



MagicBunny.co.uk

TOPHAT

October 2002 - Edition 7

Halloween Special

Welcome to the Spooktacular 7th Edition of the TOPHAT Magician's E-zine.

In this issue, we have heaps of Halloween, spooky and bizarre articles for you to devour. Sink your teeth into our MagicBunny exclusive interview with Brazilian mentalist Khronnus or learn some Halloween card tricks to spook out your audience!

Coupled with some great articles about the meaning of Halloween and it's origins, this e-zine is an essential read this October.

We hope you enjoy this publication, and have a very happy Halloween.

All the Best,

~Jon Snoops~
Editor of MagicBunny.co.uk's TOP HAT Monthly e-zine
jonsnoops@hotmail.com

Contents

We've had a lot of submissions this month, and we are very grateful for all that have sent things in. Here's this month's line-up:

MAGIC NEWS: *"Message From Admin"* by Admin

MAGIC INTERVIEW: *"An Interview with Khronnus"* by Khronnus & Huw Collingbourne

MAGIC EFFECT: *"Ouija Board Illusion"* by Khronnus

MAGIC ARTICLE: *"Hallowe'en"* by Mister Toad

MAGIC EFFECT: *"A Spooky Halloween Card Revelation"* by Daniel Price

MAGIC ARTICLE: *"The History of Halloween"* by Annie

MAGIC EFFECT: *"Peanuts"* by Sean McQuade

MAGIC INTERVIEW: *"An Interview with Simon Lovell"* by Simon & Daniel Price

MAGIC ARTICLE: *"Some Halloween Facts"*

MAGIC ARTICLE: *"Casualty Simulation"* by Niggle

Thanks to all contributors, keep these coming in sent to TOPHAT@magicbunny.co.uk

Message From Admin

Welcome to the special Hallowe'en edition of Top Hat. I hope that you enjoy reading through this latest e-zine and that you may pick up some new skills or knowledge along the way.

The biggest development this month has been the introduction of a new forum called "Guest Speakers." The forum was launched earlier this month with a guest appearance by our first visitor Tora, all the way from Turkey. Tora has accumulated some twenty years on the stage and has an expanse of knowledge and experience that many of us would simply dream about. This new forum at Magic Bunny has rapidly become my own personal favourite, as I visit the boards each day - the width and breadth of questions has been tremendous and Tora's replies have been brilliant and totally professional. I certainly found these threads to be inspirational and I have received a great deal of positive feedback from other users too.

If you haven't visited Magic Bunny over the past few weeks, take a peep now and see what you are missing - I am sure that you will want to return again and again.

Have a happy and safe Hallowe'en and I shall look forward to your input on the boards over the forthcoming month of November.

Best wishes,

Admin.

An Interview With Khronnus

Brazilian magician, Khronnus, is master of bizarre and magic. Here he tells Huw Collingbourne how he helped to bring a 'psychic healer' to justice.



Khronnus was born in a small town of Caxias do Sul in the South of Brazil called, in the state of Rio Grande do Sul. He recalls that it was his grandmother who introduced him to magic by making things 'vanish' when he was about seven or eight years old. When he was a teenager, Khronnus developed an interest in the more 'mysterious' aspects of magic. He thinks this may have been due to his mother's belief in spirits and mysticism such as tarot and palm-reading. His investigations into mysticism eventually led him to decide to become a mentalist. Khronnus has been working as a professional magician for about seven years, since the age of 16. In a recent TV programme, which has been broadcast internationally, he helped to expose one of Brazil's most famous 'psychics'. Khronnus is currently preparing another TV special to be shown in Brazil later this year. He is also planning to publish a series of three booklets on "Psychic Magic": Vol1, Metal Bending, and Materialization; Vol2 PK, Moving Objects with your Mind; Vol3 Psychic Masterpieces.

Huw: Many thanks for doing this interview, Khronnus. Can you tell us a bit more about the fake psychic you exposed in your recent TV show? Who exactly is he?

Khronnus: His name is Thomaz Green Morton de Souza Coutinho, He has been working as psychic in Brazil for the last 25 years.

Huw: What was so bad about him?

Khronnus: He is a fake and a criminal. He is being investigated for being responsible for four deaths, three of them as a psychic healer, one of them for driving while drunk. He is being hunted by the Federal Police of Brazil, for money laundering, murder, illegal practice of medicine and illegal enrichment. He also used drugs to cause hallucinations in his "patients". He would take a pack of sugar, transform this into a yellow "healing powder" and then tell his patients to drink it with coffee.

Huw: And how did you come to be involved in the TV show?

An Interview With Khronnus (cont.)

Khronnus: Thanks to "psychic hunter", James Randi who recommended me to the TV company as the most accomplished magician in Brazil to do the job.

Huw: Some magicians and mentalists would argue that it is always bad to expose fake psychics. After all, if you expose the methods they use, aren't you also exposing the methods used by mentalists?

Khronnus: No. All magicians and mentalists have the obligation to expose people who are using misdirection and other magical principles to fool other people with the single objective of making easy money. These kinds of people are parasites of our society. They hurt people, they kill, they rob, and all of them without exception should go to jail.

