

Magic Bunny

Presents

Top Hat

Table of Contents

A Letter from The Editor <i>by Michael Jay</i>	1
Letters to The Editor	3
Special Offer	4
Chavracadabra: The Decline of the Magician <i>by Gary Scott</i>	5
Helping With The Magic <i>by Dave Wyton</i>	10
Layman's Secrets <i>by Andy T. Layman</i>	13
Spellbound: The Wonder-Filled Life of Doug Henning <i>by Mark Williams</i>	16
The Magician - A Novel <i>by Michael Jay</i>	19
The Believable-ness of the Unbelievable <i>by Elliott Hodges</i>	23
A Slydini Classic for Stand-Up <i>by Jon A. Hand</i>	28
Worlds Apart <i>by Matt Horan</i>	45
Bizarre Bursary.....	47
How Magic Came To Be <i>by Brandon Williams</i>	48
Who Is Buried in Abraham Lincoln's Grave? <i>by Weepin' Willie</i>	50
End Page.....	56

This table of contents is linked to the articles - Just point and click

A Letter from The Editor

By Michael Jay



There is just so much happening right now, I'm not sure where to begin...

I guess I'll start with our latest news and something that I couldn't have imagined in my wildest dreams. I'm sure that you are familiar with Lybrary.com and its owner and operator, Chris Wasshuber. Chris has been a supporter of home-grown magic books on electronic media for many years now and his site, Lybrary.com, carries the books of authors who would have had no other outlet in the magic world were it not for Chris and his passion for our art.

In fact, when Eugene Poinc died, Chris made sure that Gene's website remained on the internet, free of charge, for anyone interested in the great master that was Eugene Poinc.¹ Over the years, after Gene's passing, I have visited Gene's website on many occasions, made possible by that amazing patron of magic, Chris Wasshuber.

It is with great appreciation that I thank Chris Wasshuber and Lybrary.com for now carrying our magazines on his website as a free resource for his customers and for the magicians who may just stumble across these humble offerings from magicians across the world. Also, a word to thanks goes out to our readers and writers who've made Top Hat a popular and worth-while resource for the general populace of magicians who are twisting in the wind trying to find what makes magic, magic.

It is with pride that I offer you the link to Lybrary.com for your perusal and approval. Enjoy!

Chris Wasshuber's Lybrary

¹ More astute readers may remember the column on Eugene Poinc from the Top Hat issue #9 wherein the writer stated that, "You can still find his website on the internet if you really try." Lybrary.com is one of the sources where Gene's pages can be found.

So, please, take some time out of your busy day and visit Lybrary.com and don't be afraid to send the link out to your friends and family in magic telling them of this wonderful website of which we are now a part. Again, thank you, Chris!

The next point of business in this preface to our magazine is another bit of news that brings me great pleasure. While we've been clawing our way into a bigger market share, it has not gone unnoticed. We all know that Top Hat is not a pecuniary endeavor and, therefore, remains bereft of all commercials. Still, I'm opening this issue with what could be considered an advertisement but for the fact that the only recompense is two free tickets to a full scale stage magic show that will be in London at the Shaftesbury Theatre, and runs from 14 November 2015 - 3 January 2016. These two tickets are on offer to all of our readership, the details for winning that pair of tickets can be found below. As the editor I felt that such a thing was a worthy endeavor in consideration for those two tickets offered to our members.

My apologies to those who may disagree.

All that being said, let's dig into issue #11, which starts with Gary Scott's third and final offering on 21st century magic. Following Gary is Dave Wyton with a scathing indictment of magicians using assistants as if they were *persona non grata*. First time contributor Andy T. Layman then shares some very uncomfortable truths of which all magicians would do well to take heed. Mark Williams gives us a review of a book that's been on the market for a while, but should find its way into every library on magic and following that I offer you chapter 2 of my novel. Elliott Hodges then proffers some advice on making the most of suspension of disbelief, which is the perfect introduction to Jon A. Hand's update of a Slydini routine and how you can put it into your stand-up or cabaret act. Finishing out our main section is also a first time contributor, Matt Horan, with some very blunt advice to the mentalists amongst us. And, of course, we finish our magazine with the Bizarre Bursary, which offers a short story from Brandon Williams (yet another first time contributor) on how magic came to be and Weepin' Willie's gives us our finale piece - a tale of the macabre (we expect nothing less from Willie) and a trick based on that story.

All excellent material for you to peruse and enjoy. As always, please tell your friends and family in magic about Top Hat and give them the link to visit us on FaceBook:

Top Hat Magazine

Letters to the Editor

- One thing I would like to see, is more tricks. I know, I know, there's enough new tricks coming out already. But I always felt like I missed out on some of the great 'trick orientated' magazines like Pabular, Apocalypse, Kaufman's Almanac etc, but I do enjoy reading/exploring methods. I subscribe to both MagicSeen and Genii and the both feel like the focus is always on news and reviews (and adverts...). I got into magic because I enjoy magic tricks. Surely we all did. Therefore it always seemed odd to me that most glossy magazines don't put more of an emphasis on that.

