


## A Word From ...

... The Editor *Darrel Miles*

 When I was twenty two years old I was the Chairman of a National Youth camping meet. This is held in a different part of the country each year (which means that others are able to judge how well it is being run, compared to previous events).

During the Opening Ceremony I introduced the dignitaries to the crowd of seven hundred people. The local MP and Mayor were introduced without problems. Then, nerves kicked in. I introduced Mr Claude-Smith and his wife.....um....

Apart from this moment, when my mind went blank, the rest of the weekend proved to be a success. As Chairman I was the one people came to thank. However, I had to point out that the people who did the real work were the team I had behind me.

Twenty four years later I find myself in the same position with the original Top Hat series in collation.

Without the vision and hard work of Jon Snoops Top Hat Volume 2 would not exist. Jon, on behalf of myself and everybody who has ever read the original Top Hat, I offer a big "Thank You" for putting all the time and effort into make such a quality publication.

Once again I have a team who do all the hard work. My appreciation goes out to each and every one of you for creating and publishing Top Hat Volume 2.

- Michael Jay, Copy Editor
- Michael Lauck, Assistant Editor
- Wayne Trice, Assistant Editor
- Tam McLaughlin, Technical Assistant
- Wayne Clancy, Technical Assistant

There is one final team I would like to thank - those who've contributed the articles that make this a Top Hat of which I'm proud to be involved.

Finally, it brings me great pleasure to welcome you all to the first edition of Top Hat Volume 2.

- Darrel -




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## Magic ... ... As An Art

Essay

Joshua Westmeier-Shuh

 It was my fourth day of my third year of medical school. I was on rounds in the Intensive Care Unit getting asked the usual questions by an attending physician.

“What do you have to do before a patient gets a splenectomy?”

(Most of the questions directed toward a medical student, like this one, can easily be narrowed down to about a million answers. For me, I think: What answer can I give that says I've been reading and have common sense?)

“Uh.....make sure they don't have any sort of coagulopathy.”

“NO...”

(Damn it.)

“...They need the Pneumovax shot! What medical school did you go to?”

(Duh. What was I thinking? Forget checking vital signs, bleeding disorders, medication regimens or protocols for dietary restrictions. It was Pneumovax! With such a specific question I should have been able to get it right away. DUH!)

Questioning sessions like this can go on for days. Well, maybe not days, but it seems like it. That day was different though. That day I was abruptly pulled out of my question and answer (mind reading) session to assist with a code blue.

The woman was in her forties which, in my limited experience, is pretty rare for a patient in the Intensive Care Unit. Most are much older. She had previously been in a car accident. At the time I walked in (was grabbed) she'd been down for seven minutes.

To be honest, my head was buzzing. I wasn't ready for this. People were moving everywhere, alarms were going off, the nurse was pushing drugs in the IV line, and the doctor was giving orders. Then it dawned on me. No matter what we did, this person was going to die. Six minutes later her family came to the same conclusion.

Time of death: 3:45 pm.

I walked out of the room and next thing I knew I was back on rounds. There was no time to think, no time to sit and quietly reflect, no time to breathe. Often times people who spend their careers in the hospital forget what it's like to be the new guy. They're desensitized; emotionally detached. They have to be. Emotions often cloud clinical judgment and that's bad for the next patient. Suffice it to say, I'm just not there yet. Regardless, I finished the day.

On the ride home, however, I did have time to reflect. At first I was okay. Then I wasn't. It was just a few tears, then more. Five minutes down the road I was pulled over, sobbing uncontrollably. It's the kind of crying that takes you over. You're not even you, but rather pure emotion in a body. I'm convinced that most people cry this way only a couple of times in their life. Or, if you're Michael Jay, it happens every time someone forgets to use the search function on Magic Bunny.

Now, you may be puzzled by my emotional state. I mean, I should have known that I was entering a field where dealing with death is often part of your day. And besides, I didn't even know this person, right? Well, that's all true. However, I hadn't lost control because a patient died.

Two months prior to this incident my 89 year old my grandfather was a healthy man. Just a couple of weeks after his retirement he fell out of his brand new recliner and broke his hip. Five days later he was dead. While he was elderly it was completely unexpected. I hadn't dealt with it well. In fact, I'd hardly dealt with it at all. Between medical school examinations, getting ready for the hospital and dealing with the normal stressors of life, I hadn't taken any time. I pushed it off and tried to forget. It didn't work. The hospital has a way of making you to remember.

I saw myself in her family. It was the way they looked and the way they moved. A mixture of sadness and shock is what you expect, but that's not what happened. They weren't crying; they were paralyzed. Unable to process the emotion that just befell them they stood motionless. I looked at them and knew that they were exactly like me. You see, it's a great irony that most of us go through life subconsciously thinking our situations are unique. The truth is that everyone feels loss, joy, uncertainty, love, frustration and other emotions at some point in their lives. These things are timeless. The human condition is timeless.

The point of the previous story was to explain that someone identified with me on a personal level that most never reach. However, by now you're probably asking yourself what the hell that has to do with magic. Hold on - relax - I'm getting there.

As magicians our goal is simple: Artistic Excellence. That statement, however, begs another question. What makes something artistic? If something (art) has a broad definition, can it really be defined? Unfortunately, most people who try to answer the art question, including myself, are often blinded from their own point of view. Regardless, I have to try.

I have found that the older I get the more I consult Google before I write, speak, or type anything (ALL HAIL GOOGLE!). Alright, let's see. Type in "art." (Check.) Look at only the first page because no one cares about the other eight million hit results. (Check.) Narrow first page down to the first two results. (Check.) Decide between "Art.com" and "Wikipedia art definition." (Check.) When in doubt always go with Wikipedia. I think it knows more than Google (ALL HAIL WIKIPEDIA!).

*Art: The product or process of deliberately arranging items (often with symbolic significance) in a way that influences and effects/affects one or more of the senses, emotions and intellect blah blah blah (I added the "blahs").*

Well that's just great Wikipedia, but I want to know about performance art...