Our art is made for entertainment, not for criminality.

Huw: What sort of magic and mentalist tricks did this psychic perform?

Khronnus: These are a few:

* Photo genesis - He used a photography flash with different colour filters in order to produce "beings of light" which he claimed to be from another planet, from an alternate dimension called "Afron V" . Can anyone with the minimum sense and reason believe in these claims?

* Perfume Production - by hiding a sponge between his fingers he was able to produce different "perfumed oils". This was his worst trick.

* Bending Coin - He shows his victims a stack of eight coins. By adding a ninth bent coin he claimed he could bend currency.

(I only agreed to expose the above tricks).

* Cutlery bending - All kinds

* Cold Reading

* Transmutation of various materials - foil into metal, sugar into healing powder

* Resurrection of a dead bird - this is a pretty convincing one if presented properly

* Making healing powder from a plant.

* Turning "Iron Sponge" (I don't know how to say it in English but it's a kitchen utensil) into a metal chain

* Etc....

Huw: And how did you manage to catch him 'at it'?

Khronnus: For the first time in 25 years he allowed the cameras and a TV crew to spend a week in his farm. After that I watched the tapes and caught him at his tricks.

Huw: You do quite a bit of mentalism yourself. Which mentalist effects or routines do you find the most powerful?

Khronnus: All those that seem like genuine psychic power are very strong. (Telepathy, PK, cold reading, etc.) I also like to predict "big events" (such as soccer finals, etc.). Divination effects are also very good.

Huw: How about fork bending? Do you find that audiences are still interested in that? And do they believe that it is 'for real'?

Khronnus: The thing about metal bending is that even educated, intelligent people believe it's real; this applies to moving objects with "the power of your mind" also.

That's why I think audiences are still interested in it.

Huw: How easy is it to learn to do fork and spoon bending?

Khronnus: I think this is the kind of thing that you learn by doing it. You learn those small, but very important things that change the trick into a "genuine phenomenon" only by presenting it. You get better with experience. It's not just that: "look, a regular spoon... now it's bent", it's a lot more than that...

Huw: Did you learn from books or videos? Or did you just teach yourself?

An Interview With Khronnus (cont.)

Khronnus: I watched Geller as a child and start imitating him; during this I developed my own techniques. After that, as a teenager, I went to the books and videos.

Huw: You also specialize in spooky and bizarre magic. Can you give us an idea of the kind of spooky routines you perform?

Khronnus: My favourite at the time is the Ouija board effect that goes with this interview. I love to perform spirit and mediumistic effects in general. I also like 'body' effects as nail-into-nose, knife-into-eye, pencil-through-tongue, this kind of stuff.

Huw: Do you like to scare your audiences?

Khronnus: I *love* to.

Huw: What's the strangest or funniest reaction you've ever had from an audience?

Khronnus: Once at a business dinner the lady who was hiring me fainted while I did a Voodoo routine. And once at a radio show a priest called the radio claiming that I was Satan.

Huw: How did you start to get interested in that style of magic? Was it through watching other magicians? Or were you more influenced by horror films and books?

Khronnus: Neither one nor the other. I think it comes from my early interest in mysteries of the supernatural, the feats of "circus freaks" and Role Playing Games

Huw: Is there any other magician who scares you...?

Khronnus: I don't think there's anyone who scares me, but I love to watch and read anything from Tony Andruzzi.

Many thanks to both Khronnus and Huw for providing us with this interview, we hope to hear from more top magicians soon both in our new Guest Forum (see <http://www.magicbunny.co.uk>) and also here.

Ouija Board Illusion

On top of allowing us to interview him, Khronnus has kindly agreed to let us print this stage illusion of his. Therefore, we are privileged to present Khronnus's 'Ouija Board' illusion exclusively to readers of Top Hat.

WARNING!

First, a word of warning: In his original stage illusion, Khronnus makes use of ammonia and hydrochloric acid (HCL) as part of the effect. We have provided Khronnus's full method here so that readers can fully understand the workings of this illusion as originally presented. However, ammonia and hydrochloric acid are both highly hazardous chemicals. The acid, in particular, will not be readily available to members of the public in the UK and we would strongly recommend that you do not attempt to obtain it. If you want to create similar effects in a routine of your own, you should consult a specialist magical supply dealer who should be able to recommend safer alternatives.

EFFECT

You ask a member of the séance to "think" about a lost relative's first name. The ouija board then reveals it. The spirit gets angry and appears. You finish by visually catching the spirit in a glass bowl.

Ouija Board Illusion (cont.)

Props

- A gimmicked ouija board
- A 'visor' or 'planchette' for the ouija board
- One glass bowl
- HCL and ammonia (*but see our warning above*)
- One 2" by 2" magnet

How to build the ouija board

You take an ordinary ouija board which must have some kind of decorative circle on it; mine has the sun to one side and the moon on the other. Prior to the séance you "wax" the entire surface of the board with furniture wax with the exception of the decorative circle. Let it dry, and wax it again. Let it dry and wet the circle with HCL which is less "smelly" of the two chemicals involved.

