embrace this arena of work ever since. The business has changed greatly recently and the working conditions have improved vastly. The larger cruise ships now contain showrooms that rival your local Performing Arts Center. The sound, lighting and stages are very sophisticated and if you know how to, can be used to dramatically improve your show.

Generally speaking to get a booking on a ship you are going to need to travel two 45-minute shows. It doesn't mean you will actually get to perform two 45-minute shows but you might. I am writing this column in the Grand Lobby of the Queen Victoria where I was booked to do one show. On a ship your show is usually repeated twice so that early and late seating dinner guests can catch them with ease.

At least, that is how it should have been on this particular three day run. However nothing runs quite that smoothly in real life. As I was going through my tech rehearsal the Production Manager informed me that there had been a magician who had already performed that cruise. He had featured a Torn & Restored Newspaper, which is the closer to my show. I immediately adjusted my show and changed my closing effect to the one from my second show. No problems. After I finished my shows I was told that in fact they would need me to perform

15 minutes the next night in a variety show. No problem—I can dodge bullets for 15 minutes! However the next day at my tech rehearsal I was informed that the singer had lost her voice and could I do 35 minutes to close the bill. It worked out very well, but the entire business required a great deal of flexibility.

I described this episode in some detail but in verbal shorthand I could just have said 'Prepare to be flexible.' Let me run down a few other key ideas keeping them brief and pithy. There are no rules in life only suggestions however I would like to point out that these suggestions are based on quite a bit of experience.

There are certain tricks that have been just done to death on cruise ships. The vast majority of passengers cruise frequently, and they have become very familiar with certain tricks. The Cruise Director (Your Boss) will likely want to scream if he sees a set of Linking Rings, a Card Sword or Baffling Bra. Worst of all is the Bandana/Banana trick, which is now as overdone as a slice of burned toast. Something is really missing from the bit when the surprise element has been removed.

There is nothing wrong with these tricks, of course, but they have become shipboard cliques and should therefore be avoided. One of the very real problems facing a 'fly on' magician is that he is very limited in the hand baggage he is allowed to take on the airplane. You have to (often contractually) carry the majority of your props as hand baggage so we become very limited in our choice of material— it has to fit the bag! Therefore some careful thought needs to go into what you perform and how you pack it.

Most of the time you will have an excellent tech crew who will do their very best to help you providing you give them a good written rundown on what you want them to do. You need to be really articulate during your rehearsal. If you don't have a proper technical cue sheet then a fifty-dollar bill will be ample inducement for your tech to write one for you and give it to you on a CD for future use.

If you want to use live music for your show it is also very cost effective to have the bandleader write charts for you and it can certainly enhance a show to feature some live music in it.

I customize my music CD and burn them fresh for each show. You really can't expect the sound tech to jump backwards and forwards on a CD.

When I arrive on a ship and have some idea of what I will be performing, I also burn a CD that contains my running order, sound cues, lighting cues, introduction and also a couple of JPEGs of my latest working photo. Let the production manager print out the files and you walk into the rehearsal looking like a pro. After your show is finished don't be afraid to buy the techies or band a drink to show your appreciation, it isn't just polite but it's good business.

Don't forget that ships move—that's how they get from port to port! If your table is on wheels then have the stage manager use black sandbags to avert disaster. Other disasters can occur, if you have dancers or another act following you on the bill, if you leave liquids or slippery props onstage after your performance. Yes, cards can be slippery! If a dancer slips on something you left onstage you could cause them to fall and break an ankle or worse.

This is a short list of some excellent ways to look your best and get the job done when you work on a ship. Oh, one more tiny point, any vessel big enough for you to be working on is a ship and NOT a boat. This is important terminology and getting it wrong makes you look like an idiot.

I have taken some of the thoughts incorporated into this and several other columns and expanded them into a very thorough and detailed book about this exciting field of employment and turned them into a full length book entitled, "Cruise Magic 101: How to make a great living performing magic on a cruise ship." It is a very definitive treatise on the topic based on my 40 years plus years experience in the field. The book costs \$24:95 and can be ordered by emailing me at [nicklewin1@mac.com](mailto:nicklewin1@mac.com).





# 364 ON 1

## WAYNE ROGERS

This routine combines ideas from five existing tricks. The Birthday Card Trick and The Gold Medallion (Al Koran, *Professional Presentations*), the Card in sealed envelope in Wallet, Confabulation (Alan Shaxon) and the old 52 On One gag. For those who don't own Card To Wallet, I'll explain an easy to make alternative.

**PLOT:**

Ask a spectator to think of a close friend and to tell you their friend's birthday date.

Not the year. Just the month and number. This is written down on a pad along with the friend's name. You tell the spectator that in your pocket, on the back of an envelope, you have that very

date written down.

From your jacket pocket you remove your wallet containing a sealed envelope. On the front of the envelope is a full year calendar, and you cheekily show the friend's birthday. After the groans subside you partially tear open the envelope and hand it to the spectator. From inside they remove a business card and on the back it reads, I PREDICT YOUR FRIEND'S BIRTHDAY IS THE 27TH MARCH.

**THE SECRET:**

You openly write the date on the top of the pad, but when you ask for the friend's name and write it down, you also secretly "double

write" the date onto a prepared business card. Fold the page another third and tear it off, handing it to the spectator for safe keeping. The card with date is palmed off and inserted into the envelope in your pocket. Show the calendar gag then tear off most of the bottom of the envelope and hand the envelope to the spectator who will find inside the prediction card.

**PREPARATION:**

Glue a full year calendar onto the envelope you will use. Mine was taken from <http://www.timeanddate.com> On this website you can customize any calendar or copy the one supplied below.

If you have a Card to Wallet, glue the calendar to your usual envelopes. My alternative method is to just use an envelope. Prepare by making a tear on the back of a coin envelope along the line of the bottom turn up. Start the tear by cutting part way with a sharp knife (insert a piece of card in the envelope to protect the address side while you make the cut), then make the tear. Photo 1.

Seal the main opening flap. Fold a business card in half. But do not crease sharply. Insert the bent card into the opening you tore at the bottom of the envelope, and push half way down. The spring in the folded card will hold the torn end of the envelope open. Photos 1-2. When it comes time to load the prediction card, the bent card and prediction card are together pushed right down into the envelope.

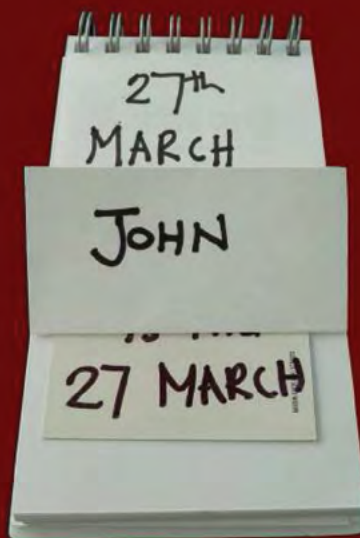
To prevent the envelope from being squashed inside your pocket, make a narrow box from cardboard stapled to a wooden frame. The prepared envelope sits in safely in the box and can be used any time in your act. Photo 2 Finally take a small writing pad and fold up the bottom third of the first page. On another business card write I PREDICT YOUR FRIEND'S BIRTHDAY IS THE . . . Leave the date blank to be filled in later. Place the card under the top page of the pad. Photos 3-4 The photos show the full sequence of the dirty work

1. Pre-tear envelope and insert bent card into opening.
2. Place pre-torn envelope in box in pocket with folded card holding gap open.
3. Prediction card with space left for writing in date.
4. Pad with page folded up and prediction card in place.
5. Write date and name on pad. Double write date onto the prediction card.
6. Fold and tear off page.
7. Palmed card goes into envelope in box and pushes down the bent card (Viewed from above as sitting in pocket.)
8. Show calendar glued to front of envelope. The tear in the envelope is on the back and covered by your fingers.
9. Partly tear down the pre-torn end of the envelope for spectator to remove prediction.
10. After the prediction card is removed, the second bent card is still in the envelope. Take the envelope back and remove the second card. The bend you made earlier will not be creased sharp and you can easily straighten it out and give it to one of the other spectators to keep.

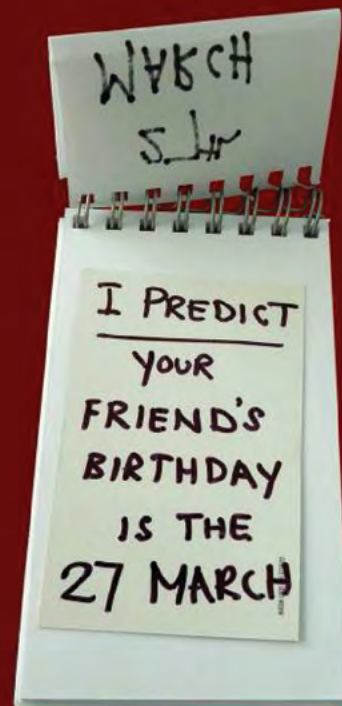




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Wayne Rogers (Chicane) is a full-time professional magician and magic manufacturer based in Auckland, New Zealand. Wayne's original magic props include The Appearing Ladder from Briefcase, Missing Spade, Appearing Shovel, and Pinocchio's Nose.

Over the years Wayne has won most major competitions at New Zealand magic conventions, and in 2004 was honored with the supreme award for excellence for a New Zealand magician . . . The Grand Master of Magic Award.

Contact Wayne at [chicane@nzmagic.com](mailto:chicane@nzmagic.com) or visit his website

<http://www.nzmagic.com>



Wayne Rogers

# THE SUCCESS SERIES

## CRIS JOHNSON



## Surround Yourself With Positive People!

In short, the negativity in our field can be astounding at times.

Once I started writing the review blog at Hocus Pocus, things started to change....I began interacting with some wonderful people in magic. People like Paul Romhany, Peter Loughran and Bobby Motta. These guys in particular I am proud and honored to call my friends.

They're good people doing very well in magic and more importantly than that, they only share positive energy. Rather than run down or complain about this person or that or complain about the cost of a new trick, they simply go about their business and try to make the world a better place by being kind, decent people.

To a guy like me who, until recently, only encountered negativity in the form of some, though certainly not all, of the people on the Magic Café or the local guys trying to undercut my efforts in nasty ways, the friendships I have developed give me hope for our field.

The point behind all of this is a simple one – surround yourself with positive people. Instead of adding to the problem or complaining about the lack of work out there or whatever, look at the bright side of things. On top of that, if you know of a magician just starting out, encourage him/her in useful, positive ways. Be supportive. Kindness begets kindness.

Additionally, all of the positive attitudes you surround yourself with will begin to help you change how you think. Without getting into a big hypnosis lecture, I can say beyond a shadow of a doubt that the more a person dwells on the negative, the more negativity will follow that person. Our brains are like super-charged bio-computers and it will react to whatever is fed into it.

It has been a very interesting year because of the friendships that I have began and/or deepened.

Let me explain....

Magic, to me, is a lonely business. Unless you've got a performing partner (Siegfried & Roy, The Pendragons, Penn & Teller, etc) you're spending a lot of time by yourself.

To make matters worse, in magic, there's a deep decades-long tradition amongst many, though certainly not all, part-time or amateur magicians to ridicule products, performers or other people in their market, shows they see, opinions they read about online, etc.

With all of that in mind, I can confess to you that it does not take much to make me doubt myself. Because I must project confidence onstage, until the last few years, I have separated myself almost completely from the magic community as a whole. I have a couple of close friends in the biz, but we were all under the radar, so to speak.

If you are a magician who is currently surrounded by people who trash other magicians without foundation, then I encourage you – no, I challenge you to find new folks in the magic community to interact with.

It will help you emotionally, psychologically and even professionally in ways you can't imagine until it happens.

#### ABOUT CRIS

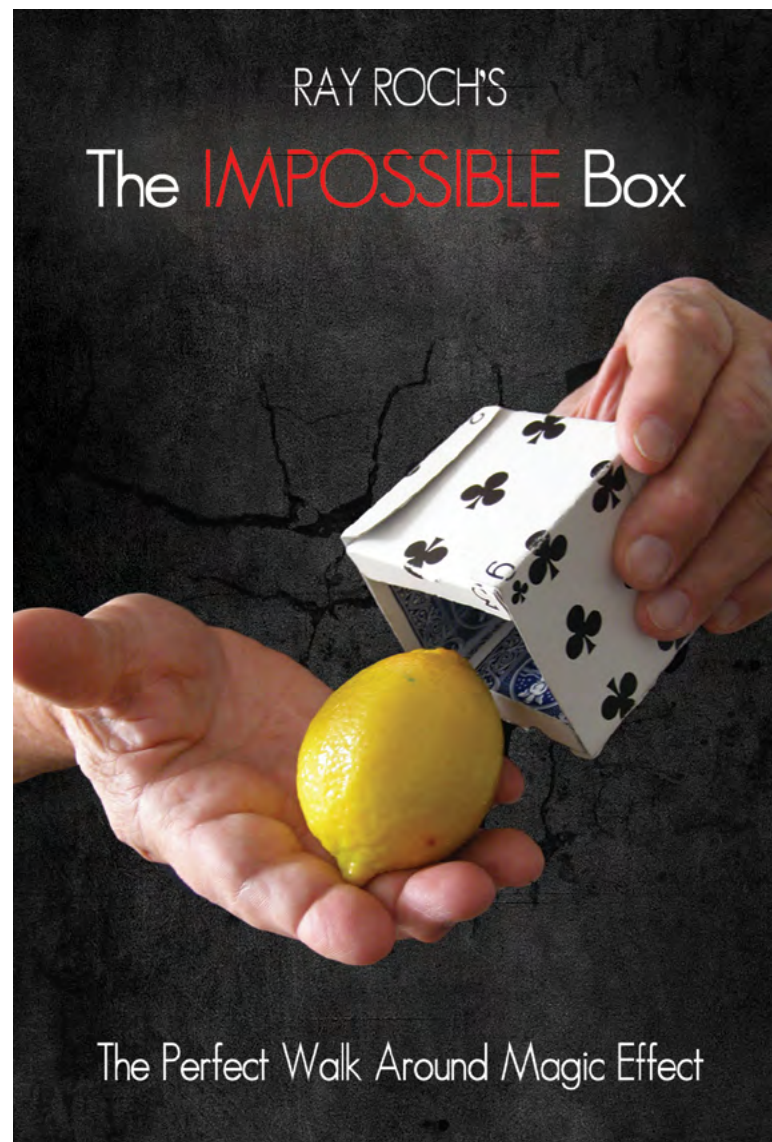
Cris Johnson is a full time professional magician living in Buffalo New York. Cris has been delivering motivational and fun-filled programs to clients in 32 states across the U.S. for over 15 years.



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# MARKETING TIP FOR BIZARRE MAGIC

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## PETER LOUGHRAN

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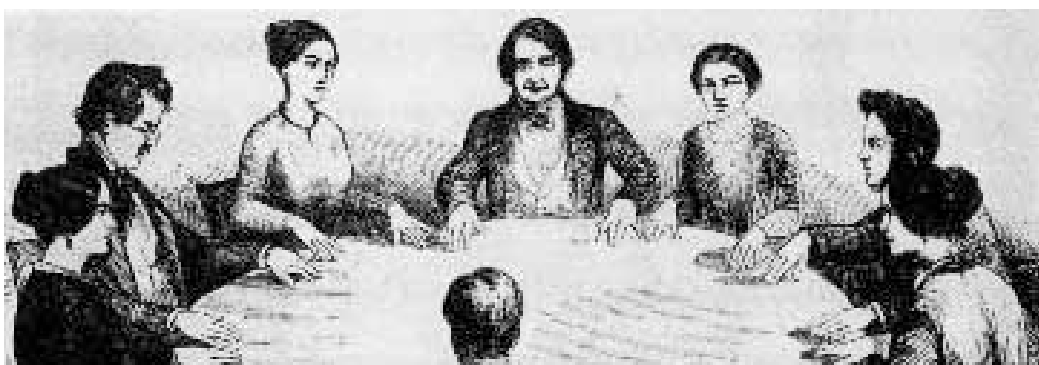
» If you are interested in doing bizarre shows, or a séance show, ghost show, or are currently already in this market, and whether or not you are using one of my products, or something else to create your show, I'm going to share a very cool idea on how to generate more money by doing these shows, which is also an idea that can actually book you more shows!

I was talking with Canadian paranormal performer Scott McClelland a few years ago, and we were chatting about doing séance parties and we talked about taking "night vision" cameras to the parties to film the events of that night for the client for added realism, and also an additional way to explain why you can have an assistant with you (if you ever need them to do some of the dirty work for you). Then it hit me. I remember a few years past, when a good friend of mine was a tour guide

for a white water rafting company on the Ottawa River in Canada. He used to take myself and few other 'victims' down the deadly rapids, and I'm not talking about a 12 man boat either, I'm talking about those little 6 man boats that were guaranteed to flip you out and send you down into what they call the green room deep underwater beneath the rapids. One year I nearly died, but that's a whole other story, needless to say I haven't been back in a few years. However that's what made my last trip think of what I did before I left the white water rafting resort.

During your outing on the rapids, they send out kayakers with video cameras to record the day's events and to capture the exciting and terrifying flipping of the people and boats into the massive rapids, then if you survive (JK), several hours later, they show a video, that they made





and edited on site, of the day's events all done to music. You get to see yourself flipping out of the boats and swimming for your life! Then after the showing they offer to sell you the video for around \$40 a copy. Brilliant!