*Performance Art: Those forms of art which differ from the plastic arts (what's a plastic art?) insofar as the former uses the artist's own body, face and presence as a medium and the latter uses materials such as clay, metal or paint which can be molded or transformed to create some physical art object (so that's a plastic art!).*

I think that these definitions are good, but complex. My simple brain needs a simple definition. How about this: Art is employing a skill or craft to relate to another human being. Or, in other words, you must be able to provide the type of catharsis that family provided for me that day. Tall task? No one ever said being an artist was easy.

Let's face it, magic in its current iteration is not artistic. (Before you decide to have me burned at the stake go back and read the previous couple of paragraphs.) It is here that you must "choose your own adventure."

If you do not accept my definition of art then stop reading.

If you do accept my definition of art then continue to the next paragraph.

Seriously, how many mainstream professional magicians fit my description of an artist? I've been to a lot of public shows and have never once said, "Wow, that magician gets me." Even so, let me give you a few examples to further clarify my position.

**Please stop reading and watch the following two videos:**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jQ56IHLEuHE>

You can stop this one at about 2:23

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KWDSiiEQCNc>

I'm sure you've seen this one before so you can stop wherever.

**Now in the next few paragraphs it may seem like I'm picking on Jeff McBride, but that's only because I am.**

So what do these videos have in common? Well, both performances have music, rhythmical movements, and live audiences. Unfortunately, that's where the similarities end.

In the first video we're given a lead in: THIS DANCE IS ABOUT BREAST CANCER. Then, they dance. Everything, and I do mean everything, fits their lead in. We know the characters are a couple (that's implied through subtext). The song and lighting set a somber tone while the dance tells the story. Even their wardrobe sets the mood. In two minutes and twenty-three seconds I had forgotten it was a dance. Why?

Because all I saw was loss and pain.

How about the second video? Forget demonstrating the human condition, let's just ask ourselves if it even tells anything remotely resembling a story. You tell me.

Have you ever found yourself wearing a Kabuki mask and needing it to change? Have you ever found yourself empty handed and needing a deck of cards to appear at your fingertips for no reason (think like a normal person)? I have a sneaking suspicion the answer is "no" for both questions.

If there is no story to tell do the other elements even matter? What does the lighting contribute? What is the music for? Is it supposed to elaborate on something or cover the fact that he doesn't talk? How about the wardrobe? Is he a ninja? A mime? A wizard?

I really don't know.

Jeff McBride's performance gives me nothing. I feel nothing. I cannot relate to it in a personal way because it focuses on one thing: How'd I do it? There were so many other questions that could have been

addressed. There were so many questions that I expected to be answered by a World Champion Magician. Would it not be great if different questions were asked?

**Narrator:** "How hard is it to be you?"

**Scene:** A man in a mask is walking in a group of crowded people. His posture reflects sadness. The lighting is blue. He is the only one who knows that he's sad; everyone else is just going to work.

**Narrator:** "Do you ever wake up in the morning and feel like you need to put on a mask?"

**Scene:** Man turns to the audience, mask changes. He continues to walk through the crowd. Music begins to play Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata."

**Narrator:** "Do you have to change that mask throughout the day to appease everyone?"

**Scene:** He is at the office now. With each person's question his mask changes. For his boss it's one mask, for his coworkers it's another. Everyone is happy, but the man doesn't understand.

On his way home, the man turns to the audience.

**Man:** "How hard is it to be you?"

**Scene:** Man's mask has disappeared, but everyone in the crowd is now wearing a mask.

Now I know that's a little heavy, but here's the deal: I don't know how to write a play. I do know how to ask the right questions. My questions all boil down to what I've been saying for the last four pages: Do I understand what someone else is going through?

We as conjurers need to ask ourselves this question if we want to be thought of as artists. Don't take my word for it. When in doubt consult a famous magician.

In the non-edited version of the instructional magic series, "Revelations," Dai Vernon sums it up perfectly. It is a brief, yet illuminating, couple of minutes. Michael Ammar (another world champion magician) performs "Triumph," a well known card trick. After having watched the trick Vernon points out the obvious. He tells Ammar that he didn't add an ounce of emotional appeal to the trick. Vernon was right. He then goes on to say that all tricks need emotional appeal.

The long and the short of it was that Ammar was asking "How'd I do it?" and Vernon was asking "Why should I care about it? Why should I care about you?"

Dai Vernon understood what made an artist and tried to pass it on. Then he got edited. I guess they sell more tapes that way.

So here's my mantra: Consider the idea you wish to share with your audience first and then develop the magic trick around that idea second. This month I challenge you to count how many tricks you perform that relate to another person on a level apart from sheer curiosity (How'd I do it?). Tell me, how many pieces have you created that demonstrate you're not just another guy doing tricks? Take a minute, think on it, and ask yourself if you're an artist.








# 60 Second Interview ... ... Daryl

Interview

Alex Radway

 **Hi Daryl, thanks so much for taking the time to speak with me, before we start, please state your name, occupation, and residence.**

My full legal name is Daryl Edward Easton, but I simply use my first name "Daryl" or "Daryl" - The Magician's Magician" in all of my magic work. I've always thought that being on a first name basis is more friendly. Besides that, I like the idea of being known around the world by one name. It's a "Sting", "Cher", Madonna", "Penn & Teller" kind of thing!

OK, let's get started:

**Which Foolers Doolers effect are you most proud of?**

Tough question! Perhaps my favorite CREATION is Ultimate Ambition Improved, Hyper-Bent-Elation, or Presto Printo.

My favorite HANDLING or ROUTINE of someone else's trick is either 3 Fly III or Papa Rabbit Hits the Big Time. Having said that, if I truly had to pick just one trick regardless of whether it's my effect of routine, I'm sure that I'd choose Daryl's Amazing Acrobatic Knot.

**Which magic effect out there do you wish you could have invented?**

My first thought would be *Out of this World* by Paul Curry. It's a miracle!

**When performing, what is your favourite opener and favourite closer?**

Unless I'm only doing a short close-up show, I almost always open with Daryl's Rope Routine. My favorite closer is Daryl's Amazing Acrobatic Knot which is my routine for Pavel's Fantastic Knot trick.