The visor

This is sometimes called a 'planchette'. It is a triangular board with a viewing pane at the middle. It is supposed to spell out messages from the spirit world when people touch it lightly. To make this, cut a triangle of a heavy cardboard, making each side 2" long. Now you proceed to cut a circle inside the triangle the size of the letters on your ouija board. Use 3 magnetic pins with colored round ends to serve as the base for the visor (see the illustration).



This is a typical Ouija Board, which is available commercially.

The glass bowl

This is an ordinary glass bowl containing a few drops of ammonia.

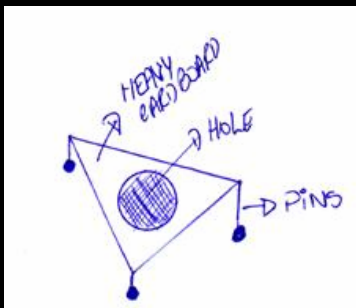
The magnet

This should be attached to your knee

Routine

You present the ouija board and invite 3 or 4 people to join you in the experiment. You talk about its history and some strange tales about it. You then ask someone from the audience to write the name of the spirit you wish to contact in a piece of paper. You proceed to convey the written information via your favorite method (refer to one of the standard texts on mentalism for ideas on this).

You now ask your audience members to each put a finger on the visor. If you have created the right atmosphere the visor will now move according to the spectator's involuntary body movements (* See Footnote). If you're a lucky guy and all the spectators have seen the name there's a chance that they themselves reveal the name of the dear departed without your help. Although, if this is not the case, you will - by minor movements - conduct the visor to the letters that compose the name of the dead. Up to this point you must have created a creepy mood in order to scare your audience.



This is the plan of the 'visor' or 'planchette'.

You will now ask the spirit to leave the board, and he will reply 'No!' – that's done by your minor movements of the visor once again. Do this two more times and tell the spectators that you will try to get the spirit out of the board. In order to do this they all have to remove their fingers from the visor.

Suddenly the visor will start moving by itself. That is, you will bring the magnet which you have on your knee, under the table, directly below the visor and start to move it in that way. If you have done things right the

spectators will be scared to death right now!

Spend some time moving the visor to build tension. Finally, state that the spirit is out of control and warn that it may stay in the room where you are currently conducting the ouija experiment if it is not captured. You now introduce your glass bowl and say that it serves to catch rebellious spirits. By putting the glass bowl directly over the sun on your board – or the place where you chose to put the HCL drops - it will create smoke and heat (that's

Ouija Board Illusion (cont.)

HCL and ammonia). You finish stating that the spirit is now captured inside the bowl and allowing the spectators to touch the glass in order to feel the heat inside.

This is a powerful routine, give it your personal touches and patter and play with it. You will be able to scare the hell out of your audience.

Footnote

() this is the principle of "the glass game" and "the key in the bible" stunt in which you invoke a spirit not in a glass.*

By Khronnus

Hallowe'en

History

All Saint's Day and All Hallows are two different names for the same day in the calendar. All Hallows can be defined as "All the Holy People." The day before All Hallows is known as All Hallows Eve or Hallowe'en. This previously was known as Samhain – an ancient Celtic celebration of the New Year. Ancient people thought that this was the time when the dead revisited the earth and the Celtic people looked with trepidation towards the New Year. Meals were left out to put the dead in good humour, fires were lit and loud noises were made to frighten away evil spirits. This pagan festival accounts for many of the features of the night that is known as Hallowe'en.

The church, which seldom stamped out celebrations unless they were immoral or cruel, preferred to baptise the ancient festival with new meaning. Therefore, the church provided alternatives to the pagan festival of Samhain, which incorporated many of the old customs. These alternatives were spread over a three-day commemoration of which All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day were more important than that of Hallowe'en. The emphasis of these Christian festivals was to replace and debunk the beliefs represented by the old Samhain. The early Christians used All Saints Day to celebrate the achievements of the Saints. As part of these new festivities, bells were rung and bonfires lit. Instead of fearing the return of the dead, the Christians kept All Souls Day for remembering the faithful departed and their surviving families.

In many places, people went "souling", that is going from door-to-door singing and asking for fruit, cakes and drinks. Soul cakes or loaves were made and given to the poor. Sometimes a mummers play was enacted to encourage the people to give more at this time. These plays are still enacted in rural parts of Great Britain, such as the one in the Antrobus area of Cheshire. Here, the brave Saint George fights the black prince, who is killed but revived by a quack doctor. During this play a three-legged horse runs amok, trying to bite its rider and create as many laughs as possible.

Many of the present Hallowe'en customs may be traced back to these earlier times and their roots are firmly embedded in our own cultural heritage.

Why has Hallowe'en become so Popular?

The growth of Hallowe'en in Great Britain is probably related in part to the demise of the Guy Fawkes celebrations on November 5th and the effect of cross Atlantic commercialism. Once, Guy Fawkes parties were large family events but these have now waned and the celebration gap has been partly filled by the events of Hallowe'en. In the past the traffic was in the other direction. Originally bonfires and crackers were part of Hallowe'en and they moved to Guy Fawkes Night.

Hallowe'en (cont.)