So after talking with Scott, and after seeing the brilliant marketing ploy from the rafting company to garner additional money from the guests with the after video sales, I knew I could apply that same idea to magic and these séances ghost show parties.

The idea is simple, you set up one or more video camera and make sure they have the "night vision" option and make sure to set the camera to that mode for the show. You record the night's events, and then with the raw footage you take video to a video effects expert or do it yourself with

computer programs like "after effects", and super impose ghostly images interacting with the spectators. When you purchase one of our effects we supply you with contact info for our special effects guy who can do the work for you and at great rates. For instance when performing our WitchBoard illusion or using our separate "Ghost Controller" unit that we offer, you can make a Radio turn on by itself and cause it to seemingly switch though the stations rapidly and then eventually stop on a specific song as if possessed by a ghost that you are trying to contact. Now imagine that when your guests see the after video they will now see a ghostly figure in the room, with them and their guests, standing over the radio and changing the stations! Hook Line and Sinker.

Add a few more effects, and now you have an after video that you can sell for top dol-

lar at least \$50-\$100 each. You know the guests are all going to want one to show their friends. Sally says..."Hey what did you do Saturday night Jill?" Jill replies..."Well you are never going to believe it, here let me show you" and she pops in a DVD of the nights events showing her and her friends with ghosts captured on camera in the same room, and them all reacting to it, now that is priceless PR. Now best of all, you make sure your contact and booking info is all over and on that DVD, and you have an interactive business card that will surely keep you booked over and over and over again.

Please send comments and questions to: [peter@masterofillusions.ca](mailto:peter@masterofillusions.ca)

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**FROM  
ANYWHERE\***

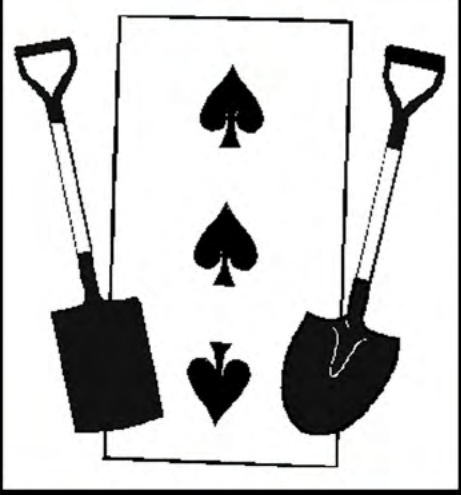
\* SUPPLY YOUR OWN CASE OR SUITABLE CONTAINER

**Wayne Rogers'**

**APPEARING POLE  
FROM  
NEWSPAPER**



WE  
SUPPLY  
THE  
GIMMICK  
YOU SUPPLY  
YOUR  
OWN POLE





# INCOME MARKETING SYSTEM FOR MAGICIANS

## BY RANDY CHARACH

Last issue, we looked at an overview of the Income Marketing a System for Magicians© and had a closer look at Step 1.

Here's a summary of the steps of the system:

- Step 1)** Identify The Perfect Client to book Your Show
- Step 2)** Name Yourself As The 'Only' Magician to Hire
- Step 3)** Create Your Magician Marketing Plan
- Step 4)** Offer Various Forms of your Show to Clients
- Step 5)** Measure Your Results from your Marketing Plan
- Step 6)** Expand On Marketing That Brings You the Best Gigs

Today, let's examine...

### Step 2: Name Yourself As The 'Only' Magician to hire

Now that you've identified your perfect client...

Oh, did you?

If not, best to refer back to the previous issue of Vanish and read that article. The Income Marketing System for Magicians is a complete step-by-step system. Even though we're just touching on it in these articles, it's important for you to follow each step to gain the biggest benefit from these lessons.

Okay, here we go...let me ask you a question;

Why should an event planner book you instead of another magician?

Have you ever asked that question of yourself? If you have, congratulations you get one point. Was your answer ---- because your show is better than your competitors?

If so, sorry you lose one point. Or, maybe your show is really good and you also offer an amazing customer experience before and after the show.

Well, it still true you need a solid, commercially acceptable, entertaining show. It's also true you need to be professional and outstanding in your dealings with your client before, during and after the show. It's time to step up our game though, and take this giant step forward.

What if you could eliminate the competition? First, direct competition only exists among commodities. Is your magic show a commodity?

Let's find out what Wikipedia defines as a commodity...

*"It is used to describe a class of goods for which there is demand, but which is supplied without qualitative differentiation across a market. A commodity has full or partial fungibility; that is, the market treats it as equivalent or nearly so no matter who produces it."*

I know you're thinking --- this doesn't describe you because you're not a "goods" and there is qualitative difference between your show and business practices compared to other magicians. Fair enough, true -- and a great start for you to raise your game.

You see, right now all your achieving is

premium pricing along with a greater quality and quantity of bookings. That's great and will bring you a good amount success. If you truly want to eliminate competition, and create an environment where you, your show and your fee stands separate from other magicians -- is a serious next step you must do.

It's time to differentiate your act in a bigger way than before. It's all about positioning. Once you effectively position yourself and remain congruent with that positioning, you'll no longer be competing with any other magician.

There are many ways to position yourself as the only logical choice for your client. You first need to know your client inside and out (step 1 of my system).

Start by asking yourself what's unique about your act, or you. How are you different than all the other magicians? Ask others who know you both personally and professionally their opinion. Dig deep. There has to be something. Once you discover 'it', you have something to work with. You can build on that uniqueness.

Another option is to create something new, exciting and different about your magic. Stuck? Try combining more than one thing. Notice on America's Got Talent how the most popular acts have combined, say 'dance' and 'lighting effects'?

Paul Romhany has done a beautiful job of combining Charlie Chaplin with his magic. He's positioned his act in a category of its own and essentially eliminated magicians and Charlie Chaplin impersonators as competition. Brilliant!

Criss Angel originally combined rock music with magic. Remember Marvyn Roy "Mr. Electric"? How about Norm Nielsen and his music themed act? Both of these magicians set themselves apart

from other magicians, and were in big demand. I use to see them on TV all the time when growing up as a young magician.

Another way to do it is to create something bigger than you and be the driving force behind it. Doug Henning had a lot going for him and was destined for greatness. He really made his leap to stardom through magical themed shows and starring in them. So, think about your magic show in terms of an 'event' a 'spectacle' -- and give it a name. Immediately you're different than the next magician who positions his 'brand' just as him or her doing some really cool magic tricks.

You can be the 'only magician to...' or, 'only magician who...' and position your brand around that. What can you do that no other magician does. Think David Blaine and his Houdini-like stunts. Copperfield did some spectacular illusions that no other magician had ever done -- over and over again stayed in the spotlight for years. .

It's not necessary for you to have a huge budget, or risk your life to stand-out among the other magi's. You don't have to have a second amazing skill either. There are more ways to become the 'only magician' -- even if it's just in your local community.

The higher your goals, the more of a challenge it will be. If you're a part-time kids performer and only want to perform in your city, it's a different process of discovery than one wanting to be the next household name magician.

In the next issue Vanish, we're covering a HUGE topic. It's about creating your marketing plan and that can be a lot of fun. That's where you look at SEO, Twitter, Facebook, all that other stuff that's in our face every day -- all day!

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**"THAT SHOULD BE ME UP THERE."**

This is the cry I hear from so many magicians when they see someone who is more successful than they are. And I have to agree. It could be you. So why isn't it? What is really stopping you from climbing the ladder to success and seeing your own name in lights? Or even if you do not aspire to that level of stardom, what is stopping you from being a better performer?

Success comes in many guises and we have to ask ourselves how we really measure it and what we really want. However you answer that question I think there are certain steps that all successful people take. I recently read an article titled '7 steps to success', they were all pretty general so here are my 7 steps to success in the world of magic.

**1 Do what you love and what you are good at.**

Well we already have found something we love - the art of magic. Find the branch of magic that really floats your boat. If you enjoy it then it will be easier to get others to enjoy it. Are we any good at it? Well you are better than most people in the world. When it comes to the ability to perform magic you are already one of the best in the world - because most people can't do it at all! It only takes one good trick to make someone say 'do that again'. And if you can get that response then you are on the right road.

**2 Be prepared to learn and to be positive (motivation and enthusiasm).**

There are many magicians who are prepared to help you and teach you through books, DVDs and personal tuition. There are magic clubs and societies with members who want you to succeed. Seek them out. Like so many professional magicians I love to spend time talking about the art I love. I need to learn and be positive just as much as anybody else and one of the ways I learn is by teaching others. If you are positive fun person and want to learn you will have no trouble finding people to teach you. Find a magical mentor who can help you develop.

**FROM THE DESK OF KEITH FIELDS**

### 3 Be innovative.

Innovation is the life blood of magic. You should dare to be different and not be afraid to take a risk and try something new. It is only by trying something new that you will discover if it works and discover more about yourself. And if it doesn't work it doesn't matter. I try to do something different every time I perform. If it works, great, I have a new idea to develop, if it doesn't then I will try something else next time.

### 4 Be prepared to invest in yourself.

Not just money but your time, effort and any other resources you have. Time and effort are a much more valuable commodity than money. And they will achieve a lot more than your cash ever will. But use all these things wisely as there are no short cuts to putting in the work.

### 5 You must be disciplined in having set goals and targets.

Remember that persistence is the key to success. Goals are such an important tool on the road to success. But it is no good to anyone unless those goals are written down and regularly reviewed. Work out where you want to be then work out what steps you need to take to get there. If your ambition is to put on a stage show then start by building the skill base you need to put on the show. Gather the tools and experience that you need in small chunks. You can practice the skills that you need for one arena in another. You can learn skills at a birthday party show that transfer directly to a larger situation. Design a roadmap to help you get to where you want to be and stick with it.

### 6 You must be prepared to manage your time effectively.

Set aside a certain amount of time every so often to analyze your progress and review your roadmap. Re-write it as new opportunities arise. And most importantly enjoy the ride. If it is not fun then you are probably doing it wrong. If you want to achieve something then you will have to work at it. It is not going to just happen.

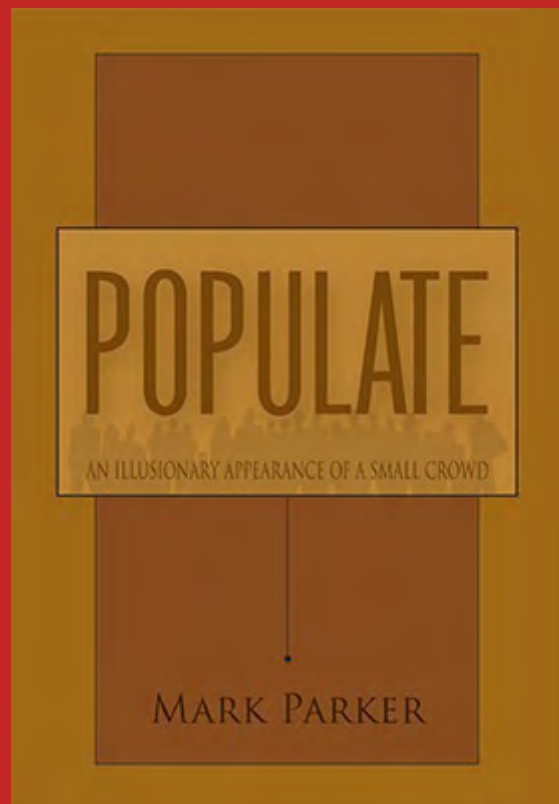
### 7 As you evolve, learn to give back.

As you grow and learn and begin to hit your own goals you should start to help others do the same thing. Teach others the secrets that helped you achieve your success. Never forget that you were once a beginner and needed help from others to climb the ladder. Some of us even needed help to get on the ladder in the first place.

By taking these steps you will definitely improve your chances and maybe, with a bit of luck, it will be you up there.

## ABOUT KEITH

Keith is an excellent motivational speaker, an experienced TV presenter, and an award winning comedian and magician. Originally from London, his keynote speaking and performing has taken him quite literally all around the world. He now lives with his wife and family in the USA and was called 'an alien with extraordinary ability' by the American government.



**Populate** - An illusionary appearance of a small crowd. Introduction by Eric Olsen of EDF Magic

This is the first in a series of single illusion publications by renowned Illusion designer Mark Parker, author of illusion books 'Vivify' & 4E Illusion Design. **Populate** is Parkers take on the Guy Jarrett 21 person cabinet.

In this version an elevated framework structure, screened with fabric is shown completely empty & revolved 360 degrees. In an instant the fabric is stripped away revealing the surprise appearance of 26 people. The illusion is self contained, performed away from any backdrops and requires no black art. A stunning and surprising appearance of a small crowd of people.

The illusion is described in detail complete with dimensions and construction notes. The apparatus required is designed to break down into individual sections for easy transport. Printed in glorious full color throughout, complete with detailed 3 dimensional illustrations.

*"Mark has a devilishly creative mind that scares me!"*  
-Lu Chen

*"Populate is a wonderful & surprising illusion. Mark's elegant design solution to this plot is a must read!"*  
- Charles Bach - Las Vegas

*"Mark Parker is an explosive creative genius of illusion design! Fascinating excellence!"*  
- Brett Daniels - USA

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# THE REVELATION KEN DYNE



Creative madman and mind reader. Performing a combination of corporate shows, theatre appearances and speaking on the subject of real persuasion, Ken is one of the UK's most sought after live acts.

**A** tear, a peek, a switch, nail-write it, double-write it, pocket-write it, switch it, steal it ... whatever you do to get to the end result, the audience cares very little.

Why don't they care? Because if you're doing it right, they shouldn't know it is happening at all.

But there is something that they do care about. Something that makes one performer stand out, and the majority fade in the background.

Why is it that we're all still obsessed with a learning a better peek of a card? A better control, a better switch, the latest impression device, the newest way to force something on someone for later?

The reason is because, well at least for me anyway, I forget that other people outside of our community actually have things they care about beyond how they selected their card. They have friends, jobs, hobbies and interests too.

So far as our participants can see, they chose a card. That's it. They probably don't even recall whether you dribbled or riffled the cards, do they?

So much literature we find our shelves filled with focuses on 'how' we do the thing; the secret move or prop. When in fact, so long as delivered with an equal measure of confidence and competency, it's just as good as the next thing.

Yes, the "flamdooby half-pass" might allow you to keep all of your fingers in view at all times, but the "shaba pass" has been nailing audiences for years. Most of us know that it's mainly for us that we learn these things.

So what is it that audiences do care about? They care about the revelations, and that is pretty much it.

Look at a mentalist for example, he only has a finite number of

things he can do. He can read minds, predict things and possibly move objects with his thought and do rapid mathematical/memory things. That is ALL he can do.

Now go around and ask a pro what to include in your program and they'll tell you to choose just one or two of these 'abilities' and only perform demonstrations that illustrate those things. So now we have just one effect happening over and over again.

In so many cases, especially here in England, the fad is to dress your mentalism in a platinum scarf of 'influence'. So everything he does is influencing people and proving he did so correctly. So, prediction.

The show consists of a prediction followed by...a prediction. Which is then closely followed by something that shows signs of being vaguely different which, oh wait...is predicted.

As far as the audience sees, it's the same thing over and over again, unless you do something different. The revelation.

I've become obsessed with creating interesting revelations for effects. I've got a notebook (well a digital one called a Google Document), I refer to as my Book Of Revelations™ and this is where my creativity has been focused in the recent years.

At first I was obsessed with interesting methods, right now those things don't matter. Instead I think audiences will get far greater enjoyment from seeing a series of interesting, surprising, clever

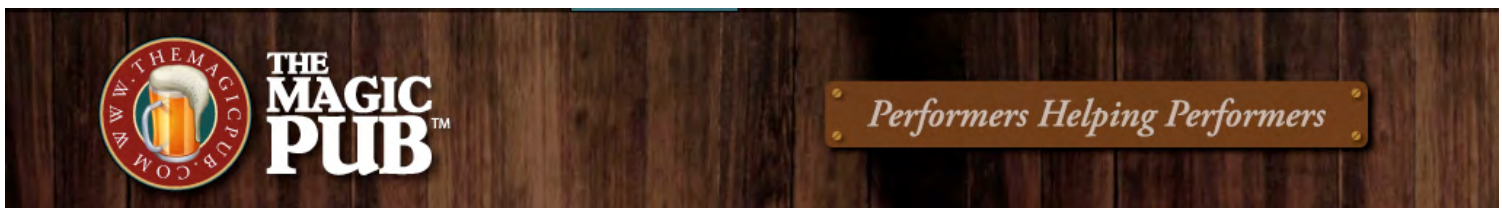
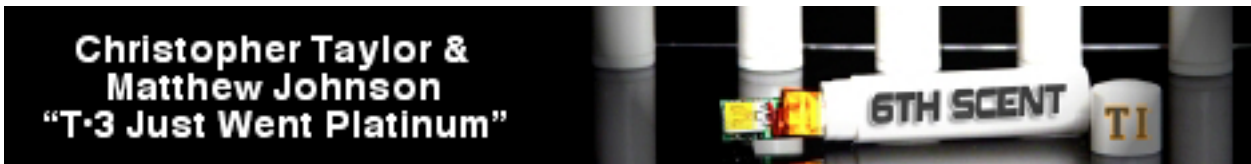
and even strange revelations.