**As we all have one, what is your most memorable mess up of a trick?**

Oh dear! I'm embarrassed to mention it, but once I TOTALLY messed up the beautiful Out of This World effect. I got SO carried away with the presentation that accidentally pulled the switch on the WRONG two packets! Instead of the colors being 100% correct at the end, they were 100% WRONG!!! I tried to cover it by saying, "...in a way, that's JUST as

impossible as getting them all correct." Although it was a true statement, it didn't fly!

**When someone says "You're a magician? Show me a trick", what do you show them?**

Wow, another great question! If I happen to have a deck of cards and time is short, I'll probably show the cards to be ordinary by spreading them face up between my hands. Secretly, I'd spot two cards that are together that are an excellent contrast and I'd cut to the top. Using my very best Double Lift, I'd show one of the cards, then place the top card, face down, into a spectator's hand. After a magic pass, the card changes in the spectator's hand!

If I have no cards available, I'd probably borrow two small coins and perform the Tenkai Penny trick.

**Why always the 2 of diamonds?**

The Two of Diamonds is the card that started me off in the wonderful world of magic. When I was seven years old, my very first trick the Svengali Deck and the Two of Diamonds was the force card. Since that moment, it has always been a magical card for me.

**What is the best piece of magic advice you've been given?**

Take the trick apart, look at each and every piece and UNDERSTAND why it is needed (or not needed). Then, put the trick back together in the most efficient way possible! Think about it...

**What was the last trick you saw which completely fooled you?**

The Bullet Catch as performed by Penn & Teller. I'm guessing that I've seen it three or four times over

the last fifteen or twenty years (including once last week) and I still have no idea! It's seems to get simpler, cleaner and MORE impossible each time I see it!

### Which of your many awards means the most to you?

The F.I.S.M. gold medal for Card Magic. It was a long time ago, but it was one of the most memorable experiences in my life!

### How on earth did you come up with the Hot Shot Cut?

I had recently seen Jerry Andrus lecture and I was toying around with a deck of cards trying to make them act as mechanically as he had. I came up with the cut first and then, pretty much by accident, a card spun out. Later, I discovered that this card was the original bottom card of the deck and the revelation was born!

### Which magician(s) do you admire the most?

I'll bet I could give you more than 100 names for more than 100 different reasons. This goes to show you the importance of BEING YOURSELF and the power of sharing your own, unique, individualism. That being said, here are TEN names, in no particular order, off the top of my head.

Juan Tamariz, Fred Kaps, Dai Vernon, Jimmy Grippo, Albert Goshman, John Carney, Brother John Hamman, Simon Aronson, Guy Hollingworth, and Rene' Lavand.

### Always a very important question: red backed or blue backed bikes?

Of the two choices given, red bikes. Out of ALL of the top quality cards produced, Blue Bees.

*Thanks Daryl, and now for some random non-magic questions:*

### When you're not thinking about magic, what's on your mind

Food? Actually, my wife Alison and my two daughters Laura and Annabel.

### What's the most treasured item in your house?

It's a beautiful photograph showing many of Dai Vernon's favorite magic props. This was produced by Bill Bowers, it was personally autographed by Dai Vernon, and it was given to several of the professor's friends at his 87th birthday party.

### If you weren't doing magic for a living, what would you be doing?

I suppose that I'd either be a teacher or a salesperson of some type.

### If you were a superhero, what would your name and power be?

How about "Good-o"! My power would be to make anyone, at any time, and any place feel GOOD! This way, they would do the right thing and the world would be a better place for EVERYONE!

### Favorite ice cream?

Mocha almond crunch

### What was the last movie you saw? Any good?

Super 8 (produced by Steven Spielberg and directed by JJ Abrams). I thought it was excellent!

### Do you have any non-magic related hidden talents?

I can sing a tune or two and I play a pretty good game of Blackjack.

### And finally, most important of all, who is your favourite character in The Simpsons?

I don't suppose I watch the show often enough to have a favorite character, but Homer and Bart are pretty strong.

### And we are done, thanks for speaking to me Daryl!

No problem at all

*Daryl has brought us such highly valued teaching materials such as The Ambitious Card DVD, Card Revelations, and is the creator of such effects as Ultimate Ambition and Presto Printo.*



**Presentations For Demonstration Of ...***Essay***... Memory Using A Memorised Deck***Dan Cunningham*

I am of the opinion that a demonstration of an astonishing memory is one of the most startling weapons in the arsenal of a magician. A spectator doesn't believe in real magic any more than you do, so the next best thing is to ensure the said spectator that he/she is in the company of someone of extra ordinary abilities.

Much to my surprise, after watching the performances of some of the most regarded performers of memorised deck work, I saw little in the way of demonstrations of memory. As you might imagine given the credentials of the performers (Aronson, Tamariz, et al.) I came to the conclusion that they didn't use a memory demonstration because they didn't think it wasn't something that an audience would appreciate.

This was a position that I held quite stridently until someone pointed me in the direction of two memory demonstrations.

The first was Bill Malone's 'Hands-Off Memory Test'; a completely self working, three-phase effect that has a wonderfully impressive climax. The second was found in Pit Hartling's excellent book 'Card Fictions'. In it he teaches a technically more sophisticated demonstration, aided by a very casual approach that will leave any audience baffled and amazed.

Once the leg-work of learning the sequence and position of the fifty two cards has been done you have a tool that can be used in many ways, but by far the most accessible is the prodigious memory demonstration, which, I have found, is always far more impressive (and more often remembered) than any exhibition of control.

The simplest way to demonstrate your supposed miraculous memory is to false shuffle the stack and then, after glancing at it, being able to tell a spectator any detail they ask for. Now that is, in itself, a perfectly serviceable method, but I think that there are far more elegant alternatives and I have detailed three of my favourites for your consideration.

**Presentation 1 - 'Via the Process of Elimination'**

With this effect the memdeck can be cut freely. The stack's utility here is that from looking at the bottom card we can determine the top card (in other words the next card or cards in the sequence).