Another reason for the rise in popularity of Hallowe'en is the increasing interest in the occult. Whatever the reason for this interest, it is fair to say that there is now a large amount of material on this subject, including videos, computer games and books, which was once not so readily available.

The fascination of Hallowe'en is not just confined to children. It has established itself on the culture and commerce of the whole community. Hallowe'en is a big event in the adult world, which young children long to join. To be able to play in the ways that adults play is very attractive for these children.

Anyone lodging objections to Hallowe'en has to admit its powerful appeal. As well as being boosted by commercialisation, it meets the need for a mid-autumn frolic, brightening up the darkening days in an appropriately gloomy way. True, it does glamorise witches but few people take such beings seriously. Very few people think that fancy dress witches present real people and so they do not usually transfer the fake horrors of Hallowe'en into everyday life.

Why Celebrate Hallowe'en or Not?

(1) Historical Inaccuracy

The warm, loving, feminist, Greenpeace paganism described above is mostly fiction. Christians don't have a blameless record, but neither do they have a monopoly of oppression and destruction. Early pagans deforested much of ancient Britain, drove many animal species to extinction, sacrificed animals and humans too. The urgent migration of Celts, Gauls Gaels and others suggests that peace did not always reign throughout pagan times. A serious study of ancient paganism shows a gap between what modern pagans claim and what ancient paganism actually was. The fictitious beauty of ancient paganism is an essential part of modern pagans' faith. Historical truth must not be bent to appease them.

(2) Witches and Hags

The characterisation of witches has had a long and evil history. It depicts wicked personalities as old women. For centuries, lonely old women were shunned, terrorised, drowned and burnt because they were believed to be witches. The materials for this discrimination remain for modern Hallowe'en fun-makers in the form of the teasing and intimidation of elderly people during this time.

(3) Effects on Children

Some children are worried about Hallowe'en. The dramatic presentation of witches, monsters and evil can create unnecessary fear for sensitive children. Although such images are present in the virtual world of television, the apparent "realness" of Hallowe'en presents an additional anxiety for some smaller children in the dramatic elements of Hallowe'en and by what Hallowe'en represents.

Evil is real, objective and powerful. Some children are disturbed by nightmares and the celebration of mischief and the overturning of normal standards may have far reaching repercussions.

(4) Vandalism

Hallowe'en has given a licence to do the unacceptable. Gangs of youths now commonly paint spray walls, break windows or throw eggs as part of this event. Children knocking on strangers' doors has obvious risks and fear is generated in older members of the community and those who live alone. There can be little logic in having an event that overturns the normal rules of society whilst stressing the importance of adhering to these rules during the remainder of the year.

(5) Offence

Hallowe'en is offensive to Christians and members of other faiths. Today we live in a world that demands respect for other people. It therefore, seems right that society should take careful account of the religious objections that many faiths have to the celebration of this festival.

By Mister Toad

A Spooky Halloween Card Revelation

Effect:

You are out on Halloween and in the mood for a trick after making yourself sick from all those treats. Or maybe you have been caught egging Mr. Pearson's house after he gave you an orange and now you need a trick to help you escape.

You introduce a deck of cards (red backed preferably, red=blood) and have one selected e.g. 5 of diamonds. The card is returned and the cards are fired, Blaine style, all over Mr. Pearson, his garden path and Fluffy, Mr Pearson's cat who has become interested in the pumpkin, which has been sat next to the wall all the time.

You ask the spectator to look over at the wall and notice the dim glow. From a distance it looks like the normal light from a pumpkin, but how? The pumpkin's face is facing you. Upon further inspection, the light on the wall seems to be 5 separate dim glows. The pumpkin is turned round and it is revealed that a 5 of diamonds is cut in the back of the pumpkin.

Method:

Very easy as you might guess. Set up your pumpkin in the usual way - taking out all the seeds and cutting in a face. Then turn it round and in the back cut 5 diamonds out (diamonds been the easiest shape to cut out of a pumpkin) and put in a candle. The rest is a doddle.

Place the pumpkin somewhere, next to a wall (e.g. a door step) with the 5 diamonds facing the wall. Force the 5 of diamonds and throw the cards all over (or, if you are cheap like me or want to show the effect more than once, just lose the card in the deck). Then it is up to you to milk it for all its worth before finally revealing the 5 diamonds.

By Daniel Price

The History of Halloween

What is Halloween?

Halloween is a festival that takes place on October 31. In the United States, children wear costumes on Halloween and go trick-or-treating. Many carve jack-o'-lanterns out of pumpkins. Halloween parties feature such activities as fortunetelling, storytelling about ghosts and witches, and bobbing for apples.

Halloween developed from ancient new year festivals and festivals of the dead. In the A.D. 800's, the Christian church established All Saints' Day on November 1 so that people could continue a festival they had celebrated before becoming Christians. The Mass said on All Saints' Day was called Allhallowmas. The evening before All Saints' Day became known as All Hallows' Eve, or All Hallow e'en.

What is the History of Halloween?