Matt Du Heaume

I would love to put more emphasis on tricks, Matt, but I am at the mercy of what the authors send to me (whether regular contributors or one time contributors). Fortunately, we don't put any emphasis on advertising. As we garner a bigger market share for this magazine, I believe that we'll see more tricks or routines being offered. This is why it is so important that our readers get the word out and get these magazines into as many magicians' hands as possible. So, I would like to enlist your help and the help of all of our readers in making this a popular and well distributed magazine - this is a grass roots campaign and each and every reader is just as important as all the others in this push to make Top Hat a staple in the magic community. You all have my thanks in advance!

Broadway's biggest selling magic spectacular is coming to London! **THE ILLUSIONISTS** is a fast-paced and wildly entertaining show, featuring seven of the world's greatest magicians. Full of hilarious magic tricks and death-defying stunts, **THE ILLUSIONISTS** is set to mesmerise audiences of all ages.

Top Hat Magazine, in cooperation with The Illusionists, is offering two free tickets to this Broadway show, set to open at the Shaftesbury Theatre in London on the 14th November, 2015.

The rules are simple: Send your name to tophatv2@gmail.com with the subject heading "Two Free Tickets" and you'll be entered to win. All names entered will be put into a top hat and the winner will be drawn from that hat in a YouTube video that will be made

available in our 15th October edition of Top Hat Magazine. The deadline for entries is the 7th of October, be sure you don't miss it!

THE ILLUSIONISTS - WITNESS THE IMPOSSIBLE™ - the world's best-selling touring magic show which has sold out in 71 cities across 17 countries - comes to London's West End for the first time. Guest starring the UK's hottest magician **Jamie Raven**, fresh from Britain's Got Talent, where he captivated the British public with his unique magic tricks.

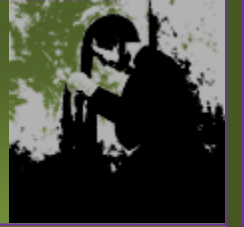
The Illusionists - Witness The Impossible runs at the Shaftesbury Theatre, London from 14 November 2015 – 3 January 2016. For more information and to book tickets visit

www.theillusionistslive.com/london or call 020 7379 5399.



Chavracadabra: The Decline of the Magician

By Gary Scott



Part 3 *Catholicon*

In my first essay, I mentioned 'Releasers' being a sub genre, I was wrong. They are now at the top of the magic food chain, closely followed, in their symbiotic relationship, by the 'Quoters' and behind them in droves that outnumber the 'Releasers' a thousand to one are the 'Suckers'. Those that buy up everything from the 'Releasers'.

Not that I can do anything to subside their influence, but we can take some actions that can keep the performance side of things alive and well. So where do we begin in healing our magic community? We need a universal remedy and magicians of the past had the perfect answer. Learn to perform magic. Simple to understand but difficult to execute. Our community has become a company of serial buyers. The 'Releasers' are jumping for joy. No longer do we as magicians have to perform magic. We can use the Blackpool convention as the perfect example of what we have become. The dealers hall becomes more and more crammed with tripe and the ticket prices go up. Have you noticed how year by year that Blackpool becomes more and more dealers hall orientated rather than magic performance or show? We should really be going to Blackpool to learn from our peers, watch them lecture and session with each other. Then watch the shows on offer and watch how to perform on stage. The biggest magic convention of them all has become a sewer of watered down products for sale. I think the term commercial fits so well here which will ultimately anger those that read this. If this does anger you then you fall into one of those categories that have been mentioned. So let the healing of our art begin. Get out of those brackets and become a magician again. It's why you got into this stuff, right?

So let's say you recognise yourself in one of these brackets and you want to get out? What do you do?

Here are some guides to getting back to the heart of magic performance.

Get reading again. Stop buying the latest and greatest and read the classic texts of magic. Go into the past and read magic books from yesteryear. They hold the key to making your magic as compelling and dynamic as it should be. Modern magic books have some really neat ideas and some have updated workings of sleights and existing effects. Magic texts are now no longer confined to the book, but now appear in the form of e-books. I would recommend that if e-books are your thing that you print them off and put them in a binder for easy reference. This ultimately becomes a better reading experience.

Here's a list of some books that can help you on your way to healing the open sore that is the magic industry:

- **Modern Magic** - Professor Hoffmann (Also More Magic & Later Magic)
- **The Tarbell Course in Magic** - (Try and read the original source material. You will learn a lot more about the language used at the time)
Hint: The recently published 'The Original Tarbell Lessons in Magic'
- **The Dramatic Art Magic** - Louis C. Haley
- **The Art of Acting** - David Carter
- **The Five Points in Magic** - Juan Tamariz
- **The New Modern Coin Magic** - J.B. Bobo
- **Prism** - Max Maven
- **Magic of the Hands** - Edward Victor (Also More Magic of the Hands & Further Magic of the Hands)
- **The Dai Vernon Book of Magic** - Lewis Ganson
- **Maximum Entertainment** : Directors Notes for Magicians and Mentalists - Ken Weber (Lots to disagree and agree with. Remember, Ken Weber's experiences are going to be completely different from yours.)
- **Our Magic** - Maskelyne and Devant

So, you've probably guessed that this list is not exhaustive. It is a mere drop in the ocean that's part of the sea of magic literature. I have missed out so many good titles that it is painful to leave them out.