Ask for less than half of the cards to be cut and placed to the right hand side. From the left hand packet deal between five and ten cards to the spectator. Once the cards have been dealt put the remaining cards from the left hand packet on top of the right hand packet. Ask the spectator to shuffle the cards they now have. The position you will find yourself in now is that on your right hand side you have the stack intact with the exception of the spectators cards, which should be in a randomised order.

Explain to the spectator that the easiest way for you to learn which cards they are in possession of is to memorise the cards that they don't have and then simply use the process of elimination. Take the cards, spread them face up and collect them again within a few seconds. Whilst doing so say words to the effect of 'The memorisation takes.....that long'. In fact you only need to make a note of the bottom (or face) card.

Whilst pretending to look at the mental photograph, place your hand palm up and begin to name the cards that follow the noted bottom card in sequence. The spectator should begin to hand you the cards that you call (if not a little prompting will do the trick) and in doing so, re-building your stack for you.



Now as a demonstration of memory you could finish there and sometimes if the pace is naturally quite high I do. However occasionally I put the spectator's cards to one side and say "Some of you are thinking 'Good trick, however there is no way that he memorised those cards in that time.' And for that I am prepared to forgive you! However I will try and prove you wrong." At which point I spread the remaining cards (the ones you spread earlier in order to supposedly memorise) and turn my back. I then ask for any cards to be named and, with my back still turned, I proceed to tell the spectators which cards their named card is next to, where roughly in the stack it is, how many cards away the nearest card of the same value is, etc.

All in all, I consider this to be a nice, easy, light-hearted demonstration where the only requirement is for you to note a single card under the fairest of circumstances.

### **Presentation 2 - 'Cut to Any Named Card'**

I present this as an apparent card counting exercise. Begin with your stack in its complete sequential order. (For the previous effect it was ok to cut the deck. This time the stack has to be complete, with the cards in their correct numerical order.) Out faro the deck twice. Then, whilst describing how advanced card counters can keep track of every dealt card in their mind, deal out the cards, face up, into four piles.

Once done turn each of the packets over. Now you will have noticed the first time of trying that, as you deal, you are rebuilding the stack, only in four piles of thirteen. This is because dealing the cards face up into four piles is an anti-faro, undoing the actions of the earlier two.

This serves two purposes. The first being that you can begin your demonstration with a thorough shuffling procedure. The second is, because the stack is in four packets of thirteen, you now have the ability to cut to any named card if a couple of subtleties are realised.

Your mnemonic system should allow you to tell immediately which pile a named card is in. Couple this with the fact that the named card will only ever be either in the packet's top four cards, the bottom four cards or one of the five in the middle. If it is in the top or bottom four, riffling your thumb down the cards should allow you to cut to it with ease. If in the middle five cards, a little estimation before the cut should allow you to cut to within one card, be it the face card of the cut packet or the top card remaining on the table.

As many accomplished memorised deck users are skilled in estimated cutting already, coupled with the fact that with packets being only thirteen cards you can only ever really be one card out, you will find yourself cutting to named cards with the smallest amount of practise. Let me assure you that a rapid fire demonstration of this will leave your audience with the impression that you are in possession of remarkable skills.

To clean up simply collect the packets face down from left to right.

### **Presentation 3 - 'The Divination Routine'**

If there is one routine I like to do when I have access to a close up mat and an appreciative audience, it is this one.

Now there only features a demonstration of memory in the second phase, but it is nicely justified and finishes the routine off nicely

Before you begin get your card case and, using a scalpel or other type of precise knife, cut away a small window at the top left of one of the sides. This small modification allows you to see the face card of the deck when it is cased. I have all my cases arranged this way as it adds heavily to the 'impossibility factor' of any divination routine.

### *Phase 1 - 'Impossible Divination'*

After the obligatory false shuffles and cuts ask your spectator to cut the deck at any position they choose. Whilst looking away, with only your peripheral vision to aid you, ask your spectator to take the card that they cut to. After they've noted it ask them to put it out of sight (in their pocket for example) and you, again only looking out of the corner of your eye, complete the cut and put the cards into the case.

Once the cards are safely in the case bring your attention back to the performance area and put the deck away in a pocket of your own. In that action you obviously need to shield from the spectators view the window in the card case whilst at the same time noting the index visible through it. From this card's identity you only need to think of the next card in the stack and you now know the spectator's selection.

From here it is up to you how to approach this. It could be a demonstration of spotting a poker player's tells, a mindreading effect or any theme you may desire. Enjoy the luxury of the position you find yourself in. Remind the audience that there are no cards to observe, no information available, yet you are able to reveal the card's identity in these seemingly impossible circumstances.

Once the card's identity has been revealed and the spectator hands you back the card in stunned silence return it to it's rightful position in the stack which, in this instance, is either the top or the bottom.

### *Phase 2 - 'Under Duress'*

False shuffle the deck and allow the spectator to cut. Explain that the previous feat of divination only has utility if it can be done under a certain amount of mental duress. This may seem a little melodramatic, but I use the example of observing a poker player's tells whilst operating the other facets of any card cheat worth his salt; i.e. calculation, estimation and memorisation.

At this point you are going to demonstrate what you would like the spectator to do and in doing so you are going to give yourself all the information you need to complete the effect.

Explain that in a moment you wish them to follow these instructions:

*'Cut less than a third of the deck and observe and remember the face card.'*

As you demonstrate this you, yourself, note the card that you have cut to. This will be the key card.

*'Shuffle the cards as thoroughly as you can, so that even you don't know it's position.'*

Shuffle the cards yourself to demonstrate. This destroys that section of the stack, so if you want to avoid this simply false shuffle the cards, a task that is very easy with so few cards.

*'When you are happy that the cards are shuffled spread them face up on the table. I will attempt to memorise every one of them in far less than a second, and I will try and tell you which one of them is yours...'*

Spread the packet of cards you have just shuffled to demonstrate this and then turn it face down and put the remaining stack on top of it. Give the deck the full deck retention shuffle and put it in front of the spectator.

The condition of the deck is that the bottom thirteen or so cards (the amount that you cut for the demonstration) are mixed and the rest of the stack is intact. You also know the identity of the top card because of the key card that you remembered. This is all the information that you need.