Anyone familiar with my routine Brainwashed will see how I took the idea of a 'In Plain Sight' prediction and taking it to the extreme level, creating a very interesting and surprising finale to my theatre shows.

The reason I think focusing on revelations is of such importance is because of the growth in sameness among performers. How many times have you seen the Vanishing Bandanna performed the EXACT same way? Is there anything unique about any of those performances that makes the performer stand out? Probably not. Is there any element of that performer in the performance? Probably not.

I'm a visual person and I like to go against the grain in many areas of my life, in particular in my approach to mentalism. I don't go for this minimalism approach where some pieces of card and a pad will do. Instead I create interesting visual elements that stimulate more of the senses in audiences, leaving a much more five-dimensional memory\* in their minds. One that, most importantly, is uniquely me.

\*A five dimensional memory is one that involves all of the senses. I made that term up in the hope it'll catch on and appear in self-help books sometime soon.





## "Hermione"

Hermione is of course a character in the popular "Harry Potter" series; here the inspiration comes however from the Shakespearean character in "The Winter's Tale" Queen Hermione, wife of King Leontes. The king banishes Hermione and she remains a stone statue for sixteen years. The play finally ends with the stone statue of the queen returning back to life.

# HERMIONE

## LEE ALEX

"HERMIONE"



### Effect :

In the centre of the stage a clear raised platform is lit from all angles, including the underside, leaving no doubt in the audience's mind that trap doors, mirrors or the such like are being employed ( indeed they are not!). Atop the platform stands the figure of a woman, motionless and without color. It is apparent that this figure is in fact a statue and has been chiselled from stone. Under cover of a rapid smoke effect the statue transforms into a colorful duplicate of the statue – the figure has come to life and is able to walk down from the platform via the glass steps that lead up to it.

### Background to the effect :

There is an age old thought amongst audiences that everything the illusionist accomplishes is done with smoke and mirrors. I wish sometimes that everything was so simple! I have always had a passion for the legend of Hermione in "The Winter's Tale" since we were forced to study this at school. It is one of Shakespeare's least popular and least performed plays, but despite that, the image of Hermione changing from stone back to a human has stayed with me for a very long time. Indeed I have been toying with this very illusion for a number of years. I wanted to present the most clean and believable transformation with the least technical worries. The effect was intended to be fast and performable everywhere. The solution that I have come up with allows this to be presented completely in the round with no special technical requirements, no special lighting, and none of the usual bases or other means of hiding an assistant that other illusions rely upon.

The platform that is described in the effect above is not a necessity, but was placed to emphasise the fact that the statue is isolated and may be viewed from every possible angle and also that the effect may be accomplished literally in a flash with no other technical requirements. A makeshift platform could be constructed with two sawhorses and a sheet of substantial clear acrylic, the area of which needs to be just large enough for a single person to stand comfortably – let us say 80 centimeters square.

THE SECRET OF THIS  
ILLUSIONS LIES IN  
THE DRESS.



**Method :**

The secret of this illusion lies in the dress. The fact that a historic figure has been chosen as the subject is no coincidence. The principle lies in a large reversible crinoline style skirt, which at the outset shows a stone effect and once turned inside out shows a bright and colorful material in contrast to the dullness of the stone.

In order to perform the illusion two girl assistants of similar height and build are required.

One girl is made up with normal stage make-up; the other has been painted with body paints on the face and bare areas (arms, neck, upper chest etc. depending on the style of the dress used) in a stone effect. The hair likewise has been styled in a similar fashion and the "petrified" girl's hair is also body-painted to resemble stone. (On large areas it is advisable that the body paint be sprayed on to the subject rather than sponged on. In order to get a good base for the hair, this should be well lacquered before applying the paint, or alternatively a wig may be worn by both girls).

**Construction of the dress and skirt :**

For ease of construction we shall look at the separate elements of the whole

costume.

For the illusion to be accomplished two complete costumes are constructed, one "stone" costume, and one revelation costume. The appearance of the dresses should be identical apart from the surface texture. (For example if the one dress has a bow in a certain place, the other dress should possess an identical bow in the same position).

**The dress :**

This includes the upper bodice of the costume and a lower under skirt which is used to conceal the legs of the assistant under the layered skirt that comes over the top. The bodice is tight fitting to the body and gives contrast to the skirt below. There should be no apparent separation between the bodice and the skirt. The decoration of the bodice depends upon the scenario (see Further Presentation Ideas below). In the case of Hermione two identical bodices are made (that is identical in look, but not necessarily in material. For the faux stone costume use calico or linen which will facilitate the application

of the stone effect). The "petrified" bodice is then treated to a stone-effect decoration by applying paints to the surface of the material. Please be aware that certain fabrics may be harmed by the paints and should be tested before construction is commenced. Special "stone effect" paints are available commercially, or you may consult any number of decorating effect books for further ideas on how to create a stone or marble effect. The effect should not be heavily applied since the flexibility of the material should not be lost. The stone effect may be enhanced by adding "moss" (particles of acrylic sponge painted green, also used for model train settings) and foliage – creeping ivy, autumn leaves, skeleton leaves made from wire and netting etc. to the costume.

**The skirt :**

Again two skirts are required and these are constructed with a bustle – a gathering of material which gives fullness at the back of the skirt. The necessity for this will be seen as we go through the construction. I was tempted to use an underlay wire frame as

used on some wedding dresses to give fullness to the skirt, which is needed to hide the second assistant before the change and the original assistant after the change. This however was rejected as it hindered the reversal of the two skirts within each other – both assistants would need to wear a similar underlay and the skirt would not function as intended.

The skirts should be of such a length that the feet of the assistant are hidden, but not so much as they drape on the ground. Both skirts are the same length. If necessary the skirts can be made slightly longer to cover the hidden assistant completely, but not so long as to arouse suspicion from the audience – a couple of centimeters maximum will suffice. Allow for the length of the skirt rising when the assistant is concealed within.

The skirts are supplied with three layers of under skirt. These are made from chiffon or light satin which will give fullness, but not create unnecessary weight. The waist of the skirt should be a tight fit over the bodice and dress. If necessary use an elastic waistband or draw-string waist which can be drawn tightly around the waist. To make dressing easier the waistbands open completely and may be fastened again with poppers and a zipper.

The completed skirt will resemble some item of clothing made for Siamese twins! Turn both skirts inside out. These are then laid waist to waist. The two back halves of each waist are sewn together. When the first skirt is turned the right side out, the inner skirt is still inside out. When this latter skirt is turned the right way around, the original outer skirt turns inside out and becomes covered by the second skirt.

#### **Dressing your assistants :**

Both assistants wear their appropriate bodice and underskirt. The second skirt (final revelation) is worn first. Once the skirt has been worn this assistant bends in half forward to touch her toes. The skirt which will create the original appearance can now be worn.

Dressing should be left to the last minute. The concealed assistant is able to walk backward in her bent position, and the standing assistant must be guided walking forward. Alternatively you may wish to use a low platform with casters for ease of manoeuvrability. If your performance allows

the assistants may be dressed at the last minute on top of the glass platform before the curtain raises on the stage.

#### **Presentation :**

The petrified assistant stands on top of the clear platform. With a music cue a smoke effect is set off. Beforehand both assistants have crossed their legs one on top of the other under the skirts. This crossing facilitates the necessary turning – if the one assistant were to bend, and the other one to stand up, the dress would be revealed with its back to the audience. The turning must be done in the process of standing up/bending down, and this under cover of the smoke. The assistants must be well rehearsed in this process in order to allow the effect to occur as quickly as possible. The correct leg must be crossed over the other according to the way in which both assistants will turn – a turn to the right means crossing the left leg over the right leg, and vice versa.

If you wish to eliminate this manual turning process, this can be created mechanically by having the assistants stand on a “lazy Susan” (turning plate) which is fixed on top of the platform. These are similar to what is used for television turntables or the metal twisting plate found in the gym. The assistants are turned by the magician immediately after the revelation dress has come into view. The use of such a device should be a last resort as it deviates from the simplicity of the workings of the illusion.

Alternative method: “Hermione goes Solo” This method requires only one live assistant. In this case the original figure is replaced by a mannequin. This mannequin should be made to resemble your assistant as closely as possible. The mannequin is dressed with a wig to resemble the hair of your assistant, or alternatively your assistant wears a wig too.

For the presentation of “Hermione” (a stone figure to a human), this method is worth considering. The vinyl mannequin may be decorated easily to resemble stone, and there is even the possibility of creating a more stone-like effect by applying plaster or wall filler to the mannequin which can then be spray painted. The surface of the mannequin should be roughened with glass- or sandpaper which allows the filler to adhere better.

The skirt differs in this version also in so much as two waists are not necessary. The two skirts are turned inside out and sewn to each other around the waist line. The mannequin literally sits on top of the bent buttocks of the assistant. The bodice of the mannequin is made longer and gathered up at the join to the waist of the skirt. This excess allows the mannequin to hang down and not perpendicular to the assistant once she has stood up.

The mannequin is held in place by the concealed live assistant. She is able to hold the mannequin at the waist either side through the material of the skirt. The turning during the revelation is omitted in this method. The assistant faces the front from the beginning, releases her grip on the mannequin, which falls backward under the skirt. If your assistant is able to bend double backwards, then the turning may also be eliminated in the previous method also!

This method has the advantage of allowing the skirt to be removed once the effect is finished and having your assistant perform another illusion after. The mannequin and the first skirt are hidden behind the lining and underskirts of the revelation skirt. The skirt should have poppers or clip fasteners on the waistband to allow the skirt to be removed. The skirt has an open slit down one side.

#### **The Mirror Glass Method:**

An almost transparent effect may be achieved by adding an underskirt made of shiny silver spandex. There are many highly reflective fabrics available which are almost mirror like. You may also consider the use of a silver-sequined fabric.

The idea here pertains from the magicians’ Mirror Glass effect. The glass is divided in half with a reflective mirror which reflects the front of the glass giving the optical illusion of a completely empty glass. In reality the mirror hides the back half of the glass which is loaded with a production item. Like wise the front of the skirt is made more transparent with the use of chiffon and organza materials. You may wish to add lights inside the skirt for a stunning effect. The skirt becomes lucid and the second assistant is well hidden within the wraps of silver fabric. Fibre optic fabrics may also be a great choice to add to the beauty of this illusion – fabrics which

attract light or have fibre optics built into them, LED bulbs, Glo-sticks, fluorescent and UV fabrics, EL wire are all options to highlight this illusion.

Experiment with different fabrics and lighting effects to gain the most translucent appearance possible. The original assistant must stand in front of the silver divide with legs visible. If you choose the use a mannequin, then no legs will be visible.

The addition of this detail and optical illusion adds highly to an already seemingly impossible effect.

**Further Presentation Ideas :**

The look of this illusion is not restricted of course to a petrified girl changing to a human.

Shakespeare's Hermione was just the inspiration. There are many scenarios that this basic principle may be applied to:

Evil to Good (or vice versa): This is a classic theme that runs through many forms of entertainment and story lines. A dark colored outfit with Gothic accessories, studs and rubies, splattered with dark red, dried roses might change into a light colored silken dress decorated with pearls and fresh flowers. In reverse the magician may wish to act out a "Vampire's Bride" type effect where the innocent virgin becomes a creature of the night.

Ice Queen: A frozen goddess-like figure sparkles in a white satin dress, overlaid with organza of various shades of blues, white and silver, encrusted with crystals and stones. Careful attention should be given to the make-up and hair, and again body paints and shimmer will help out extensively to give the desired effect. The Ice Queen is melted and becomes a Fire Element in bright reds, oranges and yellow. Use a vanishing cane in silver and an appearing cane in red respectively as an accessory.

There is an exciting product on the market known as "Smash" plastic which is used in the film industry for breaking glass effects. If your budget allows, you may wish to have the top of the Ice Queen made from this material. Before the revelation of the hidden assistant you are able to break the ice and have the top of the model smash into many pieces.

Of course each time a new mannequin must be made, but the effort will be worth it!

Cinderella: There are a number of characters in plays that could benefit from such an effect. The first one that springs to mind would be of course the "rags to riches" story of Cinderella. Make your two girls up with a wig to look the same – of course one should be a lot more dishevelled than the other!! The first dress is of course a patchwork of different materials stitched together with thick stitches, dirty stains, and an apron.



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# CARDS OF FATE

## RICHARD WEBSTER

Richard Webster has written over thirty five books for psychic entertainers and magicians, and dozens more for the general public that have been translated into twenty two languages.  
<http://www.psychic.co.nz>

The magician casually shuffles a deck of playing cards as he tells his guests about Donald Campbell, the man who set several land and water speed records before his tragic death in 1967.

*"Donald Campbell was very superstitious," the magician says. "For instance, he always carried a teddy bear called 'Mr. Woppit' that his wife gave him. That was his good luck charm. Mr. Woppit was recovered from the wreck of the turbo-jet hydroplane Bluebird after Campbell's ill-fated attempt to become the first person to exceed 300 mph on water."*

The magician spreads the cards face-up on the table. *"Campbell and his crew spent a number of weeks at Coniston Water waiting for the right weather conditions for the attempt. Donald Campbell wiled away the hours by playing a form of Russian Patience that he'd learned in Las Vegas. The day before the accident, Campbell turned up the Ace of Spades followed by the Queen of Spades."* The magician picks up these two cards and displays them. As he continues to talk, he picks up the remaining cards, adds the Ace of Spades and Queen of Spades to them, and continues shuffling.

*"As Donald Campbell was highly superstitious, he was concerned about these two cards. He told his companions that Mary, Queen of Scots, also turned up that same combination of cards, and knew instantly that she was going to be beheaded. 'I know that one of my family is going to get the chop,' Campbell said. 'I pray to God it is not me.' Naturally, his friends and colleagues tried to convince him that the cards meant nothing, but Campbell could not be reassured. His friends produced another deck of cards, but these had green backs. Unfortunately, Campbell was also superstitious about green, and refused to have that color around him. This made him even more concerned. He went*

to be convinced that some sort of tragedy was about to occur. Of course, the following day, the tragedy occurred. The Ace of Spades and Queen of Spades had foretold yet another disaster."

The magician smiles at his spectators. "Of course, no one here is superstitious," he says. "However, just on the off chance that someone might be afraid of tempting fate, we'll use these cards to create a re-enactment of that fateful afternoon." The magician hands the facedown deck of cards to a male spectator. "You, sir, can play the part of Donald Campbell. You look adventurous and ready to attempt a world speed record. Before you make the attempt, though, you're about to play Russian Patience. To do that, deal as many cards as you wish in a facedown pile on the table." The magician silently watches as the man deals. "Stop whenever you wish," he might say, if the man appears to be dealing the entire deck.

"Good." The magician takes the unused cards from the spectator. He picks up the pile of dealt cards and hands them to the spectator. "For Russian Patience we need two piles. Would you please deal the cards that you selected into two piles." Again the magician silently watches as the man deals two piles.

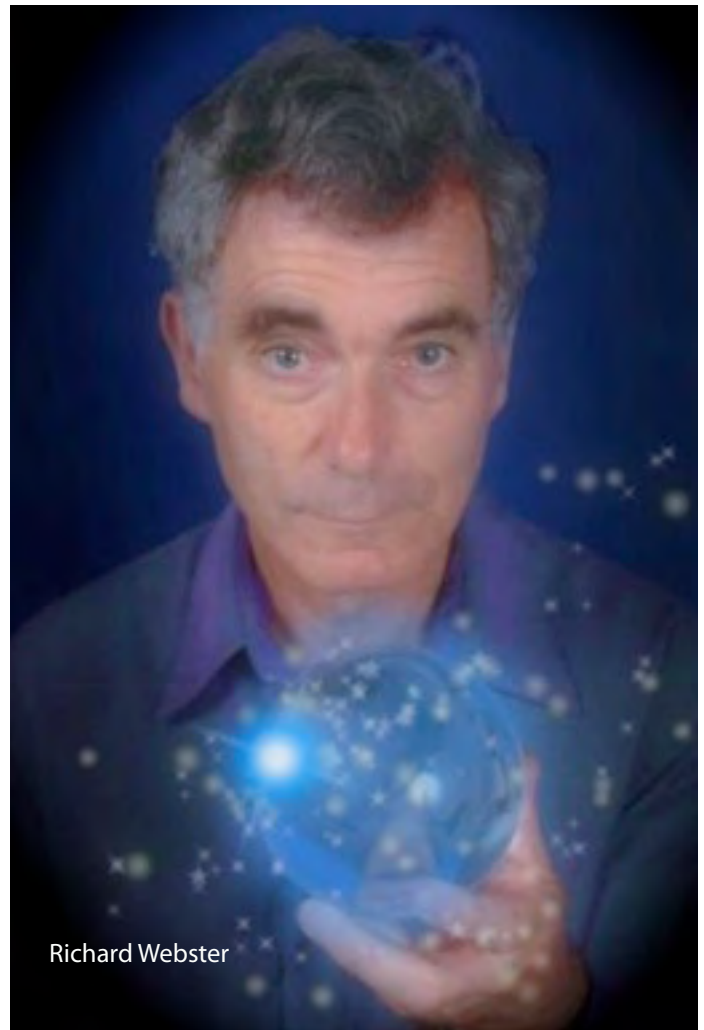
"Remember, you are not you, you are Donald Campbell," the magician says. "Donald, please turn over the top card of one of those piles." The magician leans close to see what the card will be. He appears shaken when the card turns out to be either the Ace of Spades or the Queen of Spades. Without saying anything, the magician indicates that the spectator turn over the top card on the other pile. Naturally, it is the other card. The magician sighs deeply. "It's good luck for all of us that this is simply a re-enactment." The magician turns the pair of cards face down again. "Remember," he says, "It's bad luck to be superstitious."