You will also have to learn the difference between practise and rehearsal.

Practise equals working on all those finite details that make up your effects including sleights, script work, blocking and staging. Once you have all these down then rehearsal beings. If you now take all those effects you've been

practicing and put them together in an act with continuity, begin running through this act without stopping and allowing for all those mishaps that will happen, then you are rehearsing. Once you can get through the act without any mistakes, give it another thirty days. I'm serious. Let the act become part of you. It should be as natural as breathing. Once it's at that stage, then you can make room for improvisation when things go slightly askew, or the music doesn't play, or the lighting doesn't work.

I hope Ricky Jay doesn't mind me quoting his fantastic movie, 'Deceptive Practice: The Mysteries and Mentors of Ricky Jay', in which he proclaims that the best way to practice or learn magic is a one-on-one basis, aka Sensei and student in the martial arts. This is exactly why I went to have personal tuition with Daryl, right at the beginning of my magical infancy, so I could be the best that I could be. And here I am 16 years later and blessed with magical knowledge. I've learnt history along the way, performed on stage, wrote/directed my own shows and have Ron Bauer, the greatest, living close-up magician, as a close-friend and mentor. Magic has been good to me, but it's only been as good as the work I've put in. I've tried to make the best of my natural gifts and hide my weaknesses. Magic is performance, so give everybody your strengths. If you suck at doing things close-up, try manipulation and be on stage. If stage is too daunting and you can do well in small groups, then close-up may be your thing. If you can communicate with rhetor, then maybe mentalism should be your path. Can you tell stories in a compelling manner? Then maybe Bizarre is your natural vocation.

What I'm trying to say is... Be yourself. Don't try to perform an act based on the occult if you collect stamps. Find out who you are, what you're interested in, and work that into your magic. Base your magic presentations around you, your life and your experiences. Let people see you and bring them into your world using magic as the tool to connect. Every time you perform it should be an emotional experience for spectators.

Does any of this sound like the information given to you on the back of a DVD box? No? Where did all this information come from? Did I make it all up? Actually, all this information was passed onto me via the magicians in my life, the books I've read and, most importantly, the magic I've performed. No doubt the younger readers of these essays will say I'm just a bitter old-man (well,

middle-aged) but I wouldn't be parting with this information unless I had been through it all myself. And I'm still going through it and I'm still learning.

So, as part of the conclusion to my imperious trilogy, I'd like to start how I began, with another tale about a certain 'Reality TV' Celebrity and another amazing appearance.

This time though, It all begins at the Essential Magic Convention 2012. The EMC is a long convention. Hours and hours of magicians lecturing and performing over a three day period.

One of the highlights is the sit-down interview/topic discussion with two or three select individuals and we get to know more about them, their magic and whatever else is thrown in their direction. The time came for Paul Daniels to come and sit in the chair for some open dialogue but he wasn't alone. Up popped Dynamo. Sitting next to the grandmaster of TV magic in the UK. All I could think was, "You're sitting right next to Paul Daniels. Ask for help!"

In fact, I actually started to verbalize my thoughts. My wife thought I was demented. I was shouting at the TV and getting angry that 'The Sob Story' was sitting next to 'The Legend'. I was angry for the right reasons. The past and the present were colliding in a befuddled mix of nonsense. As I've already said, I was praying that 'Chavracadabra' would ask Paul Daniels for help, even if it was off-stage. Alas, nothing more than a massive interview failure.

More repetitive sob story bullshit. If I had the Paul Daniels connection and had a TV show, there is no other person in UK that should really be used as a magic consultant. Not just magic either, but a TV consultant.

I weep for Dynamo, who is currently our figure-head for magic in the UK.

Vernon must be shuffling in his grave. As Mr. T. would say, "I Pity the Fool!"

So now we've moved into talking about magic on TV, let me tell you about the maestro that is Paul Daniels.

Magic was not Paul's only passion, but everything that encompassed magic on TV. Lighting, camerawork, sound, direction and everything in-between. How many of the Johnny-come-latelys can say that they know anything at all?

For these are the things that are more important than the magic itself. Unfortunately, for the uneducated they become nothing more than impedimenta. You now have 'Releasers' being consultants for other 'Releasers' on TV....and how long do they last? They don't. People can still see through the drivel that crosses their path when channel hopping because only those with the skill of TV production need consult a magic show. Say hello to another one of the multitude of reasons why the modern magi can't get the job done on TV. If magic was structured on TV, you have the very best form of entertainment that is worthy of repeat viewing. David Copperfield and Paul Daniels both knew how to put the show into magic. It's time others learnt that too.

I can't help but feel that the majority of newbies out there are going to chastise and hate every single word I've put in print over the past three issues. There's one simple explanation for it all - I love magic. It deserves better than what it has become whether on TV or not. Dress better. Practise better. Research better. Learn better.