History: The Celtic festival of Samhain is probably the source of the present-day Halloween celebration. The Celts lived more than 2,000 years ago in what is now the United Kingdom, Ireland, and northern France. Their new year began on November 1. A festival that began the previous evening honored Samhain, the Celtic lord of death. The celebration marked the beginning of the season of cold, darkness, and decay. It naturally became associated with human death. The Celts believed that Samhain allowed the souls of the dead to return to their earthly homes for this evening.

On the evening of the festival, the Druids, who were the priests and teachers of the Celts, ordered the people to put out their hearth fires. The Druids built a huge new year's bonfire of oak branches, which they considered sacred. They burned animals, crops, and possibly even human beings as sacrifices. Then each family relit its hearth fire from the new year's fire. During the celebration, people sometimes wore costumes made of animal heads and skins. They told fortunes about the coming year by examining the remains of the animals that had been sacrificed.

The History of Halloween (cont.)

The Romans began the conquest of the Celts in A.D. 43 and ruled much of what is now the United Kingdom for about 400 years. During this period, two Roman autumn festivals were combined with the Celtic festival of Samhain. One of them, called Feralia, was held in late October to honor the dead. The other festival honored Pomona, the Roman goddess of fruit and trees. Apples probably became associated with Halloween because of this festival.

What is All Saint's Day?

All Saints' Day. Many of the customs of the Celts survived even after the people became Christians. During the 800's, the church established All Saints' Day on November 1. The people made the old pagan customs part of this Christian holy day. The Catholic Church later began to honor the dead on November 2. This day became known as All Souls' Day.

Regional Halloween customs developed among various groups of Celts. In Ireland, for example, people begged for food in a parade that honored Muck Olla, a god. The leader of the parade wore a white robe and a mask made from the head of an animal. In Scotland, people paraded through fields and villages carrying torches. They lit huge bonfires on hillsides to drive away witches and other evil spirits. In Wales, every person marked a stone and put it into a bonfire. The people believed that if a person's stone was missing the next morning, he or she would die within a year.

In England, Halloween was sometimes called Nutcrack Night or Snap Apple Night. Families sat by the fire and told stories while they ate apples and nuts. On All Souls' Day, poor people went a-souling (begging). They received pastries called soulcakes in exchange for promising to say prayers for the dead.

How is Halloween Celebrated in the U.S.?

Halloween in the United States. Many early American settlers came from England and other Celtic regions, and they brought various customs with them. But because of the strict religious beliefs of other settlers, Halloween celebrations did not become popular until the 1800's. During that period, large numbers of immigrants arrived from Ireland and Scotland and introduced their Halloween customs.

During the mid-1900's, trick-or-treating became less popular in large cities, where many neighbors did not know one another. Halloween pranks, which had once been harmless, sometimes became rowdy and destructive. Traffic accidents also became a major problem on Halloween. As a result, family parties and large community celebrations gained popularity. Today, many communities sponsor bonfires, costume parades, dances, skits, and other forms of entertainment to celebrate Halloween.

Who are the Druids and the Celts?

Druids, pronounced DROO ihdz, were the priestly, learned class among the Celts, a people of ancient Europe. The Druids were judges and lawmakers as well as priests. They led religious ceremonies, settled legal disputes, and served as leaders and advisers to their people.

Druidism, the religion of the Druids, involved the worship of many gods. The Druids regarded mistletoe and oak as sacred. They believed the soul was immortal and entered a new body after death. The Druids killed animals and possibly people as sacrifices. They studied the flights of birds and the remains of sacrificed animals to foretell the future. The Romans, who conquered much of Europe between about 300 B.C. and A.D. 100, tried to stop druidism. The religion died out after the Celts became Christians in the 400's and 500's.

During the 1600's, the descendants of the Celts became interested in their Druidic heritage. Today, several groups in Great Britain and Ireland practice what they believe to be ancient Druidism. They hold Druidic festivals at the beginning of spring, summer, autumn, and winter. A major celebration takes place at Stonehenge, a monument near Salisbury, England, that the Druids are said to have used. In Wales, festivals of music and poetry called eisteddfods (pronounced ay STEHTH vahdz) include Druidic rites.

What is a Witch?

The term witch comes from the Old English word wicca, which is derived from the Germanic root wic, meaning to bend or to turn. By using magic, a witch is believed to change or bend events. Today, the word witch can be applied to a man or a woman. In the past, male witches were also called warlocks and wizards.

The History of Halloween (cont.)

What is Wicca?

Essentially, Wicca is a fertility religion that celebrates the natural world and the seasonal cycles that are central to farming societies. It acknowledges the Goddess as the feminine side of a deity called God. Witches worship both Goddess and God in various personifications, including ancient gods and goddesses. Rites are tied to the cycles of the moon, which is the symbol of the power of the Goddess, and to the seasons of the year. Religious holidays are called sabbats. There are four major sabbats: Imbolc (February 1), Beltane (April 30), Lughnasadh or Lammas (July 31), and Samhain (October 31).

By Annie

<http://www.annieshomepage.com>

<http://www.annieshomepage.com/halloweenhistory.html>

Peanuts

As we all know, a themed item for Halloween is the peanut a.k.a "Monkey Nut" (well that's what we call them here in Ireland anyway). You know what ones I mean, the one with the long, yellow shell containing or 3 nuts. Anyway, they're the type of thing you love or hate, and personally, I hate them, but, because they are so common at this time of year and so easy to conceal, they are perfect for a Halloween type effect.