#### METHOD

This is simply window dressing to an effect that you probably learned as a child. Once you have shown the Ace of Spades and Queen of Spades, you replace them on top of the facedown deck and casually shuffle it, while keeping the two cards on top. I usually shuffle them to the bottom and then shuffle them back to the top again. The shuffle needs to be casual, and apparently of no account, though obviously your spectators need to be aware that you are mixing the cards.

You hand the facedown deck to a spectator and ask him to deal as many cards as he wishes into a pile. The first two cards he deals are the Ace of Spades and Queen of Spades. It makes no difference how many more cards he deals. When the cards are dealt again into two piles, the two force cards will be the top cards of each pile. The effect is almost self-working.

The story about Donald Campbell (1921-67) is true. He was highly superstitious, and did play Russian Patience on the afternoon before his death. I have no idea what Russian Patience is, and – at least so far – all of my audiences have assumed that the dealing of cards into piles is how Russian Patience is played. Mary, Queen of Scots was also dealt the same two cards in 1586, the year before she was executed.



Richard Webster





# THE TRANSFORMATION

## KYLE RAVIN

This article is an account of my thoughts and troubles, performing a show I was not used to performing, in situations I do not particularly enjoy. I would not have taken such a tedious job, but my friendship with one magician changed my perspective of my magic business, and life. Thank you Dan Sperry. Dan Sperry was in Singapore recently for the show, *The Illusionists*. We met a few times, and had long deep conversations. I share the one thing Dan mentioned that stays and remains chiselled in my mind. "Nothing is Below Me." This is an account of my month long transformation from Stage Illusionist to Floor Conjuror. The Transformation

Recently, a friend of mine referred me to a client of his, who was looking for a magician of Indian ethnicity. I got in touch with the client, an event producer running an event for a local Museum. After speaking with the client I realized why this was such a tricky job.

The Asian Civilizations Museum was running an exhibition featuring textiles from India that date back to 1400AD. They were looking for an entertainer to perform a completely Indian theme show. They had seen my promo reel and were confident in my services. The job sounded simple. Multiple thirty minute shows over one weekend, with meet and greet sessions after each show. I was excited. I'd be fully booked over the weekends in April, that's a bonus, especially in the small market here in Singapore. The price was right and I got the gig. Yippie! No. It was at that point when I realized, '#\$#%\$^!' I don't know much about INDIAN MAGIC.

When I was performing in India, I did manage to meet magicians from the country, and from my knowledge, there actually weren't many Indian effects I could recall; The Hindu Basket, The Indian Rope Trick, The Brahmin Rice Bowls, The Indian Mango Trick and the Indian Cups and Balls. Of those that I could name,



## Magic in India

Derived from a Latin term 'Magi' which was used to refer to Zoroastrians in ancient times, the performance of magic and its practice is in fact historical and very ancient. There would be definite yet varied purposes for the practice of Magic evolved where entertainment, tricks, deception, illusion, cheating in games, fun, etc. have been aimed. Sometimes, in religious context and purpose, it meant to offer social education along with some kind of preaching and healing too. Practice of Magic started to become evident post closure of 17th Century, and eventually India presented some distinct magicians in 18th and 19th centuries. West Bengal, Kerala, Karnataka, Gujarat, Delhi, Mumbai and some other parts of India have produced few great magicians so far.

P.C. Sorcar is known as the father of modern Indian magic. Some of his specialties included the Rope Trick and the Flying Carpet, and was a prolific author of books on magic in Hindi, Bengali and English languages. On Feb 23, 2010, the Indian government honored him with a postage stamp.

I didn't own any of the props or have the know how to perform them correctly.

I asked myself, what should I do? Masks? I was performing a mask act with mask changing but that's Chinese, not Indian. I recalled watching K. Lal in East Mumbai last year. All the he magic performed was 'western inventions'; canes, dove trays, Windsheer, broom suspension and the modern cabinet. That won't work. I'm screwed...

I thought about Jeff Mcbride, and a song he uses with the words Transformation constantly being mentioned. I figured that I'm going to transform what I usually do, to suit the nature of the show, yet, keep it as 'Indian themed' as possible. Here's how I went about it.

### The Theme

Think about the theme, what advantages it might offer you. For me, the theme was Indian culture, and being of the Indian race, the information I present would be more credible. I then had to think what are the different things I relate to concerning Indian Culture? Food came to my mind, then the Rivers in India, Bollywood, then I thought of the Sam Dalal book Swami/Mantra. I thought of the Fakirs, I thought about the sword basket then I hit myself in the forehead realizing I sold my sword basket. The exhibition was about Indian fabrics, so perhaps I should ask my mother about her old Saris. (Indian clothing article for women) I wrote all these thoughts on paper. The ideas were my first step to designing this show.





### Relating the Ideas to Magic

This was where it became challenging. The budget given by the client was not a very handsome one, so going out to buy, or fabricate would be out of the question. I had to work with what I had. This is a real world situation here. Many times, we read in magic magazine about how others built their million dollar show. I was working with what I had. I needed to create a structure.

Personally, 99% of my shows feature this conceptual structure:-

Fast Paced Opening – Mass Participation – Comedy Routine – Personal or Sentimental Effect - Fast Paced Closing.

I thought about the food. Was it feasible to perform with food? Rice? Indian Sweets? Produce them? I eventually scrapped the idea. I then found one of my parasols from when I performed my manipulation act some years ago. How do I use this? How can I make this special? I ended up ripping up an old Sari and sticking it on the parasol, so I now had an Indian embroidered parasol. I had a fire pan, but I couldn't use fire in the museum. I modified that so it produced a 50 foot silk streamer. I was on a roll. I found my juggling knives, thank goodness for them. Juggling would add the extra oomph to the opening routine. A piece of Indian silk attached to a hummingbird reel, El Duco's Zebra

Silk and throw streamers were added to the opening. Performed to an electro and Tabla track, the opening was fantastic. Not entirely Indian Magic, but each was performed to the beats of the Tabla, and had some sort of 'spice' to it.

Next came the water. This was easier than I thought it would be. I had a Morrissey Lota Bucket. Perfect! I remember reading somewhere, PC Sorcar performed the Lota Bowl after watching an English Magician perform it. Sorcar performed it better, mentioning the magic of the Indian

Rivers. It was exactly what I needed. I put together a script and I had my 'Water of India' routine. PC Sorcar was mentioned, but I related the routine to life. With old Indian proverbs about determination and self confidence, I spoke about how sometimes in life, we might feel empty but with the right mind-set, we're always able to produce more. Just like the water of India! The audience loved it.

Yoga was one of my other ideas. You might find this funny, but I performed the Do as I do Hand Twister, popularized by Kotkin. It worked. "Yoga is a science that dates back to India thousands of years ago, now let's try this. Everyone put your hands out in front of you. Feel the blood flowing to the tips of your fingers..." I was able to take my audience from science to actually doing it, and in their minds, it's conditioned, it's probably an exercise. At this point I'd like to add that performing with conviction is key. Just like how you have to stare at an empty hand believing it contains a coin, you've just got to believe what you say.

Next came the comedy routine. Comedy, with an Indian theme? I started to doubt myself again. I thought of the mouth coils. Oh no ... That's something I've left a long time back, when I performed kid shows. I never wanted to go back to THAT again. Dan Sperry's words ran through my mind again. Nothing is below me. I can do it. I figured an introduction to Bollywood dance would be ideal. Two volunteers are invited, they learn some basic dance moves and both with the magician, per-



form it on stage. The routine would move into a freestyle segment where tissues are introduced. You know how the rest of the routine goes. I was still embarrassed at this concept. With all due respect to those performing the mouthcoils, I used to perform it in a very kid show manner. It can still be used for adults but I had that stereotypical thinking in my head. I was afraid to come out of my shell. "Nothing is below me! Transform!"

Sam Dalal's book reminded me of the pictures with the Fakirs. The human ostrich is one picture I still have in my mind. I then thought of my floating table. I use my Losander Table for every show, whether or not I use it. It's just a wonderful illusion to have. I thought about how the Agoris, feared Yogis in India for their cannibalism and rituals with corpses, claimed to have telekinetic abilities with constant meditation. This might work with the floating table. A watch is to be borrowed, and placed into a small box. The audience is urged to all focus on the box to attempt to make the watch rattle within it. The watch rattles. Everyone is asked to focus on the table top, make the table move, and to follow and guide the table as it moves. The table floats. This I wanted to try. Will the audience buy into it? I would just have to try.

Now my finale- It is not at all necessary to close any show with the biggest trick. In fact, I considered closing the show with a 'Borrowed Ring to Mango.' However, I felt I wanted to perform something bigger. Thankfully for Russ Stevens and Shahid Malik, I'm a huge fan of the Cardboard Spike box and I perform that as well. My girlfriend/assistant Dharshee and I discussed about closing the show with the cardboard spike box. I would mention the hindu basket illusion, how it was performed with a wicker basket, a child and swords. I would then close the show with a modern version of one of the classics in magic. The show was now set. I was ready to go.

### The Weekend

Show day came and I reached the venue with excitement. To my disappointment, I learnt that there was no stage and no backdrop. Just an open space with a sound system. Fortunately I had a spider backdrop in my van. Thank goodness for that. I was sad there was no stage. It brought back memories of the venues I used to work years ago. Nothing is below me. Change that mind set. I can do it. With a positive mind, I approached the sound technician and we went over the sound cues.

Questions were still running through my head. Would the audience buy into my floating table presentation? I'm pretty much surrounded. This is tricky. I thought about my comfortable stage, and my illusion show, then it hit me. I do what I do because I love what I do. Nothing is below me. The test of a true magician/performer is to be able to entertain in any situation. Throw me 20 kids and I should still do an equally good show as compared to my corporate illusion shows. I can do it. With that positive mind-set, I took the stage. Or floor rather. The kids seated on the floor reminded me of my kid shows. I smiled wider. I felt happier that I was able to be there to try something that challenges me as an entertainer. My silk flew off my hand, to the left and back, I produced the parasol. The audience gasped. The rest of the show went according to plan. The audience accepted the presentation of the floating table well. Many were nodding in agreement. The cardboard spike box was brutal. In a good way of course.


Dharshee emerged unharmed, her costume now changed. We took our bows. The audience stood up. I thought they were leaving. Yea show's over. But No! They Stayed. They clapped. I had my first standing ovation in almost two years. It's VERY hard to get standing ovations here in Singapore. It's just not in our culture to do so. But I managed to get one. It was amazing. The following four shows were just as good. The client was overjoyed and everyone was genuinely excited about the show. We were followed by little fans, the kids, back to our changing room.

I learnt a lesson from this experience. I hope you might be able to take something back too. As Dan Sperry said, "nothing is below me." I'm human, just as you are. The test of a good entertainer is his or her ability to work any stage, any crowd. Yes, the corporate circuit pays better, illusion shows seem more prestigious, but the floor is where most of us started. Some stayed and I respect the likes of Tommy James, the best there is in the kid show market. Many, like me then, didn't want to turn back to it. I was too comfortable with my illusions. I've learnt to be flexible. To work in any situation. Because I don't love stage magic. I love Magic, and that can be performed anywhere. Nothing is below me. Nothing. Keep Transforming.

### ABOUT KYLE

Kyle Ravin is an illusionist and show host based in Singapore. He is a two-time Singapore Stage Magic Champion, and recently won Most Outstanding Magician 2011. Kyle started magic at the age of 7 and is a practitioner of other arts such as juggling, ventriloquism and music. Kyle also runs motivational workshops with magic for teenagers in schools.





Bizzaro has performed from coast to coast and appeared on FOX, NBC, America's Got Talent, and Travel Channel's Extreme Conventions. He has even been seen multiple times at the Magic Castle. He creates much of his own magic that is sold around the world to performers. To Bizzaro, normal is just a setting on the dryer.

# THE SECRET TO HAPPINESS

## BIZZARO

"Anything you're good at contributes to happiness." - Bertrand Russell

My friend once told me that if you find something you enjoy and might want to do for a living try picturing yourself doing it for the rest of your life. If you can't then don't... do... it.

I know far too many performers who are unhappy in their career after a while. The reasons for this phenomenon vary from performer to performer. Some just don't know how to do anything else and can't stop while some are doing it just for the paycheck. Here is a little piece of advice from me to you: If it starts to feel like work... STOP DOING IT!!

Our jobs are supposed to be fun. Not just for us but for everyone. The entertainment business shouldn't be a chore. Not for the performer or the people watching us. If you are having fun, they are too. If you are just going through the motions it shows.

Now since you have read this far let me tell you the \*real\* secret to happiness. It's simple. Many don't seem to be able to grasp it. It's a foreign concept to some. I have boiled it down to one simple concept just for you. Are you ready? Take a deep breath and proceed only when you are at peace. Here we go.

The secret to being a better performer is to give a damn.

That's it. It's that simple. If you care about being better at something you will work hard to make it the best you can make it. You will work at it everyday. You will hire people to do the things you can't do. I have heard many people say "I wish I was this or that or could do this or the other". Guess what, you can. You just have to care enough about it to work hard.

This applies to any number of facets of your show. From the material you perform to the presentations you use. You will even find you can resist the urge to steal other people's lines. When you care you will spend the time to develop your own jokes, moves, and even presentations that are unique to you.

Of course caring enough to peruse your dreams takes sacrifices. Things like goats and babies not having fancy cars, eating at nice restaurants all the time, etc. Better get used to the taste of Ramen kids) I'm not outright saying the people who don't give it their all don't really care about their dreams, but I am inferring it. These kind of pursuits are like trying to push mud uphill. It's hard you will get dirty.

Trust me, it's a rough road but if you stick with it you will discover that the only people who truly fail are the ones who give up.

# PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHT GERARD

## The explanation for an effect you can perform using borrowed objects.

### EFFECT:

The spectator points to a card in a facedown deck. The performer shows the card and places the deck back in the case. Next he introduces a penny and a quarter. The spectator is asked to think of one. The performer is able to tell which one the spectator is thinking of. This game happens one more time with both coins in full view.

The performer then places the coins in his closed fist, and asks the spectator to think of one of the coins. The performer takes out the quarter asking if that is the coin they are thinking of? Placing the coin in his pocket the performer moves his closed fist with the penny in it over the card case.

Very slowly the hand is opened and the penny is gone. The deck of cards is taken out of the card case and the spectator asked to cut the deck. They cut to the missing penny. The card below the penny is turned over and it is the chosen card.

### SECRET:

Don't dismiss this effect because the method is simple, it is a very strong routine. Normally this trick is done with a Scotch and Soda set, however I prefer to do it with borrowed change.

### WHAT YOU NEED:

Two pennies (or small coins if not in North America) and a quarter, or larger coin that is different in color and size from the smaller ones.

Take one penny and clip it between your fingers as in photo 5. Borrow a deck and spread them face down, asking a spectator to point to any card. The penny is hidden underneath the spread cards, still clipped between your fingers. Whatever card they touch, you slip the penny **above** the chosen card. Photo 7 shows the penny on the Queen of hearts, the card below the spread is their chosen card. As you square up the deck the penny gets put on top of their chosen card. As long as their is pressure on the

deck the gap will not show. Place the deck back in the card case.

You will now perform a 'little' game. This is the time to borrow the two coins, a penny and a quarter. It's a psychological game. Hold a coin in each hand asking the spectator to think of one coin. Watch their eyes. They will look at the one they are thinking, look at the other one then back to the one they are thinking of. The last one they look at will be the one they are thinking of. If it is the penny tell them they are thinking of the penny, likewise with the quarter. If you get it wrong it doesn't matter, tell them you'll try again.

Place the two coins in your fist and close it tight. When you close make sure the penny goes below the quarter. Ask them to think of one coin in their mind, and then tell them you are going to take out the one they are thinking of. You reach in to your fist and take out the quarter with the penny underneath. It looks as though you are just taking out the quarter. Ask them if they are thinking of the quarter. If they are thinking of the quarter you have a hit, if they say the penny then say, "watch the penny." Place the quarter, with hidden penny, in your pocket. Now comes the most important part of the trick.

You are going to 'vanish' nothing. It's actually quite difficult to do. You can't just open your hand to show the penny gone. Hold your closed fist over the deck and say, "*watch the penny.*" Continue with, "*One ... two ... three.*" On three you slowly open your hand, and pause letting the vanish of the penny sink in.

Take out the deck from the case, and lift at the break where the penny is. They will see the 'vanished' penny and ask them to lift the card below it. It will be there chosen card.