Treat magic with respect and it will serve you well.

*
**

All of this started with a member of Magic Bunny professing, "How often do you see a trailer released for a handkerchief effect nowadays?" and that statement told me everything I needed to know about what kind of fellowship this person has been brought into. This vile magic industry. It set my thoughts a-blazing. The modern magi's way of thinking is real cause for concern. They know nothing of what I've composed.

So let me now retort:

Handkerchief magic has been part of magic for hundreds of years. (Possibly more). Let's read that again. Handkerchief magic has been part of magic for hundreds of years..... HUNDREDS OF YEARS!

It doesn't require a trailer and never will.

Siya on the boards.

Helping With The Magic

By Dave Wyton



Consider this: Young Daniel goes to a birthday party. At the party, The Great Paulini, magical entertainer extraordinaire, is on hand. And during the course of the party young Daniel assists Paulini in a trick. Young Daniel has a great time. He helped to make the magic work, he laughed at the Great Paulini when the magic didn't work and cheered mightily when it did. He went back to his seat with a prize he had won in a simple contest and a diploma which proclaimed that he was a member of the Great Paulini's Magic Club. Magicians are great!

A few years down the line Young Daniel is slightly older and even a shade wiser. He's learned much and forgotten much, but he remembers the Great Paulini.

So when he sees that there's a magician on the bill at the local club, he sits at the front to get a good view. He remembers the Great Paulini with affection and is completely disarmed. Totally fearless. He's the first up to help. Poor Daniel.

No diploma this time. No diplomacy either. He is verbally abused.

"Hold out your hand - the clean one."

"Where did you get that haircut? The poodle parlour?"

His property is abused.

"Lend me a fiver, you might get it back. Write your name on it, tear a corner off and screw it up." He is used as a waste bin.

"Is that your card? With your signature? Keep it as a souvenir."

He goes back to his seat shell-shocked. He still remembers with affection the Great Paulini and wonders what went wrong.

A few years later when his own youngster, Young Daniel Junior, has a birthday party, he books a magician, but not before interrogating at length the Great Paulini Junior, who wonders what the third degree is all about. The party is a

great success. Young Daniel Junior loves the Great Paulini and Young Daniel Senior breathes a sigh of his relief. His faith has been largely restored and somewhere in the dark recesses of his mind he believes in magic once again.

The following day he compares all three shows and cannot understand why it was necessary for Ima Nidiot to treat him and a few other members of the audience in the way he did. He never for a moment considered that Ima Nidiot was right and the Great Paulini (Junior and Senior) were wrong. Next time, if there is a next time, he'll sit at the back.

Children are largely untutored. When they help the magician, they expect, quite rightly, to be part of the fun, to help to make the magic work, to laugh (along with everybody else) at the magician when things go wrong. When a youngster returns to his seat he is pleased as punch if he can take with him a small gift or prize as a memento or souvenir. But he's even more happy with the memory of a pleasing experience.

If I lend something to anyone, I expect it to be returned in reasonable condition. If I borrow something, anticipating that the owner expects the same, I keep his trust and treat the borrowed item with the respect that other people's property deserves. It seems a reasonable carry on to me.

So why do so many magicians, more than ever these days, it seems, insist on treating assisting spectators with contempt? Which is what it boils down to. If someone is good enough to step into the spotlight to help an entertainer earn his fee, they deserve recognition for this noble act. The fact that the spectator is on hand merely for the magician's convenience should be recognised and acknowledged. If nothing else, he is surrendering his time (how often is that a consideration?) but when, in addition, he offers up some item of personal property as well, why is he so often considered to be the lucky one? Why should his being allowed to help Ima Nidiot be considered a great honour?

Reality is the reverse. The magician should be the one who is grateful. And show his gratitude by treating the spectator (and his property) with courtesy and civility and respect.

Of course, we all live in a world where such traditional virtues are considered old fashioned and seem to have long gone out of the window; but they haven't

really. It's because people in general are courteous, civil and respectful that they meekly accept the magician's insulting behaviour. They don't want to tell him what a Nidiot he really is and how he has no right to tear their fiver into pieces and give it back with no offer of substituting a whole note for the damaged one. He doesn't want to tell him that marvellous though the note in orange may be, the last thing he wants is a juice sodden piece of paper sitting in his pocket/wallet all night. He doesn't want to have to wait until the thing is dry before he can spend it. And he doesn't want to watch the rest of the show with his hands tacky as a result of contact with fresh orange juice either.

He's not a human dustbin and doesn't want a folded, creased signed playing card with a corner missing as a "souvenir". He might if it was signed by Robbie Barlow, but not by Ima Nidiot or even himself. If he wanted his own signature on a playing card, he wouldn't need a magician's assistance to work out how to do it.

The world is largely made up of regular, so-called *ordinary* people, who, in their own way are unique and extraordinary and who don't want to cause anybody any problems—and don't deserve the hassle they so often get from Ima Nidiot. Performers who treat everybody as if they were exceptions deserving of contempt are not doing anything for magic. And just because Ima Nidiot is an inferior sub-species who cannot assert himself enough in his daily existence, does not mean he has take his own shortcomings out on anyone else.