Turn away whilst the spectator cuts the deck, notes the face card, shuffles the packet and spread the cards face up. When given confirmation that this has been done turn back and, in less than a second, scan

the cards and gather them up and hand them to the spectator. To make this task even more impossible ask the spectator to shuffle the cards once more.

In truth you observe nothing. In fact all you need to know is the key card and the memorised sequence that follows. The spectator shuffling the packet after the supposed instant memorisation removes the demand for you to name the cards in order.

Following a similar procedure to the 'Via Process of Elimination' presentation begin to name the cards that follow the key card in the sequence. Whilst doing so appear to study the spectator's face as he or she hands you the cards. Continue to name the cards until the spectator is left with one. This will be the card that the spectator cut to.



## Bizarre Magic ...

*Essay*

### ... What Is It?

*Freddie Valentine*



You may have heard mention of bizarre magic and many of those who haven't studied the genre are unaware as to what it is. The genre of bizarre magic focuses on spooky and sometimes gruesome subject matter where the effects are woven into a story that engages the audience.

The subjects can range from Jack the Ripper to witch burnings and all involve death, the supernatural or the macabre in some way. This style of performance requires great presentation skills more than technical sleights, though certain skills used in traditional magic are of use.

The effects themselves are used to illustrate the story (similar to special effects used in film) to bring to life certain scenes and use props that are handmade, aged and intended to look realistic. The stories are often based around a historical event or well known legend and have an element of believability about them. This is certainly not the stuff you will be wishing to add into your next kids show!

Another part of bizarre magic is one that I refer to as "Occult Magic" which uses things that are associated with the dark side of spiritual beliefs in order to entertain. This falls into a grey area where many magicians are concerned since it covers such topics as tarot card readings, Ouija board sessions and séances. In this kind of performance you are not taking on the role of a spiritualist church and contacting people's dead relatives. Instead, you portray yourself as a gatekeeper to an unseen world which you allow them to enter for a night.

These kinds of performances have certain requirements to which some magicians balk. You need to be believable, you need to step back and allow the audience to make their own minds up as to what has happened and you need to be able to step out of the limelight and allow the participants to take the credit for what has happened. As a result, the usual 'clever boy' type of self satisfaction that many magicians crave is blown out of the water.

Although these performances are technically less demanding than that of say, card magic, you need a different set of skills which can be achieved by a mixture of your own personality, research into the factual side of what you are presenting and cold, hard experience.

Certainly this genre is not for everyone, but if you have enough of an interest in the spookier side of things and the personality to carry it off then it could well be the thing you have been looking for.

In future columns I will be covering different aspects of the bizarre magic world to give you a taster of what it entails.



## The Predator ... ... Behind The Tree

*Essay**Michael Jay*

Over the years my favourite comedian was George Carlin. I enjoyed the beginning of his career when he was more conservative. I loved his later career when he went over to liberal comedy. I have always been fascinated by his ability to take words and definitions and turn them into full blown comedy routines. George Carlin was a man of words.

In one particular routine he had a bit that will forever be impressed upon my memory. Mr. Carlin was talking about a descriptor that he always wanted a proper name for and that was the “Bronx Cheer.” Also known as a “raspberry,” a “rasp” or a “razz,” it is the act of exhaling through pressed lips with the tongue firmly in-between thus making a rasping sound that mimics flatulence.

In his comedic bit George is excited by the fact that he actually found the technical term for the raspberry (or “Bronx Cheer”). His pleasure was palpable as he shared his find with the audience:

Bilabial Fricative

Finding that term was cause for much rejoicing on Carlin’s part. No longer did Carlin have to relegate this action of making a farting sound via lips and tongue to an idiom or to a term that could only be described as jargon. It now had a name, a proper name, and that name was the bilabial fricative.

Yes, George, life is good.

I tell you that story because it will become an integral part of my article at a later time. Until then, let me continue.

Not too long ago a very good friend of mine spent a few days here in Toledo. We went to a private party one evening and, unsurprisingly, the folks there wanted to see some magic. I didn’t want to impose upon my friend, so I left it completely up to him as to whether or not he would perform for these folks. For brevity’s sake I’ll call my friend “Bill.”

Bill is an exceptional magician; an award winning magician. He is smooth and his philosophy is very close to my own in that when performing magic the spectator should come away believing that they saw real magic.

Bill performed a beautiful coin transposition for the audience that night and blew them completely away.

The main party was being held in the basement and there were young adults upstairs who were playing games and having fun of their own. When Bill went upstairs to get a cold beverage from the refrigerator he was accosted by the young folks who also wanted to see some magic. To Bill, good sport that he is, it seemed only natural that he should show these youngsters the coin transposition that so thoroughly fooled the adults only moments before, a trick that was met with accolades and high praise (high praise being speechless, gaping, maws).

In the middle of Bill’s performance one of the youngest of the onlookers, a boy somewhere around 8 years of age, immediately blurted out exactly what Bill was doing. The young man wasn’t fooled at all by the

presentation and he loudly announced his discovery of the method to all who stood around. Bill put his coins away in disappointment (more akin to disgust) and went back down stairs to rejoin the party.

Bill is by far and beyond not a children's magician. It is of utmost importance that you, the reader, fully understand this fact. It is precisely what this article is about and specifically what we are discussing here. To wit: adult magic and children's magic are worlds apart and Bill performs exclusively for adults (this being a notable exception).

Kid's magicians understand that the presentation and misdirection needed for kids is very different than that of adults. This is one of the reasons that I chuckle to myself when elitist magicians talk down to (or about) kids magicians. The fact of the matter is that kid's magic is harder than performing to adults in many, many, ways.

The most obvious of reasons is that kids will blurt out how you did a trick the very second that they catch it. Not only that, but they take great delight in catching the magician. Politely keeping their mouth shut is not part of a child's skills or abilities.

A lesser known (and little understood) reason is that kids don't see things like adults do. Children have not been alive long enough to make certain associations with movements. As one ages the brain begins to make assumptions based on the external input that it receives. The longer that one is alive, the more input given to the brain, the greater the need to make specific assumptions to avoid a complete information overload.