**1** A CARD IS FREELY SELECTED  
Spectator chooses a card and looks at it.

**2** DECK PLACED BACK IN CASE  
The deck is then placed back in the card case.



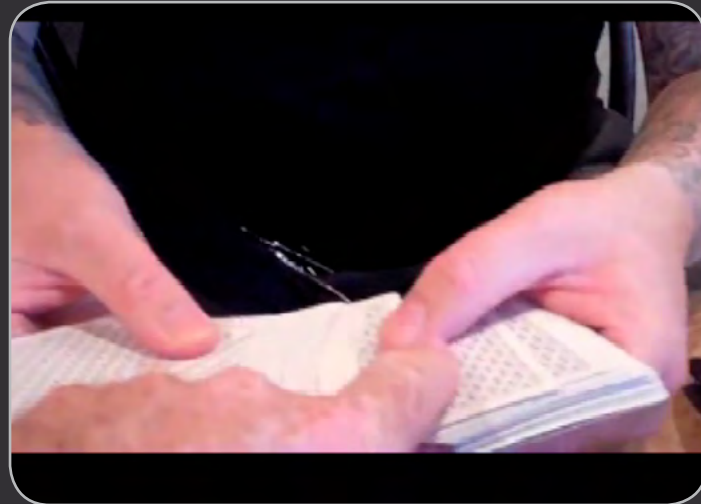
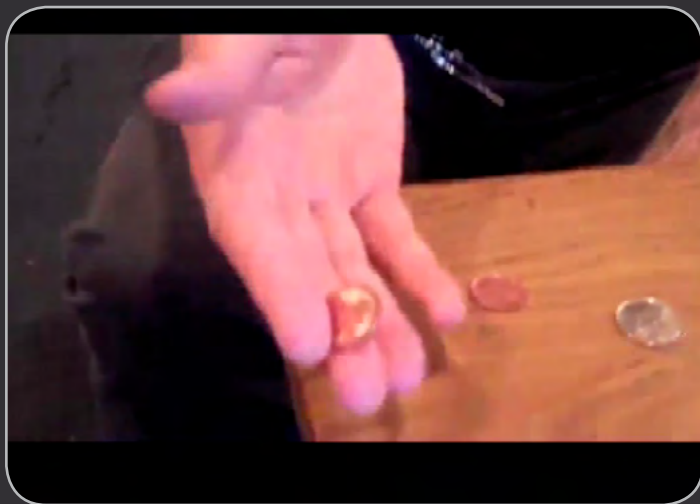
**3** SPECTATOR THINKS OF ONE COIN  
Performer shows two coins, a penny and a quarter. Spectator thinks of one.



**4** THOUGHT OF COIN VANISHES  
The thought of coin vanishes and ends up next to the chosen card in the card case.

# PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHT BY GERARD

An effect by Andrew Gerard that can be performed using a borrowed deck of cards, a quarter and a penny. It's easy to perform but really packs a punch with the audience.



**5 YOU WILL NEED AN EXTRA PENNY**  
An extra penny is hidden in right hand pinched between first two fingers.

**6 SPECTATOR CHOSE ANY CARD**  
The extra coin is hidden under the deck and slides under the chosen card.



**7 EXPOSED VIEW OF EXTRA PENNY**  
The performer shows the chosen card by breaking at the chosen card, and hiding the coin underneath. This is an exposed photo of the coin under chosen card. The deck is then closed and placed in the card box. Bring out two coins, a penny and a quarter. Both are placed in closed fist.



**8 BRING OUT TWO COINS AS ONE**  
Have a guessing game with the spectator. Bring out the quarter from your fist and place in your pocket. Actually both coins are brought out.

**9 SHOW COIN HAS VANISHED**  
Hold fist over the deck and slowly open it showing coin has gone. Take deck out and show the coin si nex to the chosen card.

# A VERY GOOD YEAR TCTAHOE



## What the Audience Sees:

The Magician shows a stack of vintage Number Flash Cards. The cards are openly mixed.

After the cards are mixed they are dealt out in four rows of four.

Four coins are introduced and the Participant is asked to choose one of the flash cards by placing a coin on top of their choice. This is repeated until the Participant has chosen four Flash Cards.

The numbers on the flash cards are totaled, and they add up to 34.

The Magician claims the Participant had no choice but to choose those particular numbers. To prove it The Magician tells the Participant to look at the dates on the coins.

They are all from 1934

## Method:

You need sixteen (16) number cards, that are numbered 1 through 16.

You can use any kind of number cards you like. I found some old flash cards, but again you can use style number cards.

I have in fact done this with business cards and wrote the numbers on the back in front of the spectators. I had the coins with me, but not the cards. In fact doing it with business cards might be stronger, I will have to experiment with this.

The coins are fairly easy to come by. If you can't find them at a local coin shop for a reasonable price you will find them on ebay. I bought four on-line for a total of five bucks.

The number is forced using Mel Stover's

## Based on *The Four Bit Machine* from David Britland's book *Psychomancy*

Calendar Force.

David Britland gave the force a more random feel to it.

The following is the script I use and the working of the force.

The Magician lays on the table a coin purse and a small stack of cards.

*"Choices. We make dozens of choices every day, maybe hundreds. Little choices, what socks to wear? Big choices, who to vote for on American Idol?"*

*As many choices as we make, there are just as many things that influence our choices.*

*It got me thinking, is it even possible to make a truly random choice? Or is there always something influencing us?"*

The cards are shown to be children's flash cards.

*"These are some old flash cards I found at a garage sale. What made me buy them?"*The Magician shrugs.

*"If you wouldn't mind, please help me with an experiment. An experiment in choices."*

The Magician mixes the number Flash Cards.

## The Mixing of the Cards:

Show that the cards are in sequential order.

Turn the cards face-down.

You will now Reverse Faro the packet. Up-jog every other card, then strip the up-jogged cards out. You will now have eight cards in each hand.

It doesn't matter if you start the up-jogging with the top card or the second card. It also doesn't matter which hand holds which packet.

Once you have separated the up-jogged cards, you ask the Participant;

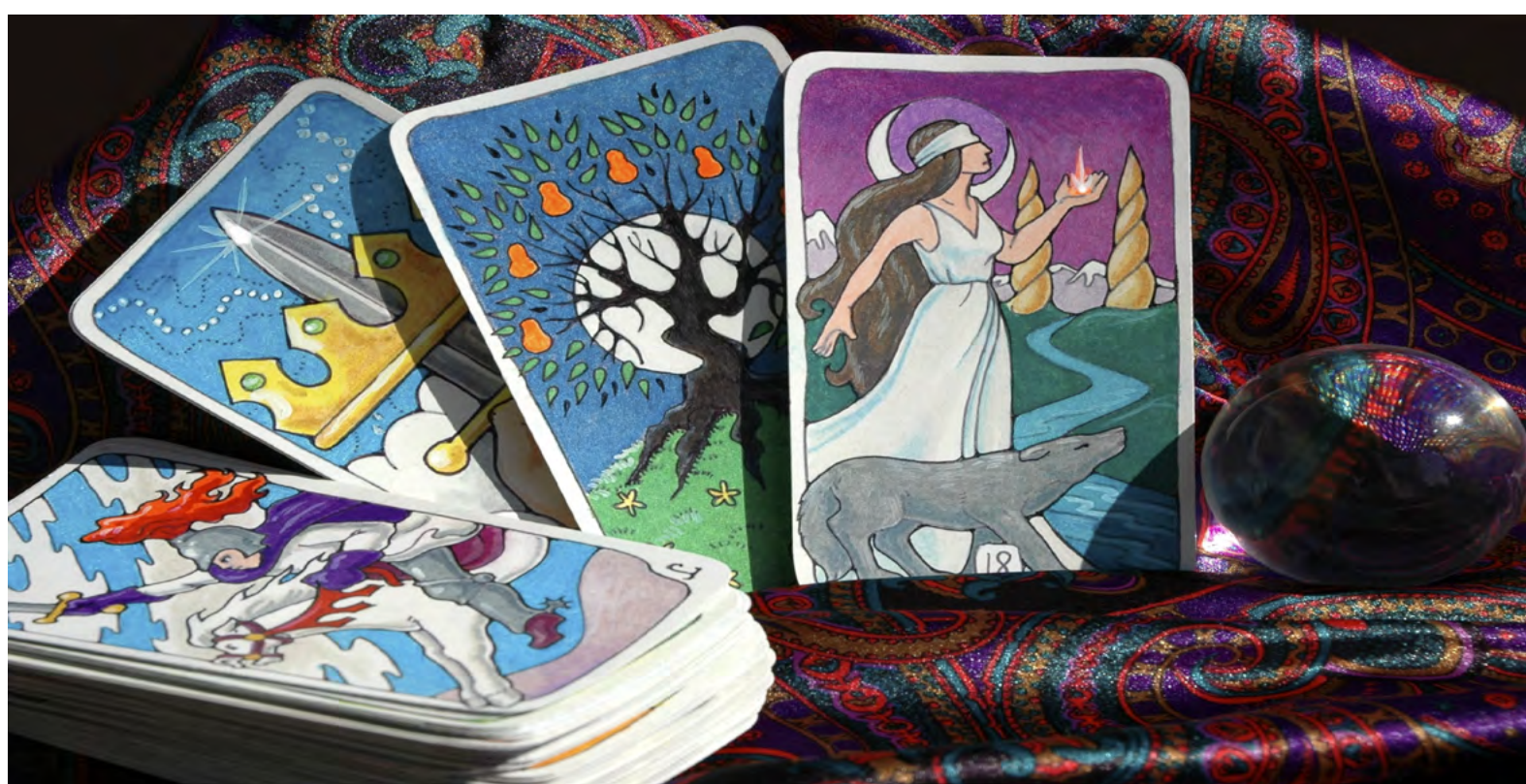
*"I have separated the cards so they are no longer in numerical order, which packet would you like me to place on top?"*

The Participant tells you which packet to place where.

*"Now, no two cards are in sequence, but let's mix them further."*

You repeat the Reverse Faro, up-jogging every other card, separating them and again letting the Participant decide with way to reassemble the packets.

*"We can mix the cards again, it's up to you."*



Let the Participant choose whether to mix one more time. Do not give the cards a fourth mix.

After the mixing, the cards are dealt out, four rows of four cards. Deal from left to right. Once the first four cards are dealt, start your second row, and so on.

*"I also have some coins. These belonged to my grandfather. When I was a kid I use to love playing with Pa's bowl of change."*

Four coins are poured out of the coin purse, the purse is set aside.

*"I am going to have you choose a coin and place it on one of the flash cards. Now, whatever card you choose, I will eliminate the other cards in both rows that card is in, so choose carefully."*

*"In your own time, choose a coin and place it on a card."*

The Participant places a coin on a card. The Magician turns over the cards in both the horizontal and vertical rows

The three remaining coins are pushed towards the Participant.

*"Good, now please choose another coin and another card."*

When it comes time for the last coin, there will only be one card left.

*"Because of your choices, there is only one card left."*

A nod to the coin is all it takes and the Participant will place the last coin on the last card.

*"So, for whatever reason you chose these numbers. Did you feel influenced in anyway, or did you make totally random choices? Maybe you focused you mind and made a clear choice of each of these numbers."*

Wait a Beat

*"Then again maybe you had no choice at all. If you add together the Numbers of the cards that you chose..."*

The Participant does this and lo and behold the total is 34.

*"34? Does that number have any meaning to you?"*

If it does, then play that up, most often, it will not.

*"One of the things I have come to realize is, that most of the time we don't even know we are being influenced."*

Let them answer.

*"Do me a favor, look at the dates on my Grandfather's coins..."*

This has been a solid piece of close-up theater for me, feel free to use my story, but I do encourage you to create your own.

## About TC

TC Tahoe is a Intuitive who uses Tarot Cards, Pendulums, Hypnotherapy, and more.

He is a Speaker, Entertainer, Author, Facilitator and Teacher. Utilizing all his unique skills, TC assists individuals and groups into understanding and reaching their true potential.

To purchase his products visit:

[www.tctahoe.com](http://www.tctahoe.com)



# MAGIC 24-7

## BEN ROBINSON

This is part 2 of Ben's essay on magic from the point of view of a full time professional.

Some might think this silly. One card magician who finishes his act with the Roy Benson production of an Ace of Spades at his fingertips once barked at another magician when he was notified that Roy Benson created the moves and finished his card sequence with it. The barking magician said, "Well, I don't give a shit. Benson's dead, man! No one remembers him. I finish MY act with this. So that's all that matters." Does it?

How does it possibly help me make money if I have (and I do) had an exact recreation of Max Malini's briefcase that he took all over the world? To me, I feel connected to the great performer in that I know he was able to do an hour show with the props he carried, in that small attaché case, or more correctly, seemingly did not carry.

Now, I only do one or two routines that Malini used, but the one I do is an audience pleaser that has traveled with me in the 20 countries I've visited. On horseback in Thailand and in the streets of Paris outside the Pompidou Center I have featured this Malini trick. It is always a hit, even if there is a language barrier. But, remember what I said earlier about magic being an international language? So, with my knife, a special deck of cards I created and a few other props I can make a living.



Recently I entertained a Russian billionaire. A real one. He owns many mansions on Long Island. That is the least of his fortune (he made his money selling futures to Russian gas "futures." BTW, he's 90 years old.) His date for the night saw me do some close up magic (Invisible deck, my signature trick and a Vernon effect where any card merely thought of winds up in their hands), and the woman stated to the assembled in a swanky NY restaurant: "You will always eat!" And then everyone broke up laughing! Truth being that which makes us smile...

On the way out of the restaurant, the mostly deaf wealthy man handed me a crumpled check that looked like he'd wiped his windshield with it. I put it in my pocket without looking as we were all saying good night and I did not think even a glance was warranted. I should have looked. The check was blank, except his signature.

When I called his office the next day I told his assistant what my fee was, and explained what I had received. She shyly said, "Ah, yes, Mr. Blastnofsky does that occasionally. It is not that he gave you a blank check, but that he may want to add to it if he liked you. Let me see how you should proceed. I'll call you back."



Photo left is of Ben backstage with Denny Haney preparing for his lecture. Ben has toured the USA presenting his lectures on his books. The photo above is of Ben and Mark and Nani Wilson.



*John McLaughlin, Ben and An*

Two hours later she had checked with the great man and he asked what my fee was. When told, he laughed and screamed, "He has the nerve to charge me (left blank by Ben Robinson's accountant)." In the end he was joking. "Lookit the kid'zalright let him triple it and he'll be happy." When was the last time you made three times your fee unexpectedly? Yes, I was happy.

People constantly ask me what I think of these TV magicians and I won't cover for them any more. They are bad magicians and they do a disservice to all magicians — period. One magician had an audience inspect a legitimate deck of cards, and then the TV shot reverses to watching the magician take back what the home audience thought was the inspected deck. But, a line producer told me they stopped the action, rung in a "mechanical deck that had this gizmo inside that made single cards rise up." Now, if a producer will divulge this to another magician, imagine whom else he told? And where does that leave the rest of us? If you do not fool those you work with, you might as well not even broadcast the show I say.

One TV magician asked my help on his

TV special, whining like a petulant child when he said, "I have a whole hour to fill and I'm being paid a lot of money, so I really need your help." Yeah, right.

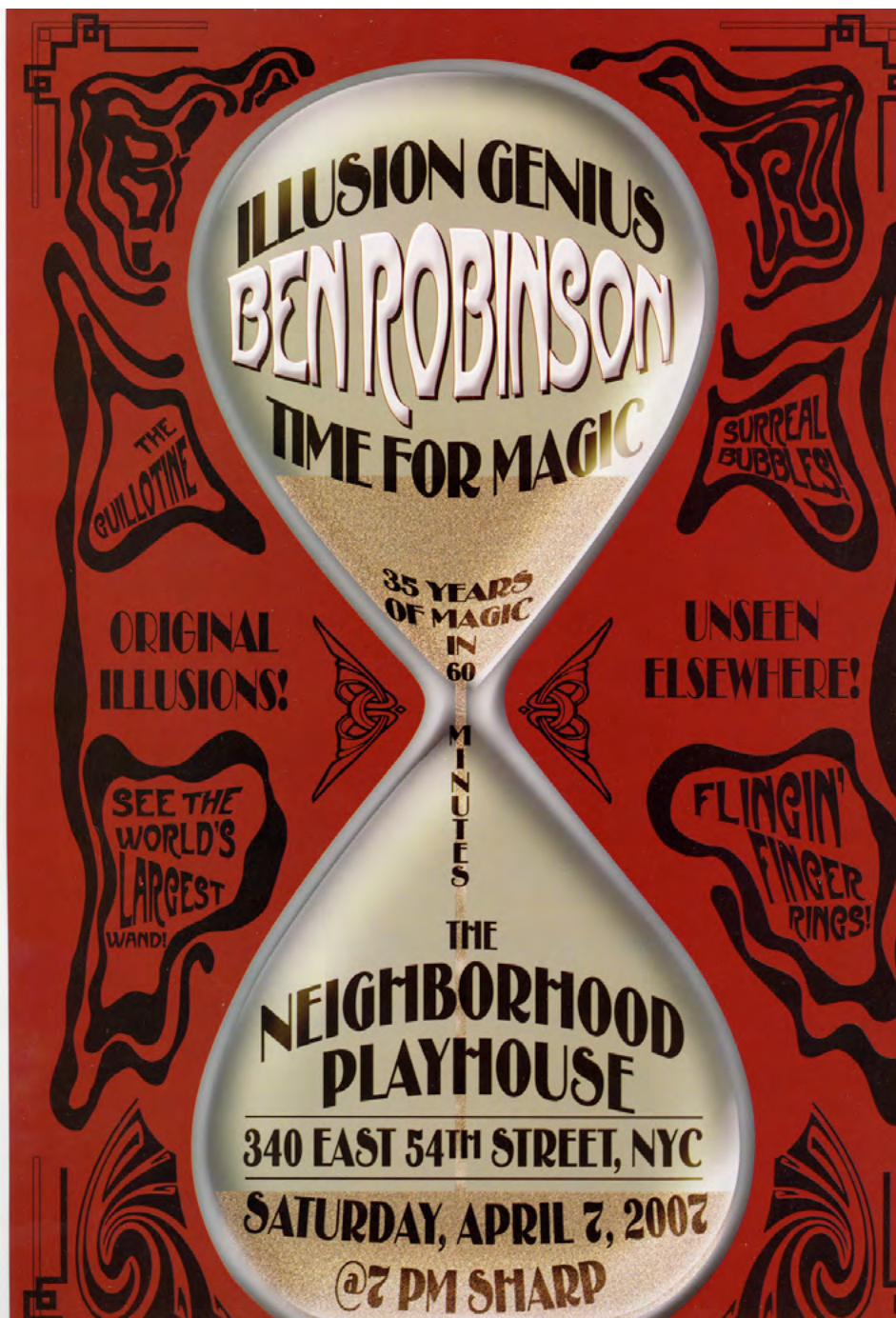
He needs my help because I have read the 3000 books in my library and I do know (for example) how to synthesize a prop that is made to wrangle fire and invert it so the effect it aids is one with ice. My developed thinking allows this after so much research and experimentation. It is not that I am so wonderful and intelligent mind you — hardly. My point is that this guy has spent other people's money making him famous, and now he's got to deliver. And he can't. He's been swallowed by the consumptive world of mediocre television, and now he is pleading with other magicians: "Hey dude, give me your best trick. I'll give you credit..." But in the end, those credits rush by, no one watches them, the magician on TV gets the credit and the inventor who supplied him...his pet has been snatched by the jaws of someone who won't know his name five years later.