There are times when the world seems to be made up of idiots. Thankfully they are exceptions. Just because Ima Nidiot's last assistant was fresh from the Alf Garnet school of deportment, and drunk as well, doesn't mean that everyone else is of the same persuasion.

Or maybe it's me that is the exception and I've got it all wrong. Maybe I'm too sensitive—one of the curses/joys of being an Artist.

If so, I'm glad.

Layman's Secrets

By Andy T. Layman



Just so you know a little about me:

I am not a magician or even an aspiring one (I only 'know' 4 tricks - and all of those are pretty much self-workers). I am what you, the Magi of the world, would call a layman. And proud to be so.

I have been quite interested in magic from an early age but mainly as an observer - not a performer. I really enjoy watching good performers do their stuff and have no interest in how it's done - it's how it's performed that matters to me.

It's a well known fact that you magicians have your secrets and keep them well guarded. What is little known or understood is that we laymen also have secrets. Just because I like you all I thought I would destroy a few electrons and let you in on a few of them.

1. *We all know it is a trick.*

This may come as a shock to you but just about everyone who sees magic knows it is a trick and that we are being fooled. There, I said it. It's one of the biggest layman secrets out there. We know you are doing "something" when you show us your latest magical masterpiece. We just don't know (or even care in most cases) what that "something" is.

One of the tricks I am working on and that I really love is a really simplified version of Triumph. The man who first taught me how this is done said that all I had to do was work out a way of controlling the chosen card to the bottom. His chosen method was to hold a break, perform a pass of some description, riffle, perform a double undercut (whatever that is) followed by a false Hindu and a half dozen more moves to finally get the card he needed, where he needed it.

So I videoed him doing it and watched and watched and all I could see was a blur of hands and countless opportunities for him to do the "something". Sure it

looked impressive but for me it took away the joy of being fooled. With 30 seconds of shuffling and stuff he had ample time to do what he needed to do. And far from being amazed/astonished/astounded I actually felt a bit angry. I had bought into the fact that this was a trick. I had invested some of my time watching him perform and I had allowed him to deceive me.

But what he did to me was to try and prove that he was great and I was a fool. An idiot who couldn't catch him out even if I wanted to.

So I decided that my control method for the card would be simple. I riffle down the side of the deck, the punter yells stop, they replace the card at that point and I throw the top packet on top with an in/out jog. But not just any old jog. This is at least half a card length. The bigger the better. I throw the bottom packet on top and run one and shuffle off. And I have never been caught.

Once I have done the "thing" and got everything where I need it I give the whole deck to the punter. From then on I don't touch the cards but get them to do a bit of shaking (to get the cards in order) and a magic spell (just `cos) it all seems to happen in their hands. The whole thing takes two minutes of which 1.30 happens when they are holding the cards!

Because this takes no time at all and there is little fiddling with the cards the effect actually seems to come across as stronger. I don't do anything to telegraph the fact that I am doing "something". My audience assumes that nothing has been done and the final reveal is so much more effective. At least I think it is.

Simple is better. We laymen are not interested in watching you perform the latest in your ever growing arsenal of moves. We just want to be entertained and feel a part of the performance.

2. We don't see as much magic as you would think.

Unless like me you hang about with magicians all the time you may see a live magician once every couple of years at a wedding or function or similar event.

Because of this we don't need you to come up with something different every time you perform - mainly because we probably won't even be there to see it. You will have a completely new audience to wow.

The chances of us meeting again afterwards are quite remote so stop worrying that you won't have anything new to show us when next we cross paths. Just do a few effects - but do them REALLY well.

3. *We all know what a thumb tip is.*

So this is what I as a layman look for in a magical performance. I am sure I am not alone.

- Simple.
- Well performed.
- With fewer gadgets and gimmicks.

Thanks for reading.

Did You Know?

Polish magician Hyman Goldstein, better known as Horace Goldin (1874 - 1939), is often credited with inventing the illusion 'Sawing a Woman in Half' (and, in fact, once the illusion became too common Goldin began using a giant buzz-saw, which he popularized). The first magician to actually present the classic sawing of the woman was P.T. Selbit (1879 - 1938).

To this day, historians argue over whether P.T. Selbit or Horace Goldin was the originator of the illusion.



Spellbound: The Wonder-Filled Life of Doug Henning

By Mark Williams

Book Review



Spellbound: The Wonder-Filled Life of Doug Henning takes a look at the life and times of Master Illusionist, Doug Henning. It truly is a fantastic book by author, John Harrison. The book was originally released at "Magic Live!" in 2009. I can tell you that this book was met with eager anticipation. *Spellbound* is definitely a must read for all Doug Henning fans. John has painstakingly researched every aspect of Doug's life and career in Magic. It is a true testament to the author and his own dedication to write this biography. John has done a magnificent job in both presenting the facts and weaving an integral story surrounding the wonder-filled life of Doug Henning.