It is a defense mechanism in the brain.

As an example, take a walk through a wooded area when there is a strong wind. As you look at the leaves on the trees you will see them being blown about by the wind. All the leaves on all the trees are doing the exact same thing. You do not pick this up in your periphery because it is too much input - you only see the leaves moving that you specifically concentrate upon. If you concentrate on your pathway you'll not see any leaves moving at all.

It is another defense mechanism in the brain (if you are busy dealing with all those leaves moving you might miss the predator that is coming out from behind the tree).

The reason that I started my article with the George Carlin anecdote is because I've finally found the term for this phenomenon of children's minds not being fully formed and causing problems for a magician as a direct result. It is called tabula rasa.

And like Mr. Carlin, I'm terrifically pleased to now put a term to this particular mental process; this phenomenon that takes place as we grow up. If you are considering being a children's magician or even if you already perform as a kid's magician you owe it to yourself to study tabula rasa.

Tabula rasa - now that's just cool!

Take care and thank you for reading.






# Pseudo



*Effect*

*Edward Sausagefingers*

*An impromptu routine for three or more spectators, using a notepad, pen, and a standard set of Cluedo\* cards.*

 **The Effect:** Three spectators each construct an imaginary murder scene using Cluedo cards. Despite some rigorous tampering with the evidence the performer is able to solve all three crimes

**Method and Presentation:** This is basically Roy Walton's 'Happy Families' (*The Complete Walton Volume 1 - Page 161*) in a new frock; the handling is almost identical with a couple of minor changes to the mixing procedure and is reprinted here with Mr. Walton's kind permission. The reverse-faro mixing which sits logically in the original felt somewhat out of place in this context, so below I will discuss alternative methods to achieve the same effect - that of having apparently mixed the cards.

To begin, have all the Cluedo cards separated into three piles: Suspects, weapons and rooms. Allow each pile to be shuffled and have three spectators take three cards each - one from each pile - to create three unique murder scenes. Once the selections have been made the remaining cards can be put aside.\*\*

Hand out a notepad and a pen and have each spectator write down the details of their murder scene. This is simply to ensure they don't forget when it comes to the reveal later on. Of course you could use the official Cluedo notepads for this, but an ordinary notepad is sufficient and far easier to replace. Instruct the spectators that they are to note down their chosen murderer, weapon and room, then tear off the sheet and fold it up. Make it absolutely clear that you will not, at any stage, go near their papers or the pad. Take a minute to emphasise the fairness of this procedure and enjoy the rare moment of honesty.

Each spectator should now be holding three cards. Ask them to mix their own, then have the first spectator place one of his selections face down on the table. The second spectator does the same, dealing one of his cards on top of the first spectator's. The third spectator repeats the action, dealing a single card on top. This is repeated until all nine cards have been dealt.

Have one of the spectators cut the packet and complete the cut. It's fair to mention at this stage that the pile is now in an unknown order of suspects, weapons and rooms. You can now further mix the packet by any of the following methods:

1) A Charlier, or 'slop' shuffle. (Briefly: Holding the packet face down in the left hand as if for dealing, push a couple of cards off the top, retaining their order, and take them into the right hand between the thumb on the back and the fingers on the face. Raise the left hand slightly and with the left fingers push a few cards out from the bottom of the packet. Take these cards into the right hand on top of the first packet, by lifting the right thumb and dropping the cards on top. Lower the left hand slightly, push off another card or two from the top with the left thumb, and take them with the right fingers underneath the cards in the right hand. Push out another few cards from the bottom with the left fingers and take them on top of the cards in the right hand. Repeat until all the cards have been transferred to the right hand.)

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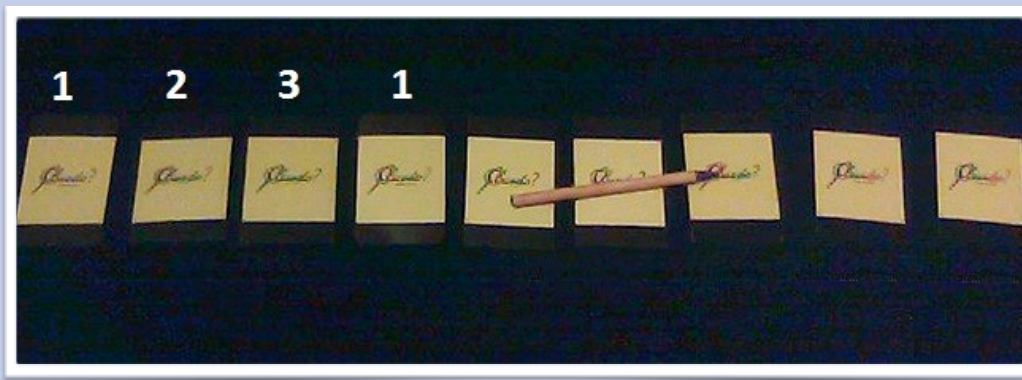
\*AKA 'Clue' to our American friends.

\*\* My psychic powers tell me you don't have a set of Cluedo cards to hand. Fear not - you can follow along using nine cards from a regular deck. Simply make three groups of three matching cards to act as the spectators selections. For example three Aces, three Kings, and three Tens.

- 2) Any number of straight cuts, performed casually to look like an overhand shuffle.
- 3) Dealing the cards into two piles, then replacing either half on top of the other.
- 4) Any number of reverse-faros, then reassembling the halves in any order. Briefly, to reverse-faro means simply to spread through the cards, out-jogging every second card. Close the spread and strip out all the out-jogged cards before reassembling the two halves of the packet in any order.

The above list is merely my personal preference in descending order. Since the Cluedo theme was intended to disguise this self-working card trick I prefer just using options one and two from above as they appear to be the most random: a casual Charlier shuffle followed by a series of choppy, straight cuts mimicking an overhand shuffle.