This hurts all magicians because "magicians" who appear on TV don't just do an

act, split, collect a check and move on... no, this lacking effort sends a stench over our art that affects all performers — this is what ALL PERFORMERS are held up to. Go to an audition of something you do not do. Just show up. Mention that you do magic, and listen to the chatter...you may have an eye-opening experience if you do not already know that the TV magician's have brutalized the art of magic. They say it is about good editing and massive publicity. I say it is about misdirection and sleight of hand you can do anywhere with anything. Tell me I am wrong and I'll show you 500 books (written between 1785 and yesterday) that defend my point of view.

I am often told that my audience has never seen the type of magic I perform. This is true. I have started to create my own work once I had one foot 20 years in the game.

Again, the point is not my work or how good, clever or horrible it may be. The point is that I have developed an original style that has only been copied in part by a few of the tricks I licensed to others. I made the bullet catch relevant to modern audiences by writing about it. It's been done many times since on television, and



"When you buy a suit of clothes you pay for it regardless of whether or not you wear it to Easter Sunday mass." Please, listen to me, all of who are reading this. It is a time-honored tradition of the theatre...nothing unusual. YOU GET PAID BEFORE YOU DELIVER in our business. If you don't you are putting yourself at risk. Before any sporting match, theatre or circus show YOU BUY YOUR TICKETS BEFORE YOU GET THE SHOW.

It has to happen only once. Magician's lives are hard enough without having to chase after a check that was "put in the mail" weeks ago. The BBC paid me in cash before the cameras rolled in my apartment. Look at it this way: if you do not demand payment ahead of time, you are probably NOT going to get paid. Trust no one.

One magician in Atlanta told me that my illusion of having my arm cut in three was the best thing in Copperfield's show. When I saw a tape of him performing it in German I felt his presentation was sub par — he threw it away. Biggest mistake of my career licensing this to him; but, it wasn't my decision. The inventor, the late Larry White, decided he wanted to have DC's signature in his scrapbook. Larry got his signature and I lost my exclusive to a wonder later butchered.

I've come to realize here at the half-century mark that you do get to achieve your dreams if you never give up. And, if you don't then you died trying and that is all anyone can do.

one guy even wrote in a national magazine that the bullet catch was like a "cover tune." Really?

You ruined it guys...is this the way of our ART? Now, I certainly do not own the bullet catch, nor do I want to. I found it very interesting that I appeared on a BBC special called Dangerous Magic and when asked to comment on another magician's act, I told the truth and it was not used in the final broadcast. Not that my remarks were obscene. It was that I told the truth as I saw it and leaned in and said, "wearing tattoos and long hair is about as dated as being a rock musician in tight pants. Nothing daring about it."

Popular acts with powerful packaging agents (if you don't know what that term means you might want to find out) do not like to see their golden cow(s) skewered on national TV, so my remarks were, uh, "disappeared." Get it? This is how the game works. The Golden Rule is that those with the gold rule. (I still got paid though.) The producer tried to tell me that ONLY if my footage were used I'd be paid my union rate. I replied through my agent,

Desire to work at three different restaurants a night and load up on all the private gigs you can handle — easy. Develop a clientele that is only super rich and you will work, but you will also meet a very demanding, often impolite crowd. Money and manners don't often accompany one another as my agent's book *The Entitled Life* leads one to believe. Yes, I did work for a billionaire and yes, he did triple my fee. That has happened once. Most of the time I am simply the hired help, like the chauffeur.

About 50% of the time I get tipped when I work. Sometimes I am asked if it is all right to tip me — would I be insulted?

Make sure you know in advance. Time is short when they are making out a check. And don't forget to send a thank you note the next day. I send a postcard with my picture on it...and I hand write it. I must have sent out over 10,000 cards in my life and I have to say I have visited at least 30 homes in my life where I have seen the postcard I sent on the refrigerator door. Social media advertising is not the ONLY way to go. Personal direct mail also has a place because so few people use it anymore.



I know of a magician in the Boston area who was tired of slinging drinks at his local bar and doing magic every now and then. He campaigned to the bar owner to do one full night of magic. Guess what happened? He was canned. No magic. No job. No nothing.

The management felt that the bar's revenue was in selling drinks, not in some magician satisfying his ego. And I have to say the bar was right, in my opinion. The magician did not think this through from the other person's point of view. The smart businessman always sees the sale from the point of view of the buyer. Here's a great story about that.

When I was beginning my career in New York City, I called a booker of entertainment every week on Tuesday at 1pm. It got so he knew it would be me and I'd have to disguise who I was to get through. It was hard, hard work and he grew tired of my chase telling me repeatedly that the outdoor plaza he booked only hired musicians and pantomimes as lunch time crowds liked music and did not have to listen to the mime. He kept telling/yelling at me "Why can't you get it through your head...NO MAGICIANS!!!!!!!" He pleadingly asked me to stop calling.

Finally after a year-and-a-half of my chase I got him on the phone and said, "Look, before you hang up, I want to tell you that I can't work for you. Even if you had an opening, I can't take it. So, why don't we meet?" (I saw it from his point of view. He never wanted to hear from me again, and I offered him that. Only, that is, until we had met for a brief five minutes. I got what I wanted. He got what he wanted. Cost him nothing except five minutes of his time. See?)

He responded, "You mean you want to meet even though I won't hire you? Why?"

I said, "Come on, aren't you just the least bit interested? I know I am. Look, I can't accept any gigs, I'm booked solid through the Spring. So let me have 5 minutes of your time and you can see the face of the man who won't call you anymore." He said, "OK, I get it. Thursday at 2pm. I have 5 minutes for you." He hung up unceremoniously. I was thrilled.

On Thursday I went casually dressed and he was polite, but guarded. I showed him some magic, my very best material to be seen over a desktop for one person. His response was "I must say I

have to thank you for your persistence. You are the best magician I have ever seen and I am sorry you can't be hired as I'd make an exception in your case in our programming."

I replied, "Funny thing, I just became available." He smiled and said, "I should have known. You fooled me. What was I thinking inviting you in here?" The man who had previously thought me a burden was now a fan. My arrow found its target even though it took over a year to place my shot. (Sometimes it takes that long. Sometimes...longer. Expect that. All of you in your twenties reading this, beware: success comes not only to the Derek Jeter's and Whitney Houston's of the world in a quick rush at an early age. Most of us who trod the boards with an antiquated art arrive at some broad public notice only after many years of slugging it out. And in the end, it is all up to chance.)

Finally the day of the gig arrived. I did three shows (1, 2:30 and 4), promoted by big posters, drawing several hundred to the gigs. I got some amazing Super 8 film of me doing magic out doors in 1984...the footage still gets me work today. Was it worth it? You betcha.

The booker "won" because he was able to offer quality novelty. The audience won because they saw something unique and entertaining. The Plaza won because nothing was disrupted. I won because I got the footage, and felt satisfied that my persistence paid off.

You see? The win, win, win...always strive for it even if others cannot see it. Do NOT try to win if the other guy loses, then you have a sure fire problem on your hands. A truism of capitalism, told to me by a banker in 1984 at a private club gig I had for 70 weeks in SoHo said to me: "Unless it is your granny giving you a check on your birthday, largely, money creates enmity." Therefore, you have to make your client happy and satisfied to pay you the money that was agreed upon. You have to do this because how many times have you heard about an artist NOT being paid what they thought was coming? Even big acts (some would argue, "especially big acts") get screwed. Rod Stewart's Road Manager told me that he ALWAYS gets the balance of the "guarantee" (the basic amount agreed upon before a percentage of the house ticket sales as well is added to the fee) in CASH before Rod steps on the stage and if the balance is NOT there, then Rod stays in his dressing room keeping the audience waiting. I know this is



In the greenroom preparing to go on stage

true having been on the spot when it happened.

Houdini wrote a great essay called Helpful Hints for Magicians Under 80. I think Houdini really wrote it. It sounds like his typical Hungarian cum lower Broadway circa 1890's-ese mashing of the English language. Nevertheless, I really like his down and dirty almost crude list of what he thought was important. A contemporary of HH's, named Dunninger, also wrote a great essay, Dunninger — An Autobiography. Now if you hunt this down (it's in his Complete Encyclopedia of Magic) you will have to really study this one page very carefully. I often think that it has taken me 30 years to read thousands of books and magazines to finally understand what I do. Sometimes I think it's all in Tarbell, why read anything else? But, let me tell you...this essay by Dunninger...all one page of it...it's all there! In one page!

Yes, Dunninger wrote for a different age and the cyber age has certainly changed things. But, one thing has not, and may never, change. It is this: you cannot be a good magician without creating wonder and having a good act.

It is the basis of all we strive for. Magic has

been around for several thousand years. The Romans killed each other by drinking from lead pots thought to be the province of the wealthy. Today we cook in stainless steel pots and die slower! We all still cook and eat. Same thing. You may think that you will become the next big thing by hitting it viral on YT.

You don't become the star of the henhouse without making eggs though. Magic is your eggs. Think about it.

Oh, and, if you just get one thing from this article on how to be a better magician, it is this: always carry a knife. I carry two of everything when I work. So, my Swiss Army Champion is my handy repair kit that I have used from the highways of Middle America to the heights of the Himalaya. (In fact my Swiss Army knife was taken to the summit of Mount Everest by Ade Burgess on May 5, 1989. I'd lent it to him as he fancied it with all of its gadgets and he told me that if I lent it to him he'd bring it back in one piece if he lived. I thought the odds good enough.) So, when I bring that knife out...the story is sure to entertain, even if the audience doesn't dig magic.

As I said, you always have to have a back up.

I hope 30 years from now, in 2042, some magician comes up to me as I shuffle along and relates to me how my experience over the last 36 years on stage, has helped them get a grasp on what Maskelyne and Devant proclaim in their masterwork *Our Magic*: that better magicians understand the "Art in and the Art of Magic."

## About Ben

Ben Robinson is a popular scholar showman. He has entertained at such opposite extremes as 21 shows in one week at Hollywood's Magic Castle, and at the Base Camp of Mt. Everest (17,800 ft.). Hartford Courant drama critic Malcolm Johnson wrote of his first one-man show *Out Of Order*: "Ben Robinson's performance of silent, surreal illusions is **MUST SEE** entertainment."

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BY ANTHONY MASI

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## TOP 3 REHEARSAL TIPS

By Nick Kolenda

Nick Kolenda is the creator of The Mentalism Course, the most comprehensive course on mentalism. In addition to explaining five killer stage routines, the course contains priceless information on showmanship and marketing. For more information, visit [www.TheMentalismCourse.com](http://www.TheMentalismCourse.com)

### Tip #3: Distributed rehearsals are more effective than massed rehearsals

Research studies confirm that distributed practicing is more effective than massed practicing. For example, studies have examined the most effective way to study for an exam. Nearly all studies found that dispersing your studying is more effective than cramming the night before. If you study for an hour each day for a week, you will likely earn a higher score on the exam than if you were to study seven hours the night before. Additional studies have examined sports performance, and they found the same results.

In order to gain the greatest benefits from your rehearsals, you should spread them out. When you learn a new routine, for example, you

should rehearse the routine at dispersed intervals. Rehearse the routine a few times and then take a break. Rehearse it again later that day, or rehearse it again the next day. At the very least, leave a few hours in between rehearsal times.

Leaving time in between rehearsals is effective because your brain needs time to process that information. Each time you rehearse, your brain processes information both consciously and subconsciously. To adequately process information, your brain needs a break from the activity so that it can integrate the new information with the information already stored in your brain. If you are constantly overloading your brain with information (i.e., rehearsing for long intervals of time), your brain has no time to consolidate that new information.

## Tip #2: To reap the full benefits of rehearsing, rehearse your show in full

Whenever you rehearse, you should almost always rehearse your entire show, rather than rehearsing individual routines. Rehearsing the entire show not only helps you recognize the flow of your performance, but it can also help you practice the transitions between routines.

When I was 12 years old, I performed my first show at a nursing home. To prepare for that show, I rehearsed each individual routine in the act. After finishing my first routine in the show, however, I had no idea what to say or how to efficiently prepare for the next routine. I introduced each routine by saying, "And for my next trick..."

I am sure that every performer reading this article knows that routine transitions should be structured much more professionally. Rehearsing your show in full allows you to rehearse those transitions.

Also, remember to rehearse the conclusion of your show. I like to tailor the introduction and conclusion to my show for each specific audience. However, I recently performed a show at a college, and when rehearsing for the show, I forgot to plan my show's conclusion. When rehearsing for the show, I stopped after I had finished the last routine. Because I had nothing planned at the end, I delivered a somewhat generic conclusion, rather than a well-constructed, audience-tailored, emotion-extracting conclusion.

**Whenever  
you rehearse  
your show,  
always pretend  
that you are  
performing for  
a real audience.**

## Tip #1: Rehearse as though you are performing for a real audience

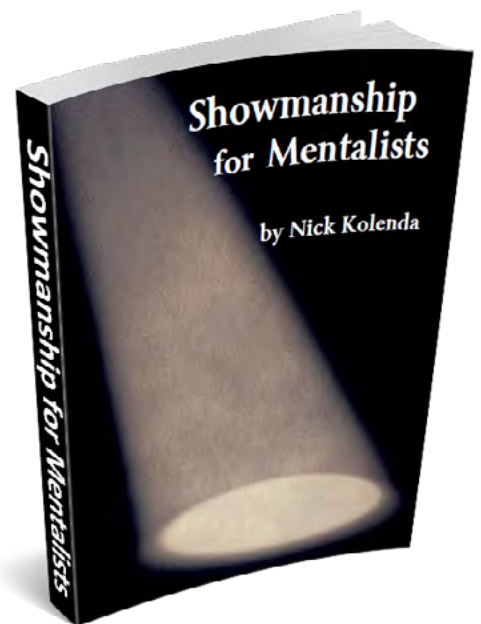
This tip is the most important rehearsal advice. Whenever you rehearse your show, always pretend that you are performing for a real audience. Research confirms that your brain cannot differentiate between a visualized activity and an actual activity.

If you pretend that your rehearsal is an actual show, your brain will believe that your rehearsal is a real show. When you finally step on stage to perform a real show, your brain (specifically, your adrenal glands) will not secrete an excessive amount of adrenaline that will make you nervous. Your brain will cause you to experience less nervousness because, according to your brain, you will have performed that same show many more times. Therefore, the rehearsal conditions should be as close to an actual show as possible.

Perhaps the most important rehearsal condition is that you should always rehearse your script out loud. Rehearsing your script out loud is an extremely helpful tactic to memorize and solidify your script. This reinforcement occurs for two main reasons. First, you develop a type of muscle memory for your voice.

When you repeatedly speak the same script, your mouth becomes used to the script, and you may soon find that you can recite the script aloud without any conscious attention. Second, when you speak out loud, your brain's primary auditory cortex processes the sound. The more brain processes that information undergoes, the more that information becomes solidified in your brain.

If you are self-conscious about hearing your own voice, or if you are nervous about other people hearing you, I recommend turning on music or switching on a loud fan. The music or white noise will drown out most of the sound of your voice, yet you still receive the same benefits that accompany rehearsing your script out loud.





# BARREL OF FUN!

## DANNY ARCHER

**HOME PAGE:** [www.dannyarcher.com](http://www.dannyarcher.com)

**MindVention:** Nov. 11th - 13th in Las Vegas 2012

**A borrowed, marked coin vanishes and reappears inside the smallest of three nested barrels.**

**HOW:**

What you need is the set of nesting barrels (a common baby toy), a Sharpie, 10 - 12 quarters and a jumbo quarter. Place the loose quarters in the innermost barrel and nest the three smallest barrels. Place the jumbo coin in position to be stolen (for me that means lodged under my belt near my left hip) and put the Sharpie in an accessible pocket. If you can't find the nesting barrels (try here <http://www.toyshoppersclub.com/IVG2/Y/ProductID-51028-.htm>), the routine works just as well with three nesting tins. There are many mints and other products that come in small tins, just find some that fit inside each other.