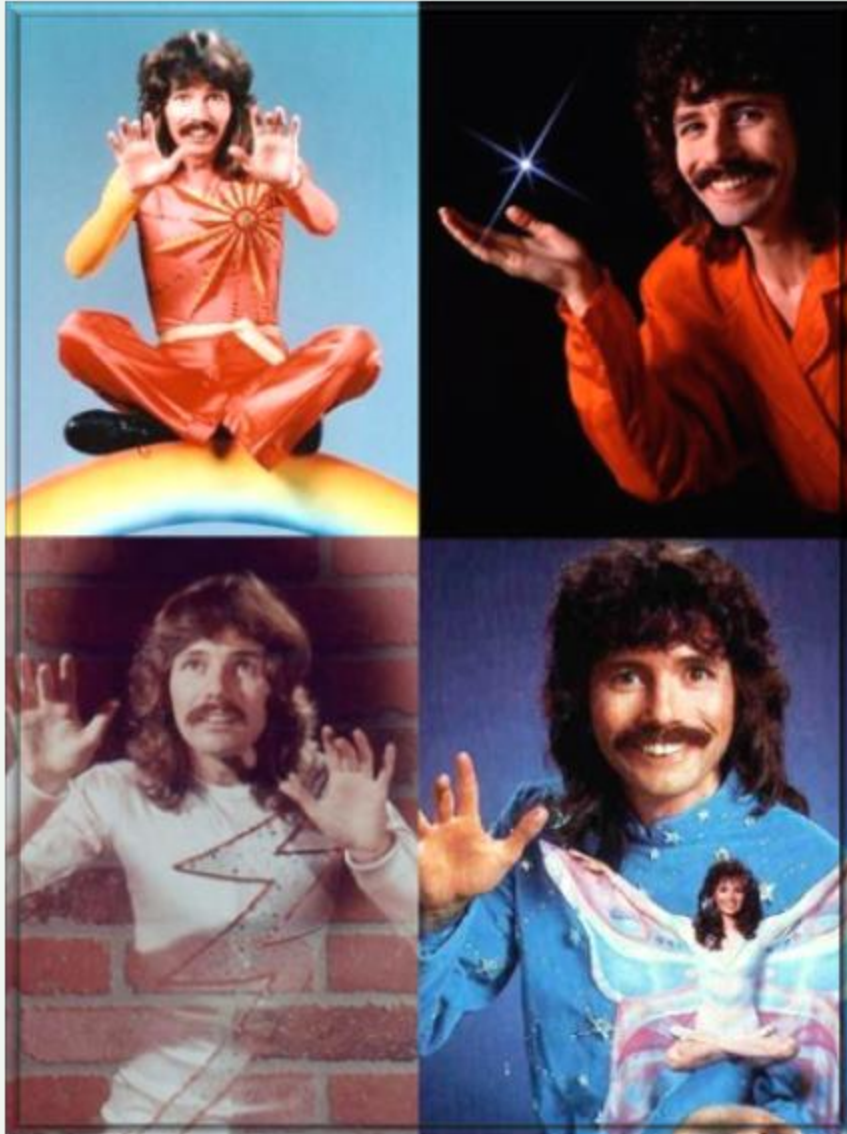
At the age of six, Doug Henning watched the Ed Sullivan Show on television to see magician Richiardi perform the Broom Suspension Illusion. It was at that moment when Doug asked his mother if he too could someday become a magician. (On a side note, the Ed Sullivan Show aired on television for nearly 23 years. Mr. Sullivan hosted this variety act show, which included an assortment of talented performers.)



Years later, when Doug Henning started to become a household name, he was often fond of saying, "The Magic of Today is The Science of Tomorrow". This type of thinking would eventually lead Henning into the realm of Transcendental Meditation, which would in effect change his life forever.

Transcendental Meditation, or TM, is a series of techniques used to improve one's self awareness and inner development. The most common form of this type of meditation focuses on the use of a mantra (a single word or a series of words strung together), which is practiced verbally between 15 to 20 minutes, twice a day. Although TM has a basis in Hinduism, it has both religious and non religious offerings. Henning became so engrossed in TM, that he dedicated a huge portion of his life and money into the planning and building of a TM

related theme park. Unfortunately, Henning's life ended so abruptly that this project never came to fruition.



John Harrison's book encompasses Doug's early years on Broadway during his tenure in "Spellbound", "The Magic Show" and "Merlin". It then takes you on a journey through Doug's life and eventual fame onto television. December 1975, saw his first televised special, "Doug Henning's World of Magic". Over 50 million viewers tuned in to watch as Doug attempted to recreate Houdini's Water Torture Cell Escape and break the time record, set by Harry many years ago. Doug successfully escaped, but missed beating the

time record. Even though, the broadcast was so hugely profitable for NBC (National Broadcasting Company) that they signed Doug on for six more annual specials.

Some of the more interesting facets of Spellbound are interviews John conducted with Doug's family, friends, co-workers and associates. All of the information is presented in a delightful way and makes for a relaxed read. You definitely get the feeling that you are hearing an enthralling story, as if the author was telling

it to you, in person. John refreshingly presents the details of Doug Henning's life so that everyone will enjoy the fascinating journey. You will read about the highlights and the downfalls Doug experienced, providing a clearer picture of what Doug Henning was all about. You also learn how Doug Henning rocketed into the public limelight and follow his exquisite career in Magic.