Effect:

1. The performer shuffles a deck and asks the spectator to choose one.
2. The spectator chooses a card and returns it freely to the deck.
3. The deck is shuffled and the card mixed up into the deck.
4. The deck is then spread only to discover the card is now gone.
5. A packet of nuts is newly opened and poured onto the table.
6. The performer asks the spectator to spread them and mix them up and then, with his eyes closed, chooses one from pile.
7. The performer then cracks open the shell of this nut and inside, there are no nuts, just a rolled up card
8. The performer asks the spectator to unroll it and when they do, it matches the card the spectator chose.
9. The performer then tells the spectator to crack open some nuts at random to prove that is the only "nut less" shell and this is true.

Preparation:

Before hand, you must cut open the shell. You should do this vertically rather than horizontally, as it is easier to remove the nuts.

Make sure it is a clean cut and that the shell will be big enough to contain the card.

Write a prediction on a piece of paper and then place this into the nut and use glue to put it together again.

Peanuts (cont.)

Do this at least 24 hours in advance and make sure you use as little glue as possible and make sure it is not protruding outside the shell.

Before the trick, place this peanut into your pocket, ready for use later.

Method:

1. Make sure the card you want to force is on top.
 2. Do a fake shuffle to retain the top card and then use any force you like such as classic force or double cut force (See Royal Road To Card Magic to learn more forces).
 3. Let them return it anywhere, but get a pinkie break on top of the card and then do a false shuffle to return it to the top.
 4. Palm the card off the top of the deck and dump into your pocket, at which time, also retrieving the nut and getting it into a finger palm.
 5. Spread the deck and look for the card and show it isn't there. If you want you can hand it to the spectator and let them look.
 6. Open the nuts and make a point of how they are unopened.
 7. Get the spectator to open it and spread them out and mix them up and close your eyes and choose a random one
 8. Switch this nut with your nut somehow (You can use a false transfer or Bobo switch etc.)
 9. Crack open your nut to reveal the card they chose is inside and then if you wish, you can let them crack open some of the other nuts to confirm none of the other shells contain cards.
-

Additional notes:

If you are having trouble finding a big enough nut to contain the full card there are a number of alternatives.

- 1) You could buy mini-cards, which can fit in easier
- 2) You could put just a piece of paper in instead of the card and don't take the card disappear.
- 3) You could incorporate into the routine, where you cut up the card and then just have half of it, or a section of it inside the shell.

Other than that, just make sure you have fun. It's a small little routine and you get a lot of these nuts very cheap, so if you mess up the cutting you can keep at it. You can also try this with other Halloween type materials, such as a candy apple, apple cake, etc.

Have a fun Halloween everyone and don't get too scared!!!!

By Sean McQuade

An Interview With Simon Lovell

Simon Lovell is a world-renowned close-up entertainer incredibly gifted in the art of sleight-of-hand. His level of skill is second only to his ability to entertain and create laughter. His talents are especially popular at private parties and corporate functions where he can seamlessly entertain from group to group, amazing everybody along the way! Daniel Price has had the privilege to speak to Simon on behalf of MagicBunny.co.uk.

How do you break the stigma that members of the public have regarding the use of cards for magic... how do you convince your audience that they are viewing real magic and not some fancy sleights of hand?? Do you find that people switch off when a pack of cards is introduced?



SIMON - I see no stigma when I work! When I do close-up I only use playing cards for my props so all of my effects are card tricks. However I also spend time getting to know the people and interacting with them before doing any magic at all. I ask their names and remember them (VERY important), I ask about them, their lives etc. People love to talk about themselves and this establishes a social friendship before any magic occurs. Card tricks are not boring, they can't be (they are, after all only bits of cardboard, with no power of emotional affect), but often performers of card tricks (no readers of this I'm sure!) are boring. Establishing yourself as a fun person means that it doesn't matter what magic you do, it's the performer they want to see. It's critical be make yourself the centre, not the magic. Interaction with the audience is far more important than learning a new Flippy Double Lift. Making your magic fun is much more important than making it difficult.

I tend to think of cards as a close up effect - how can a magician effectively employ cards as part of a stage routine?

SIMON - I do two card effects in stand-up - the three cards across and my own Sleight-of-Tongue (a very gross version of card to mouth). When working with cards on a stage you just need to work bigger. You also need to make sure that the audience are aware of every aspect of what is going on. In the three cards across the cards are treated as objects. Values need not be seen, only how many there are. In the card to mouth variation the card is signed "big and bold" and I make sure everybody sees it. Because it is signed with a blue, thick, permanent marker, even if they can't see the value they can certainly see the signature (the blue ink stands out much better than black or red ink). Also, I always force a low spot red card on them (a two or four) so that the signature stands out very clearly against the white of the card making it very easy to see. But, again, it's not the props but the performer that creates the entertainment!

What support did you receive from your family in the very earliest days of your magic ventures? Did your family stand by you and offer to support you from the very outset or were there persuasions to find a real job? Did you take the time and effort to persuade your family that this was the career path you were determined to follow?