**WHEN:**

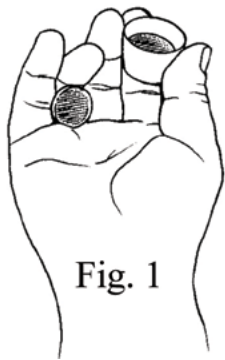
When ready to perform, introduce the barrel and place it on the table or have a spectator hold it. Borrow a quarter and have it initialed on both sides by a spectator using the Sharpie. I retrieve the coin, pocket the Sharpie, and do a quick one-coin routine finishing with the change of the quarter into the jumbo coin. If you don't have a favorite one-coin routine, try this. Show the coin in the RH (in fingerpalm position). Pretend to dump the coin into the LH really retaining it in the RH. Crumple the LH, open and show coin has vanished, and reproduce it with the



RH. Display coin in RH in French Drop position. LH comes over to take the coin, and it secretly drops into RH fingerpalm. LH tosses coin into the air where it vanishes. Reproduce coin with the RH. Flip the coin into the air and catch with LH which again displays coin in French Drop position. As the RH approaches the LH, the RH really takes the coin. As I raise the RH to my mouth to blow on the coin, the coin is Classic Palmed (this is the Spider Vanish).

The RH now makes a tossing motion towards the floor as the hand opens as much as possible giving the impression that the coin has vanished. As attention shifts back to the LH it too is opened and the coin is gone. If you can't do a good Classic Palm, try

taking the coin into RH Thumb Palm instead of a Classic Palm. The RH now reaches down to the right knee and as the coin is reproduced from the knee, the LH is stealing the jumbo coin. I maneuver the quarter into RH Finger Palm, point at it with the LH, which draws attention to the quarter and helps to conceal the jumbo coin. In one quick movement, the RH turns palm down (fingerpalming the quarter) as the LH turns palm up exposing the jumbo coin, like doing a Shuttle Pass.



I toss the jumbo from the LH into the RH, which catches the jumbo coin between the thumb and fingers and displays it. The LH reaches for the barrel and then the hands exchange objects.

The LH replaces the jumbo coin from where it was stolen as the RH displays the barrel (still concealing the quarter in fingerpalm). The LH removes the top of the blue barrel and tables it. The RH dumps the white barrel into the LH and tables its piece. The RH removes the white barrel top and removes and tables it. The LH dumps the final green barrel into the RH and then tables its piece. The LH removes the top and tables its piece, exposing the loose quarters inside (Fig. 1). The spectator is asked to hold out their hands, palms up, and the RH inverts the barrel letting the fingerpalmed quarter fall and coalesces with the quarters that fall from the barrel. Have the spectator find the marked quarter and verify their initials. Place the loose quarters back in the smallest barrel, close and nest the barrels and everything is reset.

**THIS (Tips, Hints, Ideas and Subtleties):**

That's the bare bones, and now for some meat. I always loved the good ol', marked coin found in sealed container trick, and have tried several versions. One thing I didn't like was the fact that in many routines the container could not be examined. It often had a duplicate of the marked object affixed to the bottom of the container. The signed object was revealed by means of a shuttle pass from the container into your hand where the object was concealed. Or the marked coin was removed, shown briefly and then switched via a shuttle pass. This is the wrong time to execute a switch, all the heat is on the signed object moments before the switch. Also why dump them into my hand only to give it to the spectator moments later? The wonderful idea of having something fall from the container to disguise the shuttle

pass has been around for quite some time (thanks to the Jamy lan Swiss routine called *Kiss of the Big Apple*).

Then I came up with the idea, of using coins inside the last container to disguise the signed object, another coin. You do not have to use all quarters as assorted change will work as well. The line I use is "Look it's filled with coins. One of them is your signed quarter, the rest are for me for bus fare in case the rest of the act doesn't go that well". It's the idea of using coins inside the container to eliminate the shuttle pass and allow you to dump directly into the spectator's hands, which also makes the container examinable and makes this trick play so well.

After the jumbo coin is produced, there are several ways you can go regarding the marked coin. I often sleeve the quarter when I perform this trick. You could also pocket the marked coin as the jumbo coin is placed away. Now the hands can be clearly seen empty as the first two barrels are opened. Now by removing something (or pocketing the Sharpie if left out earlier when the coin was marked) from the same pocket the marked coin is fingerpalmed. Or you can just hold out the coin in fingerpalm. In John Bannnon's routine called One is the Onliest he use a banker's clip attached to the rear pants pocket to hold out the marked coin. As you lean forward to hand the jumbo coin to a spectator, the other hand slips the coin into the clip.

Another play I use is as I dump the last barrel into the RH, I do it so that it lands on top of the marked coin. This provides a really clean display of two empty hands and one barrel. As the LH lifts the barrel to the fingertips, the coin is retained in fingerpalm. The routine is structured so that the RH is almost always holding something, which helps conceal the palmed coin. I feel that three barrels is plenty but you can use four or five, it's up to you. I hope you have a barrel of fun with Barrel of Fun!



Danny Archer



# GLORIOUS STACK

## KEN RING

### Ken Ring takes a look at the Stacked Deck and effects

**S**tacks are very useful. The cards must appear in a random order when spread face up for the spectator, yet be very locatable for the magician. So any card at any number should be memorised. But I have come up with a new stack, which I find glorious, hence the name, because nothing needs to be memorised except some simple rules for working out each card or its position. It is Si Stebbins, but not as we know it.

For the stack, arrange them thus, with the AC at the top face down. To get them quickly in order arrange the Clubs in a descending faceup pile, with AC at top, another pile of Hearts with 4 at the top, a third pile, of Spades, with 7 at the top, and a final pile of Diamonds with the 10 at the top. Now just take one card from the top each pile to collect the whole stack in the right order. The AC should be the top card and the 9D the bottom card.

AC=1, 4H=2, 7S=3, 10D=4,  
 2C=5, 5H=6, 8S=7, JD=8,  
 3C=9, 6H=10, 9S=11, QD=12,  
 4C=13, 7H=14, 10S=15, KD=16,  
 5C=17, 8H=18, JS=19, AD=20,  
 6C=21, 9H=22, QS=23, 2D=24,  
 7C=25, 10H=26, KS=27, 3D=28,  
 8C=29, JH=30, AS=31, 4D=32,  
 9C=33, QH=34, 2S=35, 5D=36,  
 10C=37, KH=38, 3S=39, 6D=40,  
 JC=41, AH=42, 4S=43, 7D=44,  
 QC=45, 2H=46, 5S=47, 8D=48,  
 KC=49, 3H=50, 6S=51, 9D=52,

#### Working out Card to number

If it is a Club, remember 'table for 3', for 3  
 x 4 then take away 3  
 e.g. 3C or JC  
 $3C = 12 - 3 = 9$   
 $JC = 44 - 3 = 41$

If it is a Heart, remember 'heart for teens' for 14  
 x 4 then take away 14  
 e.g. 3H or JH  
 $3H = 3 \times 4 = 12 - 14 = -2$ , then from 52 = 50  
 $JH = 11 \times 4 = 44 - 14 = 30$

If it is a Spade, remember 'digging for quarters' for 25  
 x 4 then take away 25  
 e.g. 3S or JS  
 $3S = 3 \times 4 = 12 - 25 = -13$ , then from 52 = 39  
 $JS = 11 \times 4 = 44 - 25 = 19$

If it is a Diamond, remember 'a six by six matrix' for 36  
 x 4 then take away 36  
 e.g. 3D or JD  
 $3D = 3 \times 4 = 12 - 36 = -24$ , then from 52 = 28  
 $JD = 11 \times 4 = 44 - 36 = 8$

#### Working out Number to card

To the number given you have to try adding each in turn of 4 numbers until you strike a 4-multiple. If the number is only 3 away from a 4-multiple (4, 8, 12, 16 etc) then it is a CLUB.e.g. 13 or 21. Then ADD 3.  
 If the number is already a 4-multiple(48, 52 etc), it is a DIAMOND.

In which case then ADD 36.

If the number is odd (23, 35 etc), but adding 3 doesn't get you to a 4-multiple, it is a SPADE. Then ADD 25

If the number is even but not already a 4-multiple, it is a HEART (remember H goalpost has two poles=even) so ADD 14.

Examples

41 or 21

41 is 3 away from 44, a 4-multiple. So it is a Club. Add the 3. Divide 44 by 4 = 11, so card is JC

21 is 3 away from 24, a 4-multiple. So it is a Club. Add the 3. Divide 24 by 4 = 6, so card is 6C

48 or 12

48 is a 4-multiple. So it is a Diamond. Add 36, =72. Take out 52, = 20. Divide by 4 =5, so card is 5D.

12 is a 4-multiple. So it is a Diamond. Add 36, =48. Divide 4, = 12, so card is QD.

35 or 23

35 is odd so it is a SPADE. Add 25, =60. Divide by 4, =15, so it is a 2, the 2S

23 is odd so it is a SPADE. Add 25, =48. Divide by 4, =12, so it is the QS

26 or 42

26 is even so it is a HEART. Add 14, =40. Divide by 4, =10, so it is the 10H

42 is even so it is a HEART. Add 14, =52. Divide by 4, =13, so it is the KH

You can now use this stack for the Universal Force.

### Ultimate Force

A deck is shuffled and placed on the table. Ask a subject to lift the deck anywhere and note a card that he cuts to. Subject replaces cut and squares the pack so the cut can't be seen. Ask the subject what his card is. Now, you ask, how many down is your card presently sitting? Of course he will look surprised at such a silly question.

Okay, you reassure him. "I have something that may help you. Let's treat this as an experiment".

You pull out a paste-card about the size of an envelope, with numbers on one side, actually 1-52 in a grid of squares. Show that these are not in any particular order. Ask the subject to point to its reverse side. Where he touches the card you carefully turn the card over to see which number his finger landed on from the back. For example it may be the 24. Aha, you say, let's see if that gets us anywhere near your card. You had better count down in the deck. But stop at 23 please. He does so, under your supervision, counting aloud. At 23 you say and what was your card again? He says the six of clubs. You say please now turn the card over. It is his card.

### Method

You use a stacked deck, and any stack familiar to you will work in which you know the numbers-down, but also which when spread face-up will look like a shuffled deck in a random order. That is why the Si Stebbins is used so universally, and I have already described my Glorious Stack above. This number-paste-card is my way of way of working a Classic force, for a force it is. Like the Classic Force, you put the card on his finger at the spot you want. But remember that subject has seen the face numbers on the paste card and knows they are not in order. It

would not be magic if the numbers were in order. They must appear to be random. The paste-card looks like this:

10	46	28	19	37	1
20	2	38	29	47	11
30	12	48	39	3	21
40	22	4	49	13	31
50	32	14	5	23	41
42	24	6	15	33	51
52	34	16	7	25	43
44	26	8	17	17	35
36	36	18	9	27	45

So how is the paste card cards numbered so that you can easily memorise the positions from the back side?

Please look carefully at the numbers. They have been especially arranged. The top row digits add to 1, the second row digits add to two etc all the way down to the bottom row of digits which add to 9. For instance 46 is in the top row because 4+6=10 and 1+0=1. 24 is in the sixth row. The numbers are in a pattern, such that the biggest second-digits in the number are closer to the centre (like 19 or 27, and the smaller second-digits are on the sides, like 11 and 30. The ODD second-digits (like 13 and 25) are on the LEFT half of the card, and the EVEN second-digits (like 40 and 36) are on the RIGHT (on the other side of the reversed - back - of the card). By way of this arrangement you can go very quickly to any number from the reverse blind side. A little practice will get you remembering the positions of all from 1 through 52 easily.

### Holding the card to assist a force.

Where you hold the number-card can direct the subjects finger. Let's say the number aimed at is 5. Holding the card so the blank back is facing you, position your left thumb over 41 and your left index over about 23. On the other edge of the card make a V with your right index and right thumb and your middle finger on the right hand underneath, with the right index over 22 and the right thumb over 34. 5 will then be in the middle. The subject will be directed to the middle of that arrangement. You have ample time to position your fingers into a similar triangular arrangement as you pick the number-card up for the subject's impending selection. Holding the thumb on 23, right index over 30 and right thumb over 52 will influence 14..

The cards can be made up on anything. Just could even carry the numbers in a notebook and write them out on a piece of card when you are at the venue or dinner table. I have them on my iPad in a grid-graphic, and I get the person to just point to the back of the tablet. They often ask me afterwards if electronics was involved. Ha ha.

### Mentalism applications

Have a number written on a piece of paper which becomes a billet. After you view it you ask the spirits to guide the subject's hand to the number.

### Final

This is the first exposure of this force to magicians. Please keep the principle away from Youtube, or the 12-year olds will do it badly and will spoil it for us all.

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*A Marked Man*



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# A MAGICIANS CONSTITUTION

## KYLE PERON

Starting in front of that glass I started reading the first opening line "We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

WOW! What powerful words and what a concept to establish a set of rules and laws that establish the rights of the government, states and the rights of the people. Now you may be wondering how this has anything at all do with the magical arts.

As I stared at those words I started to realize just how lost we are as magicians. I realized that the only way we even know what we should be doing, or how we should be acting is through simple common sense, and the hope that we had a good mentor to guide us. What we do not have is anything that really tells us what it means to be a magician. We do not really have anything that tells us how we should act as a magician and what is expected of us.

Could there be a sort of constitution set up for magicians? Maybe yes, and maybe no. I bet the colonist had a hard time arguing over the need for one themselves. But for myself, I figured I wanted and needed to write up a set of ground rules on how I personally felt a magician should act, and certain rules I felt a magician should follow. If nothing more, these could be place in my office for me to ALWAYS see and to always remember no matter where I am in my magic career.



I write this Magician's Constitution because I believe in who I am as a magician and because I believe that the art form of magic is something I take seriously. I will continue to abide by these simple rules so that I can always help myself and to ensure the meaning of the word "magician" continues to be something of value. I hope you will make this Magician's Constitution a part of who you are.

As always, I encourage you the readers to let me know your thoughts. So if you have any thoughts on my articles or suggestions or comments, please feel free to e-mail me directly at [magic4u02@aol.com](mailto:magic4u02@aol.com). I would love to hear from you.



In a recent trip to Philadelphia, I had the privilege to experience and see an original copy of the American Constitution. I also had the chance to go through the new constitution center that has been established. I must tell you it was quite an amazing, moving and touching experience, as well as the the inspiration for this article.

# Magicians Constitution

We the magicians of the world, in order to better our art form, establish professionalism, insure education with our peers and promote the betterment of our art, do establish this Magicians Constitution.

## As a magician I promise:

That I will never reveal a secret of magic to a non magician. I promise that I hold sacred those secrets which have been trusted to me and handed down from generation to generation.

To remember that magic is never so much about fooling people but about entertaining them. I will always strive to entertain an audience and to learn the ways in which to properly accomplish this.

That I will practice what I learn and not perform it in public until I have reached a fluency in it.

That I will never accept second best or "it's good enough" from myself or from any other magician. For "good enough" is simply a way of giving up and giving in. Our audiences deserve more and we deserve more of ourselves.

That I will respect my fellow magicians so I may get the same respect back. It is not about causing arguments. It is about realizing that discussions are healthy and that opinions can be different but also that we can all learn from them.

That I will never ever forget my audience. I will always remember who they are and my place on stage. What I do and how I do it shall be for the audience's I perform for.

That if the magic becomes all about "me" and for "me" alone, that I will save that magic for my own home. If I fail to forget that my magic is not all about "me", then I promise to put my magic aside until time that I fully understand.

That I will never embarrass another magician through my own actions.

That I will not steal from another magician in full or in part. I promise that I will strive to find my own unique style of performance.

To support my magic brethren and help out in any way that I can so we all may grow in this art. If I can help another magician through actions I can take, I choose to do so and not accept anything in return. I do it for the art I love.

To remember that failure is never failure if I continue to learn something from it. If I do learn then it is a step on the road to success. If I see others fail, I will encourage them to get back up and to help them learn from it.

Never ever to give up my love and passion for the magical arts and if I do, then I promise to place my wand aside until that passion comes back.

That I will never fear to ask any question from any magician for there is never a dumb question, only the question not asked.

To support the future of magic and to assist the beginners coming into the magical arts in any way I can. These beginners can be of any age, race or culture and I will strive to promote our art, fundamentals and values within them.

To simply listen and talk to any magician who simply wants to talk to me. I will make the time.

That I will strive to be as creative as I possibly can be and to continue the pursuit of creative thought in magic both within myself and others.

To treat my audience helpers like guests in my own home. If I get a laugh from them, I promise to make sure they know my appreciation. I promise that embarrassment of others to inflate my own ego is something that will never be a part of who I am as a magician.

To never allow my own ego to grow so large that I forget who I really am or where I came from. No matter where my magic takes me, I will always remember my past and give to the future of the art.

To always remember to be a professional at ALL times. I will strive to be a professional not just on stage but in everything I do and how I conduct myself.