Spellbound will delight all those who want to know more about Doug Henning. You learn about "Hendoo"...Doug's first performing name. Many will be surprised to find out that Doug Henning studied with Dai Vernon and Slydini, through a grant issued by the Canadian Government. Also, you'll find out why a performance for the Inuit Indians made Doug realize that Magic is everywhere. Readers also learn how Doug Henning first used Transcendental Meditation to overcome hyper-activity and how it later ruled his life. Spellbound reveals that "Metamorphosis" was Doug's favorite illusion. This book also reveals how Doug Henning sought out real wonder in the World and how "Magic + Theater = Art" Clearly, there is much to enjoy inside the pages of this incredible book, Spellbound.

February 7, 2000 was truly a sad day when Doug Henning succumbed to Liver

Cancer at the age of 52. Doug Henning will certainly be remembered for bringing Illusion into the homes of television viewers everywhere. Doug was determined throughout his life to bring "Wonder" into other peoples' lives. He made a long forgotten art (Magic), stand out brightly for all to enjoy. In Doug Henning's own words, he made this profound proclamation..."I don't know how to be anyone other than myself."

Spellbound: The Wonder-Filled Life of Doug Henning can be purchased through Amazon.com, Barnes and Noble and other fine bookstores.

Highly Recommended!

Best Magical Regards

The Magician - A Novel

By Michael Jay



Chapter 2

Police Sergeant Davis was in the middle of his shift with rookie Officer Guterez when the call came across the air waves.

Before their shift had started, Davis was doing some pre-prep paperwork. After all, Guterez only had a week left before she was due to be taken off of probation and given full amenities as an officer in the New York police department. It was Davis's job, as the training officer, to complete a full review of her performance in the field.

"You ready, Sarge?" Guterez was standing in the doorway with a bit of an inquisitive look. She knew that Davis didn't do paperwork until he absolutely had to.

"Yea, Rookie, I'm ready. Here's the keys, you're driving."

"Wow! Are you sure I'm ready for that?" Guterez couldn't hide her smile. She'd been asking, for what felt like months, to be allowed to drive. Davis had never let her. This time was different, though, this time he dropped the keys into her welcoming hand.

Davis had a lot on his mind, so it would be a blessing to let Guterez drive. Give himself some "me" time, he figured. She'd been asking nearly every day for a month or so at this point. Toss her a bone, as it were.

Once they were in the unit and pulling out for their fun-filled day of harassing citizens, Davis let his mind wander.

The sergeant was old school and couldn't help but consider that Guterez was a tall, thin Hispanic, far too pretty to be an officer. After 40 years on the job, Davis had seen it all; from the early days of the 'Good Old Boys' network, to the integration of blacks into the forces, to the feminist movement and now to

having these Barbie doll types on the force. Still, it was better than looking at those dikey bitches who had pervaded the rank and file these days.

Davis didn't think that Guterez could possibly do this job when she was first assigned to him nearly a year ago. As the months passed, though, Davis had to rethink his position. Guterez's ability to take a man down was belied by her slender frame. That was her secret weapon, Davis mused. That secret weapon came in right handy on more than one occasion where she had not only backed up Davis admirably, but probably saved his life during one particularly hairy altercation.

And there was one other thing. Guterez had preternaturally good instincts. They always said to go with your gut, that it was good instincts that would keep you alive on the job. Davis couldn't help but feel that Guterez had those instincts inherently, instincts that took Davis nearly 20 years to acquire. Were he a younger man he would have been terribly jealous of Guterez for this, but, as he was nearly 60 years old, those puerile emotions had long since abated. The bonus for Davis was that he got to take credit for training this young woman who, based on her instincts, managed to pull off 9 felony arrests in the last year (almost unheard of for a rookie).

"Everything okay, Sarge?" Guterez was a little worried about Davis. Generally he wasn't what anyone would call 'talkative', but he was just too quiet today. Something was eating at him and already 3 hours into their shift she felt that she should have a handle on his problem. She just couldn't put her finger on what it was, though.

"Yea," he grunted.

Davis had become increasingly proud of Guterez over the year that they had spent together. Ever so slowly, she was becoming something of a daughter to him, a daughter who carried a Glock, backed him up, and wasn't killed by a drunk driver when she was only 8 years old.

All these thoughts were shattered by the sudden barking of the radio during an otherwise quiet day.

gurjt: Unit 208, possible 10-22 at 1411 Sycamore Drive. Talk to the man.

Davis picked up the microphone and responded.

gurjt: Unit 208, copy that. ETA 5 minutes.

"Get us there, Rookie" Davis absently told Guterez while he flipped the switch that brought the lights and siren to life.