SIMON - My family had no concept of what show business was and tried very hard to convince me that it was a terrible career to go into. However I knew from a very early age that this was what I wanted to do and so they did their best to help me along. Even not liking the career I chose they certainly provided both emotional and, some, financial support in the early years. It's nice now that when they see me on TV or, as happened recently, headlining the Broadway show

Monday Night Magic in New York City (where I now live), they have grown to be rather proud of their mad son. I'm still not sure that they understand how anybody can make a good living from this business though!

Suppose you were caught on a journey without any cards and a fan of yours came across you - what effect would YOU chose to show, if you didn't have a deck of cards to hand?

SIMON - I wouldn't do anything. I rarely do any magic unless I am being employed to do so. If a real fan comes along I do have a fund of stories (some nice, some horrors) about the career that I can entertain them with though.

What sleight of hand would you say was the cornerstone of a good card magician?

An Interview With Simon Lovell (cont.)

SIMON - Since you are using the term magician and not performer I assume you are asking about which sleight-of-hand techniques that are the important ones. A good Double-Lift would be right up there. Not tough to do but very tough to fool with. I must say though that the hardest move in card magic is simply the one you haven't practiced yet! Any move is easy after you've practiced it enough.

People say that the Push-Off Second Deal is hard but it isn't to me, I've been playing with it for nearly forty years! Practicing moves till you can do them without thinking is a corner stone to being a great magician.

How do you feel about the impact of the Internet on magicians and do you see it as positive or negative?

SIMON - I see it as mainly negative. The explosion of information has made secrets much easier to access and I think this lessens their value. In my early days you had to travel miles to get to a teacher, earn their friendship and trust and then, and only then, be allowed to learn. Alternatively you had to plough through manuscripts (often poorly written) and work like a demon to make any sense of them. This gave the work a very high value for me. Nowadays when somebody says, "I don't want to buy a book, is it free anywhere on the web?" I cringe. When they say, "Is it on video or DVD instead of a book?" I feel sad.

Sorry to say but if anybody tells me they are a "visual learner" I regard that as meaning that they are too lazy to read and study a book. This instant "I want it now" syndrome is responsible for a lot of very bad magic. On the plus side there are some very good sites who try to do things in a responsible manner - yours is one of them by the way which is why I agreed to answer your questions!

How do you feel about exposure? Do you see it as a threat or a challenge?

SIMON - I see it as neither. One of the main reasons FOX made more masked magician shows after the first one was because of all the whining magicians made. Scheduled to be a one-off it suddenly garnered un-thought of publicity and so more were made. If magicians had simply laughed and said, "nice try but that's not how we do it," the shows would have vanished like a great trick. But, even with these shows, people just don't remember them well. Ask a magic pal to name all the effects exposed and they'll have trouble; what chance does a layperson have!?! If asked about them I just say, "Did you see any of the things I've just shown you?" They reply, "No" and I say, "So what they are showing are silly things, nothing that a professional would use!" If pushed I'll add, "Of course they don't even show the real methods, that's just stuff they make up for the show!" At another level I must say, again, that people choose to watch a magical performer not so much for the tricks but for the performer (the personality if you like)! They can expose a few crappy tricks but they'll never be able to teach the public that indefinable quality that makes a great performer! Exposure has been around for over 400 years, it will carry on but so will magic! Perhaps the dramatic drop in ratings for these styles of shows proves that people just don't want to know how it's done, they just want to enjoy good magic!

If you had to be remembered for one effect in your lifetime - which effect would it be and why?

SIMON - I'd rather be remembered for me than any single effect though I'm pretty proud of my, often ripped off in whole or part, straitjacket routine with the puppets which I've been doing for over thirty years now.

Usually those who make it to the top, such as yourself, have some strong roots in their presentation from those who influenced their career. This influence could be a teacher or present and past performers who the person in question looked up to as their skills and abilities grew and took shape. Who do you consider to be your biggest influences in your magic, both past and present? Who are among your favourite magicians, both past and present?

SIMON - Big influences magically would include Ken Pumfrey, Harry Baron, Fred Robinson, Ken Brooke, Fred Kaps, Eric Mason, Edward Marlo, Dai Vernon and many, many more. Non-magical influences include Charlie Chaplin, Harold Lloyd, Buster Keaton, Lenny Bruce, Lord Buckley, Round the Horne, Monty Python and more. I read widely and try to let everything influence my performance. I will take inspiration from any source and am always looking. I have quite a few favourite magicians to watch so to pick any would be unfair. I just like to watch any good magic.

Do you have any advice for all the hobbyists out there trying to make it to the pros?

An Interview With Simon Lovell (cont.)