To never stop learning and to continue to always expand my knowledge of the magical arts and its history. I will share this knowledge freely with other magicians who have shown a desire to learn from me.

To always give 100% effort in every show or performance I do. I realize that "calling it in" is not a part of who I am or the art form I choose to do.

To uphold the symbolism and meaning of what it is to be a magician. I will strive to conduct myself in a way that brings honor to the magical arts.

To never forget that being a magician is an honor and a privilege.



## DAZZLE

劉謙

Lu Chen  
Hong Kong 2012  
世界魔術巡迴之旅香港站LU CHEN  
REVIEW  
ADRIAN SAW

Having moved to Hong Kong from Sydney recently I had been flicking through *Time Out* looking for any magic shows and as luck would have it there was an article and details of a show by Taiwanese magician Lu Chen called "Dazzle".

For those of you not aware of Lu Chen, he is a superstar in Asia, thanks to appearances on a number of prime time New Year Eve TV specials in China, reaching an audience of over one billion people! He single handedly started a "magic craze" in China as a result and is 13th on Forbes Asia's Celebrity list for earnings and media exposure and undertook a huge Asian tour.

More recently he has been gaining wider Western exposure thanks to winning Magician of the Year 2011 from the Academy of Magical Arts, playing in Las Vegas and gracing the front cover of Magic Magazine. Many call him the "David Copperfield" of Asia and from the pre show queues, people were frantically queuing at the doors despite being an allocated seat event, and huge lines for photos with the show billboard. There was a lot of excitement around.

This Hong Kong show was show "number 101" as part of his long running Asian tour, it looks like he has four shows in Hong Kong this time, playing at the Kowloon Bay Exhibition Centre "Star Hall". One thing to note, and I knew this when booking tickets, is the show is entirely in Mandarin, which I do not speak, so while I knew I may not understand the speaking parts, would appreciate the show nonetheless. As an aside, his Las Vegas show was performed in English.

As with most shows of this size there were ample video screens, I counted 9, for the live video feed: a great touch was having them "tiered" depth wise through the venue, so as seats were further back you still got a close view of a screen: have seen many shows where screens are only at the front of the stage.





Audience entering the theater

The stage was bare apart from a small "chest mannequin on a pole." Imagine a mannequin with no head, arms or legs, only the chest and tiny bit of neck part. A curtain went up and the shadow of the chest could be seen. Then two arms emerged from the chest, via shadows through the cloth, followed by a head and legs. The curtain dropped and there was Lu Chen, greeted by a huge applause. I liked this opener a lot; have not seen this before and is a nice twist on many of the "shadow" opening appearances out there.

He said some hellos, while not understanding the language one still maintains the power of perception, then went straight into a high energy version of John Taylor's Suspended Animation, as slick as I've seen it performed by anyone else and the audience LOVED it. I love sitting next to lay people who really get into it as the guy next to me did, as magicians we really do lose that same sense of wonder!

Lu then went into a bill switch with a borrowed 1000 note, about \$130 USD, turning

it into two \$10 notes with a lot of comedy byplay. Audience laughter became my translation mechanism! He then handed the 10's back and moved on to an illusion. This is something a lot of stand up comedy magicians do, but haven't really seen an illusionist maintain a "destroyed item" as unresolved through their show but it played well.

The next illusion was a fairly standard "Squeezer" type illusion with an assistant. After squeezing her, he reached in and pulled out a flat cardboard cutout then proceeded to "pull the clothes off" the cardboard cutout, revealing a change of clothes. When he unsqueezed and brought her back, there was a costume change to match the cardboard cutout. It's great to see a 'standard' illusion given a twist here and there. Audience reaction was huge, but had a feeling it was more due to the costume change, which highlights how much mileage you can get from small additions.

Next, Lu then turned the two 10 notes back into the 1000.

Lu then went into the Walter Zaney Blaney Ladder Levitation with a girl from the audience. A lot of great byplay before the actual illusion. This one played a little flat for me, and the audience judging by the comparatively quieter applause.

His next illusion was Steinmeyer's Op Art. In this illusion an assistant is "folded" by removing puzzle pieces, piece by piece until only her head remains on top of a small box. The box is then removed showing her vanished. She then reappears. This was a "multi phase" illusion and applause built as she was vanished part by part. It wasn't quite my cup of tea as it came across as more of a puzzle (no pun intended) as each piece was removed, about "where could she be hiding as I can still see parts of her body".

This was followed by the Wakeling Sawing with two audience volunteers holding the leg and neck straps. This was an elaborate medieval torture chamber set piece. The build up to the illusion was a little slow with an overly long build up about the

leather straps, not a huge amount of laughs so could be tightened up. The funniest moment of the show for me was when Lu had put the blades through the box, flipped the front doors open and asked one assistant to "touch her" to make sure it was a real person. He reluctantly did so but he happened to reach in to the space covered by the centre section of the boxes in a very suggestive location on the girl. Lu made a great, I assume by the laughter, comment but his facial expression was also priceless. Audience reaction to the illusion a little muted, though I love this illusion.

He then had his hands chained and locked by an audience member, and went into a spiked illusion, locked in a sub trunk looking box. One comment would be that the blades, kind of like thin sword blades, hoisted over the box looked very flimsy and were not raised high enough above the box to give it a truly menacing feel. However they dropped and he reappeared from a rising platform at the back of the stage. This got a huge reaction, one of the biggest of the night.

After getting back on stage, Lu was visibly and audibly "tired and out of breath" and paused to take water. Not knowing what was said I can only assume this was intentional as comedy byplay as there were some laughs. Either way, it does kind of tip the fact he was running from front to back of stage to reappear, something I wouldn't think should be highlighted, even for a laugh, even if it may be a logical conclusion to a lay person.

Lu then went into a Zimmerman Prediction Chest style routine, hoisting a locked prediction box high into midair. As a heavily talking based piece I didn't know what the responses were but he was getting a lot of laughs along the way. He built the routine into a talk show host style with a couple of "Oprah" couches for him and the audience member. Of course the prediction matched perfectly written in Chinese and another big reaction.

He followed with the Linking Finger Rings which believe was one of the pieces he performed on Chinese TV that shot him to stardom. Very nicely done with tight camera work for the big screens. Using the Joe Porper/Pete Biro pencil for the unlink, there were audible gasps as the last ring visibly unlinked. So strong and goes to show size doesn't always matter!

Lu then introduced a small tin box with some items including playing cards and a pencil. It appeared he was talking about his childhood. With the pencil he then went into Timothy Wenk's Misled with a borrowed 1000 bill. This is still a fantastic illusion and again with tight camera work looked unbelievable.

He then went into a fast paced card manipulation sequence, opened with a silk to cane which frankly felt out of place. This felt a little disjointed. While obviously skilled in the sleight of hand department, the manipulations were a little too "fast and furious", it was hard to keep up amid the flurry of cards but a nice touch to see him performing some knuckle busting pieces. I think he



would be much more suited to a slower and more elegant routine.

At about 1.5 hours I felt a finale was coming and when a chair and wine glass of water were brought on stage, it was time. After a long talking build up, Lu performed the Kevin James snowstorm. It is really a great piece of magic and the audience loved it. Lights go black and audience can smell an encore.

Indeed there was one with Lu making a helicopter appear on stage. This was a nice, fast paced, stage filling piece to contrast with the few smaller more intimate pieces that preceded. Who can't be amazed by this! The crew took their applause but Lu had one more piece in store. Back to a small table and tight camera shot and Lu performed an unusual single coffee cup and balls piece. The balls looked like tiny bits of paper. Lu would put 2 in the cup, flick one off the table and tip the cup to reveal 3 back. This was repeated, honestly a little too much, I think I counted essentially the same thing about 7 times, before revealing the balls had disappeared from cup as the end of the show. Was a little bit of a strange choice I thought given the strength of some earlier routines. And that was the end.

Overall an excellent show, even with the language barrier on my part. You can tell he has, literally, done this show 100 times before: he is confident, charming, funny and commands the stage very well. A great mix of larger set piece illusions and smaller routines. And judging by the laughs he is a funny guy too. While it is a cliché, I can see why he is known as the David

Copperfield of Asia; not just for the fame but he has a level of charisma I have only otherwise seen in David Copperfield. Ironically, Copperfield judged and presented Lu a Taiwanese magic award he won as a kid.



**Adrian Saw**

*Originally from Australia Adrian is now based out of Hong Kong.*





# THE HEALTHY PERFORMER

BY DANNY WEISER



DANNY WEISER IS A STUDENT PURSUING A DEGREE IN PHYSICAL THERAPY, A CERTIFIED PERSONAL TRAINER AND AN ILLUSIONIST. HE CHOSE HIS FUTURE PROFESSION BASED ON THE FACT THAT AT THE AGE OF 16, HE INTENTIONALLY LOST 135 POUNDS, REDUCING HIS WEIGHT FROM 300 POUNDS TO 165.

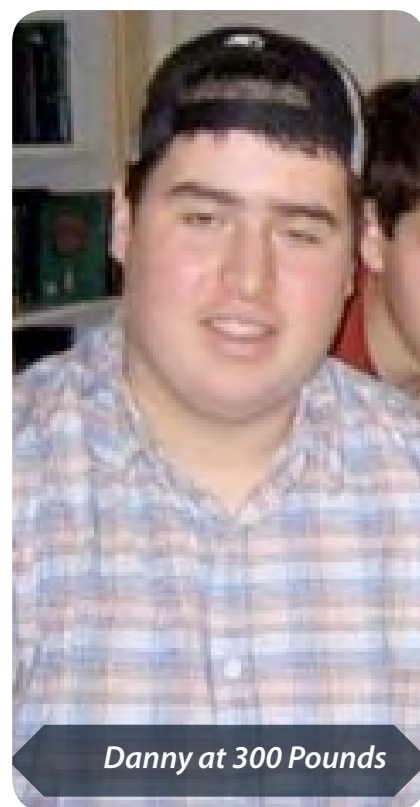
## DANNY WEISER

Besides my academic pursuits, I am also an accomplished magician/illusionist, illusion creator/designer, and have been practicing magic since the young age of six. I perform large scale magic shows with high-end illusions for any venue; no venue is too large or too small for my performances. As a younger teen, I was only performing at smaller events, including birthday parties and family celebrations.

Although I enjoyed performing magic, I always felt self-conscious about being over-weight and performing in front of others. As my skills and desire to perform magic increased, so did my concerns about my weight and performing in front of audiences. So at the age of 16, I decided that not only was there an important need to lose weight to feel better about myself, but it was also important in order to lead a healthier lifestyle.

I extensively researched different means of losing weight via diet and exercise, and made a decision to begin my personally-managed weight loss and exercise program. I diligently remained on my diet/exercise plan for about a year, and the weight swiftly came off. I typically exercised twice a day, and began a body-building program, which I continue to this day. I will be turning 22 in a few weeks, and it is hard to believe that it is almost six years since I started my life-changing weight-loss journey. I am very proud to say that I have successfully kept the weight off, and have every desire to continue to do so.

After losing 135 pounds and continuing to exercise and body-build daily, I no longer suffer insecurities about my body self-image, and performing magic in front of audiences has stopped being



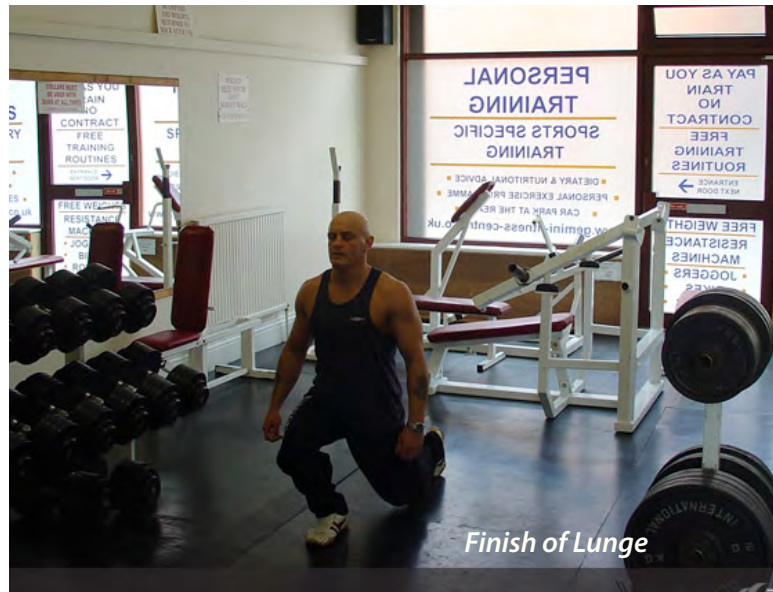
*Danny at 300 Pounds*



*Danny today*



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KEEP FIT AND

HEALTHY WHILE

ON THE ROAD

a concern for me. About two years ago, I made a conscious decision to dedicate more attention to my magic and hone my performing skills.

I utilize live animals in my shows, and I also include comedy; audience laughter never seems to be lacking. My stories of weight loss and magic are intertwined, my love of magic motivated my weight loss, and my weight loss continuously motivates my magic.

My weight-loss story which has absolutely changed my life forever. My goal with this forum is to share, with the whole magic community, the importance of eating properly and staying in good, physical shape. In each VANISH issue I will be sharing weight loss stories from myself and other performers in addition to sharing diet and workout tips to keep you healthy and marketable. Below is a workout for the traveling performer (no gym needed). Enjoy and good luck.

**Exercise Instructions**

(Please see workout photos above for proper form)

Stand up straight with a slight bend in your knees and look forward. This is the starting position.

Step forward with your left leg while maintaining your balance and squat down through your hips.

Keep your torso straight and head up. Don't allow your knee to track out over your toes.

Continue the movement by driving your left heel into the floor and standing straight up - bringing your right foot forward to meet your left foot.

Continue moving forward in this fashion by alternating which leg you lead with. Repeat for desired reps.

**Exercise Tips:**

Make sure there is plenty of room and a clear path to walk forward through during this exercise. When you have reached the end of the path, simply turn around and continue the movement back to the starting position.

Never allow your knees to track out over your toes during this movement. Doing so will place undue stress on the knee joints. Keep your head up and back straight throughout the exercise. Never allow your back to round.



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Neal Scryer has worked the underground mentalism and psychic market for years in major metropolitan areas. His previous books have been some of the most in-demand texts in the field, and have been sold on secondary markets for up to 10 times their original prices.

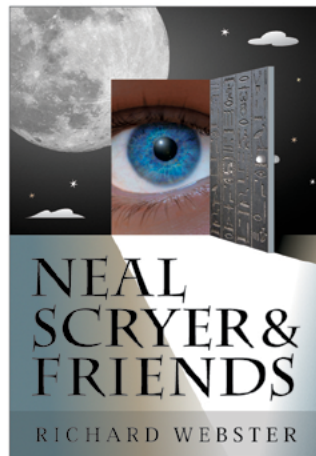
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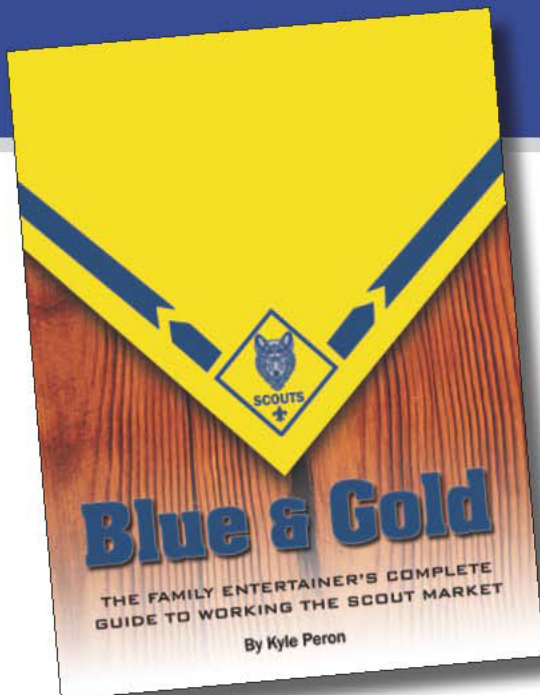
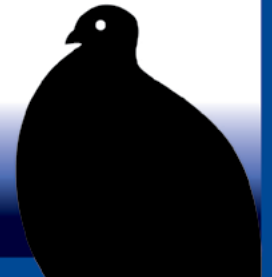
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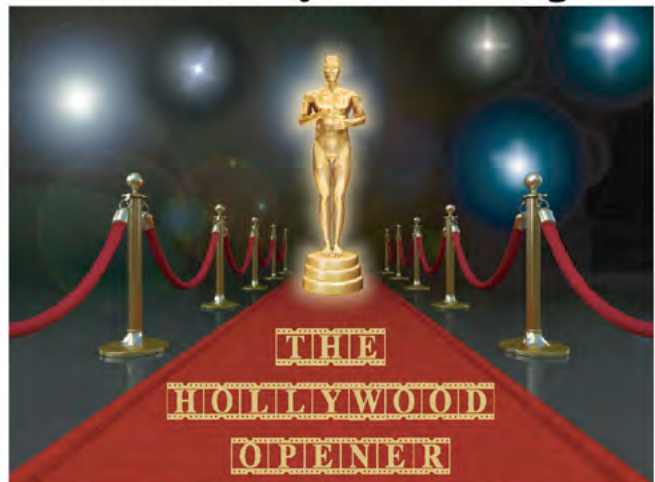
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