When the cards appear to have been thoroughly mixed finish with a complete cut before dealing them in a row, face down from left to right, leaving a small gap between each card and its neighbour. Ask the spectator who still has the pen to place it down so it lays horizontally across any three cards. Explain that these cards will remain on the table and will serve as your clues to the murders, so emphasise the fact that their choice is a completely free one.



Gather up all the remaining cards, starting at the left of the row and placing each card on top of the one to its right. As you do so, silently count the number of cards laying to the left of the pen. Do this in multiples of three (so when your count reaches 3, you reset and count the next card as 1). For example if there were four cards to the left of the pen, you would silently count "One, two, three, One". Remembering One as your key number for the next stage.

The cards are gathered up like this:



After gathering, turn the packet in your hand face up, casually peel off three cards, reversing their order, and replace them on the face of the packet. You can do this openly while pointing out that it's a mixed packet of weapons, rooms, and suspects.

Now imagining that the three cards on the table are numbered sequentially from right to left (ie. 3 2 1 ), turn over the card at the position matching your key number. In our example the key number was one, so we turn over the card at the far right end of the row.

Let's assume the card is Professor Plum.



Address the three volunteers, *"Just relax and clear your minds for a moment. I want only the person thinking of Professor Plum to concentrate and focus on the details of the crime...You can close your eyes if it helps...Picture the room where this murder took place. Imagine the weapon he was using."*

Milk off the top and bottom cards of the packet in your hand. Holding them face down, spread the pair and place them with the face up card, overlapping it by about half its length as shown below.



Next turn over the card to the immediate right of the face-up one. If there are no cards to the right, just move back to the opposite end of the row and turn up the card at the far left. Let's assume you've turned over the Dagger.

*"Relax and clear your minds for me. Now would the person thinking of the dagger please just focus on the murderer holding this weapon, and picture the room in which it took place."*

Pause a few seconds, milk off the top and bottom cards of the four card packet and place them face down with the face up card, as before.



Finally, turn over the remaining card on the table and place the two in your hand on top, face down.



The cards are now back in their original groups.

For the revelation, have the spectators open their papers and read out the details of each crime. As they call them, flip over the pairs of face down cards to show a perfect match.

#### Additional Subtleties.

The astute among you may have noticed that despite being able to reunite the cards into their original groups, you cannot match each set to each spectator. The simple answer to this is to keep an eye on the spectator's reactions when each of the three clue cards are turned face up. By carefully scripting your instructions you will be able to tell who is thinking of the face up card, by the simple fact that two spectators are being told to *“relax and clear your mind for a moment”*, while the third is asked to *“focus, concentrate”* and even to *“close your eyes if it helps”*.

When you are comfortable with the card handling elements of this routine you will find the revelation is easily adapted to suit a demonstration of psychological profiling, lie-detection, or good old-fashioned mind reading.

As an additional subtlety, once all the cards are laid out ready for the final reveal, pause and act uncertain about your choices before eventually swapping the position of two of the cards (in reality performing a false switch).




## For Instant Magic ... ... Just Add Water

*Essay**Daniel Rose*

*Many years ago, the great English conjurer David Devant was approached by an acquaintance new to sleight of hand with cards. 'Mr Devant,' said this young man, 'I know 300 tricks with cards. How many do you know?' Devant glanced at the youth quizzically. 'I should say,' the magician responded dryly, 'that I know about eight.'*

*Preface from 'Royal Road to Card Magic' by Jean Hugard & Frederick Braue.*

 I will start by admitting the fact that I've only recently become serious in my royal road to all things magical. Whoever you are, the chances are that you've been studying magic longer than I have. So, please take my thoughts as they are intended - the ramblings of a novice (as opposed to the instruction of a master).

Today, my ramblings lead to the importance of taking your time. We live in a world where information is obtainable instantly and for free. Whether you want to know the circumference of the sun, the French word for entrepreneur or some very interesting photos of Anna Kournikova the internet will respond in less time than it takes to type the question. In this regard Google has become the double edged blade of our day not just in magic, but many areas.

First of all I feel it's important to recognise that there are many positive effects that the information age has had on magic. It's very easy to lay the downfall of magic at the Internet's feet, but without Google I never would have found magicbunny.co.uk and the priceless guidance therein. I certainly never would have heard of, let alone been able to track down, the valuable books on magic and performance I now own. The main problem though, as I see it, is that with this instant information comes the desire for instant success. The result? Microwave meals. X-factor. America's Next Top Model. So, is your magic more reminiscent of the immortal classics or a TV talent show winner; here today and gone tomorrow? Which would you rather it be like? As I said, my magical knowledge is limited, so I'll be taking knowledge that I've gleaned from two other past times and relating it to magic.

### Be Patient

One of my pastimes is computer programming. I'm no expert, but if Amazon is to be believed I can learn any computer language in 24 hours or 21 days or some other specific, incredibly short, period of time. Would a book on how to 'Learn C++ in 10 years' sell as well as 'Learn C++ in 30min?' We want to know it all and know it now.

I own a couple of those books, but that doesn't make me a programmer.

Realise that no matter what book you read, what prop you buy or what secrets you're told you are not going to become the next [Insert your favourite magician's name here] overnight. There is no secret; there is no short cut. The people at the top have put in the time. When you've let go of the 'need' to know everything immediately then you can enjoy the journey.



## Start Small

Closely connected to patience is being happy to start small. Another of my hobbies is Parkour, or "Free Running." For most people this evokes images of teenagers jumping over the rooftops just waiting for some horrific injury. Now, there are some people, few and far between, who can do amazing jumps from terrific heights and not get injured. How? They work up to it. The ones who are able to do the most impressive jumps have spent many years conditioning themselves - starting with small steps before gradually improving.

If you've got your heart set on doing a bullet catch or levitating across the Grand Canyon that's great, but you're setting yourself up for failure if you don't start small. Granted, making a coin appear from behind someone's ear doesn't seem quite so exciting, but it's the basic effects that teach you the foundations you need to know: Entertainment; showmanship; misdirection; sleight of hand. These basic effects provide the conditioning that will allow you to one day jump over rooftops.