SIMON - Unless you have a driving need to perform in your heart and soul don't do it. Just wanting to be a professional magician isn't enough - you have to HAVE to do it. It must be an overwhelming need. It's a very tough business and, unless totally driven, stick to performing at an amateur or semi-professional level. Most of the great creative magicians of both yesteryear (Vernon, Marlo, Jennings, Milt Kort etc etc) and of today (Bannon, Aaranson, Wakeman, Close, Anderson etc etc) are either amateur or part time magicians! By doing a normal job you get to do magic when you want, not because you have to. Don't forget also that being a pro means a lot of travelling (which gets real boring, real quickly) and that can mean a lot of time away from family and loved ones. Being a pro means giving up a lot - don't try it unless you are really sure. If you are going to try it make sure you have a good education to fall back on. Show business is two words 'show' and 'business' - a good business degree will be of huge help to you. Also don't think that being good at magic is enough – you must study character, theatre, lighting, make-up, costumes, body language and a myriad of other things if you are going to have a chance.

I hope those answers made some sense and that you enjoyed them!

Simon Lovell
www.simonlovell.com

Casualty Simulation

If you are considering a party on 31st October, you might like to consider including a casualty make-up simulation as part of the frivolities.

Warning

Please remember that casualty make-up is extremely realistic so remember not to allow any observer to become so carried away that they believe that a serious injury has really taken place. Apply and use casualty make-up in the same room.

It is inadvisable to ever travel when wearing casualty make-up in case of accidents or confusion.

The inclusion of stage blood should be considered carefully, as it is a powerful stain.

It is advisable to wear old clothing.

You will need

A plastic craft spatula
A bottle of stage blood
Derma wax
Vaseline jelly
A make-up sponge
Cocktail sticks
Broken segments of plastic

Instructions

1. Firstly, cut a pea-sized piece of derma wax from the derma wax, using the spatula.
2. Secondly, knead the derma wax between the fingers until it is soft and pliable.
3. Thirdly, smear the derma wax on the casualty's skin so that it bonds with the surface and produces a mound. It is advisable to select an area that is relatively free of hair to aid removal at a later stage. The inside of the wrist or the palm of the hand is ideal.
4. Smooth down the edges of the derma wax with the pad of your finger, covered with some Vaseline jelly.

Casualty Simulation (cont.)

5. Pat the derma wax mound firmly with a makeup sponge to remove the gloss shine and to add a slightly textured finish.

6. Next, pull a cocktail stick through the derma wax to produce a deep cut. Take care not to actually penetrate the skin's surface at this point. Angling the cocktail stick to a drawing angle at this point will reduce the likelihood of cutting the skin

7. Run two or three drops of stage blood through the cut using a cocktail stick. Excessive use of blood does NOT enhance the effect. A small amount of blood produces a more effective finish than a large amount.

8. After this, allow the blood to run away from the wound. Take care at this stage that the blood does not run onto clothing or onto any surface. If in doubt, cover the floor with an old thick blanket.

9. Finally place a small segment of plastic upright inside the derma wax. Do not use real glass. Thick plastic has the same appearance and is safer for use.

10. For added effect, throw the rest of the plastic segments onto the floor or onto the old blanket to provide additional evidence of a "glass" injury.

(A bone from a joint of meat could be used instead of glass to provide an open fracture.)

The Removal of Derma Wax

1. Firstly, remove as much derma wax using the blunt end of the curved end of a plastic spatula.

2. Then, rub make-up removing cream into the area and allow the cream to dissolve the remains of the sticky derma wax.

3. Finally wash away all remains with warm soapy water.

Added Hints

If you don't wish to buy the professional ingredients, you may like to make your own blood using washing-up liquid and red food colouring. The addition of coffee granules may add a darkening effect of the blood (for blood that appears to be partly digested.)

Salt dough, coloured with a very small amount of food colouring, could make an alternative for derma wax. Unfortunately, it is of a far inferior standard and does tend to partly dissolve when used in conjunction with other liquids.

An amputated finger may be realistically portrayed using a single sausage.

A string of gently squeezed sausages makes for an effective gut. When attached to the stomach area, with plenty of blood, these produce an effective slash in the abdominal cavity

Burns can be produced rubbing holes in dried copydex glue on the surface of the skin. Again, remember to avoid areas that are covered with hair. Placing a cork in a flame and then rubbing the charred surface across the surface of the skin may add the blackening effect.

Bubble wrap can be cut to produce effect looking blisters.

Have fun with these ideas but please take care that your enjoyment does not lead anyone to suspect that a real injury has actually taken place. The false call out of the emergency services is a serious offence that can be pursued in the courts or, more seriously, lead to the delayed service of a true accident. **Never ever** allow a spectator to become convinced that a real injury has taken place.

By Niggle

Some Halloween Facts

"Hallow" is an old word meaning holy, whilst "e'en" is Scottish for evening.

"Trick or Treat" originated in Britain where it was first known as Mischief Night.

The ancient Celtic fire festival called "Samhain" (pronounced sow-in) is the origin of modern Halloween. This festival was the feast of the dead in Pagan and Christian times, marking the close of harvest and the initiation of the winter season.

In Ireland, wealthy landlords used to distribute gifts of food to their poorer tenants at Halloween. When the potato crop failed the Irish who moved to America in droves are thought to have introduced Halloween traditions to their new homeland.

Many thanks to all of our contributors to this special Halloween TOPHAT.

Remember to send in your articles to TOPHAT@magicbunny.co.uk for November's edition.

Have a Happy Halloween!