## Practice, Practice, Practice

There's a quote by one of the founders of Parkour, David Belle. *"First, do it. Second, do it well. Third, do it well and fast – that means you're a professional."*

Too many people rush through the basics like they're an obstacle course holding you back from the fun stuff. An example of this in Parkour is the "precision jump" where someone jumps from A to B. Sounds simple, but to land perfectly at B is a challenge. When I was first taught I was asked to jump up steps, however many I felt comfortable with, but with the condition that when I landed I took neither a step forward nor a step back; to land perfectly on the step. My first attempts were at five steps. Very soon I was taking it one step at a time. Sure, I could jump five steps, but it was messy. The lesson was simple. Better to jump 10cm perfectly, than a 1000cm wrong.

Think back to those first magic effects you were taught, the simple tricks you never bother with any more. If you're like me, you learnt it just well enough to entertain Aunt Gladys before leaving it for more exciting tricks. Try one out now. Is it perfect? Is it really? Do you know it inside out? Can you do it blindfolded? Can you make it entertaining?

**Remember, a poor magician can make the most amazing effect in the world seem dull. A great magician can take even the most basic of tricks and amaze you.**

## Experiment

With Parkour an idea that comes up is finding your own way. There's no 'right' or 'wrong' way to overcome an obstacle. Within the journey from A to B there are a near infinite number of possibilities.

So you've gone and actually perfected the effect. You're performing it in your sleep and if your significant other hears 'Is this your card?' one more time then they'll do a disappearing act of their own. Great. Now, change it completely.

What can you do to make this trick better? Try it with a different patter or presentation. Is there a better method you can use to get the same effect? Maybe you can use the same method to get a greater effect? Can you change the revelation so it's something more unexpected? How about actually doing it blindfolded? Forget about practicalities for now and just let your imagination run riot. This is how

memorable routines are born. Watch the great performers and you can see this mindset in action. What would be more impressive than making your beautiful assistant disappear? How about making the Statue of Liberty disappear?

## Enjoy


If you're NOT enjoying yourself then you need to ask yourself why you're doing it in the first place! Maybe all this talk of starting with the basics and practicing until you're blue in the face has got you a bit depressed. Don't. Don't be! Yes the road to magic is a long one, but it's a fantastic journey full of wonder. Enjoy yourself! Take pleasure in perfecting the basics, in building your skills, and working towards your goals.



## A Few Words On ... ... Hypnosis

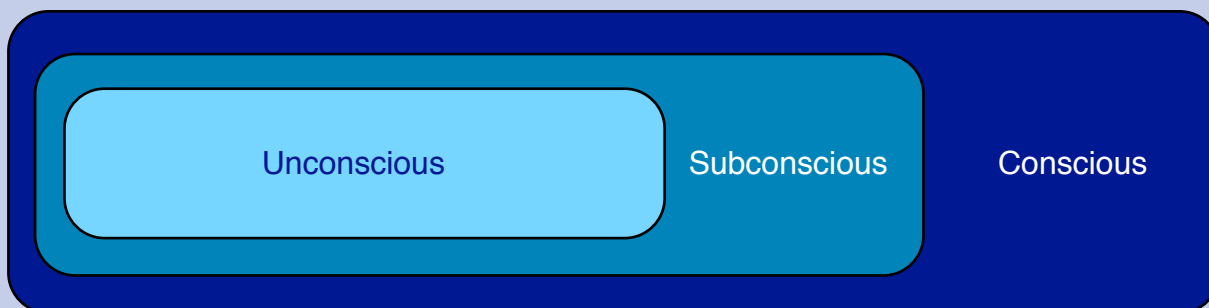
Essay

Aommaster

 Hypnosis is getting more and more popular for stage shows and walk-around performances, but many people are not aware of what hypnosis is, thus keeping newcomers from trying it out. I hope that these coming articles will help in removing some of the mystery that surrounds hypnosis.

### What is Hypnosis?

In order to better understand hypnosis, consider a (highly simplified) schematic of the mind:



**Conscious:** Deals with analysis of information, logic, rationality, will power, temporary memory, and most importantly, the critical factor

**Subconscious:** Deals with permanent memory, habits, emotions

**Unconscious:** Deals with things like your heart beat, immune response, etc.

The critical factor is an important part of the conscious mind. It acts as a "gatekeeper" to prevent suggestions being passed through to the subconscious mind. All suggestions go through this critical factor first. If the suggestion is accepted it enters the subconscious mind. If not, it is rejected, and the suggestion has no effect. In order for a hypnotic suggestion to take effect it must enter the subconscious mind. There are other limitations, but for the sake of simplicity we will limit our criteria to this one restraint.

And now we reach the definition of hypnosis. Throughout the ages there have been many definitions as to what hypnosis is and there is no universally accepted definition. However, for the sake of legislation, the US government has settled on the following definition:

*"Hypnosis is the bypass of the critical factor of the conscious mind combined with the establishment of selective thinking"*

In simple terms, when you are able to bypass the critical factor of the conscious mind and fire suggestions into a person's mind which cause a change of some sort, that person is in a state of hypnosis. Notice that the words "sleep" and "relax" are not mentioned in the definition because they are not necessary to achieve a trance state.

### A Word On Semantics

While we are on the subject, there are two words commonly used by hypnotists that need to be removed from the field.

The first one is "sleep". A hypnotic state does not require the person to be asleep. In fact, the general working level of hypnosis is nothing like sleep. Hypnotic suggestions can be ruined if, while emerging a person, the hypnotist says something like "wake up". The spectator thinks "I wasn't asleep! I guess I wasn't hypnotized and these suggestions didn't work". You do not "wake up" from hypnosis. You emerge from the state. For instant inductions, the word "sleep" is used, but only after the spectator is told that "sleep" signifies a trance state and not actual sleep.

The second one is "under." A person is not under hypnosis, but rather in a state of hypnosis. The word "under" signifies inferiority and weakness. It is derogatory and can (in some cases) reduce the effectiveness of a hypnotic induction or deepening technique.

**Next time: Depths of Hypnosis.**



Future articles can be submitted to: [tophatv2@gmail.com](mailto:tophatv2@gmail.com)