This was the sergeant's first time witnessing the rookie's real driving skills. She did everything right. Driving with a sense of exigency all the while being careful when approaching intersections and blind side streets. The other drivers were not required, by law, to yield to the police car, so a strong sense of dangerous situations was necessary when going to an emergency call. Of course, the young kids listened to their loud music and paid little attention to the road around them, so lights and sirens didn't always do the trick. Only a good driver did the trick.

"Jesus," Davis thought to himself, "She's even a natural at this."

"Okay, Rookie, this is your first homicide. I'm going to need your brain firing on all 8 cylinders today. Got that?" Davis fixed a stone-cold gaze upon Guterez. He knew that these situations were wildly unpredictable and he was going to make damn sure that his partner was going to come out of it unharmed - she would not be another daughter lost to someone's stupidity and sure as hell not on the 20th anniversary of his losing Sarah Jo.

But even as those words came out of his mouth, he thought to himself, "Yea, all 8 cylinders. This girl operates on 12 cylinders, 24/7."

"Copy that, Sarge."

"Make sure that you're prepared for anything, Rookie. You know the drill - we've gone over this and you've been trained. Today is when that training is going to serve you well as long as you keep your mind clear and watch for any present danger. Trust your instincts and follow my lead, got it?"

"Got it."

The unit pulled up to the front of the house on Sycamore. Sergeant Davis and his rookie were the first on the scene. The siren died, but the lights remained

on. They quickly, but cautiously, proceeded up the walk to the door, which was slightly ajar.

Guterez stood just to the right of the door, Davis to the left. Davis nodded and Guterez knocked on the door and announced, "This is the police, we're coming in."

"Just follow my lead, Rookie, I've seen it all - don't forget that," Davis admonished the rookie in a hushed tone and gave her another nod. Still off to the right, Guterez pushed the door open.

Davis moved in front of the doorway while the door was swinging inward and his jaw dropped. Standing opposite the door, fully 10 feet tall, was a vintage guillotine, complete with old, dried blood stains on both the wooden frame and the steel blade. It loomed ominously there, apparently in full working order, and greeted Davis as if he'd just walked into the French Revolution.

"Okay, I've never seen anything like this before," Davis muttered under his breath.

Chapter 3 of The Magician will be available on October 15th, included with issue #12 of Top Hat Magazine. Please watch our FaceBook page for details.



The Believable-ness of the Unbelievable

By Elliott Hodges



The process of learning magic is odd. We all get into magic for different reason, but for a lot of us there is an inherent interest with magic tricks and showing tricks to people to impress them or to try and be more popular than we currently are. There are many other reasons, of course, but a large part of our reasons for initially getting into magic is about the desire to show tricks to people. Then we learn a bit more, read a bit more, possibly join a club and an online forum or two and are suddenly told that we need to make our magic entertaining and think carefully about our patter. As we continue on our journey we are also told that tricks aren't the most important things about magic, and we are told to pick tricks that suit our character. We begin to hear magicians say things like "I like the chop cup but it doesn't suit me."

Now, of course I agree with all of that; they are all important things. But my goodness, haven't we come a long way from learning a few tricks to show our friends? When I started magic I remember wanting to learn some cool things that not everyone could do, but I had no idea that all of these things were involved as well. The tough thing is that, generally, we are told *what* to do but not *how* to do it. I wanted to learn some tricks, I never wanted to look at something and think about making it entertaining. Even if I had realised it, how would I go about it anyway, and as for presentation -- what on earth *IS* presentation? I'll be honest, I've been doing magic for ten years and, if pressed, I still can't give you a definition of presentation. Nor have I ever heard a definition of presentation that enlightens me. I don't think merely encouraging each other to go and read the works of Eugene Burger on presentation is quite enough, because Eugene (who I absolutely love) is a story teller and very few of us are. I remember my early days of learning magic and feeling led to believe that presentation is telling stories with your magic. Again, I started doing magic because I wanted to learn some tricks; how am I meant to do all of this?

What I want to explore is, in my mind, a vital area of creating amazing magic and also very practical in helping us with all of the above aspects of our magic. I

want you to ask yourself, "how believable is your magic?" Of course, we want our magic to be unbelievable and incredible, yet I'm convinced that the more credible your magic is, the more incredible it will seem. Think back to when David Copperfield made the Statue of Liberty disappear in 1983. I just watched it again to remind myself of it. It was an impressive display yet I don't think that it was ever quite the successful piece that it should have been. Think about the effect for a second; the magician made one of America's most famous landmarks completely vanish! It should be history making. Surely, such an illusion should become part of America's school curriculum, with all the children learn about this amazing event in schools. While it is still talked about today by non-magicians, the comments that I have heard about it are both positive and negative. Quite often they run along the lines of, "I remember when that American guy made the Statue of Liberty disappear; it was really good but I think it was a very clever mirror." The truth is of course, that the statue of liberty can't really be made to disappear and we all know that instinctively. I'm not slating David Copperfield, how could I with such a creative team behind him and the development of the illusion? I'm merely trying to illustrate that magic must be credible (believable) for it to be incredible.

Instinctively, I think we all know this. Think about the advice on performance given in beginners magic books. One of the tips often given is, "if you're a young magician, don't use patter about being in the Far East or this special skill you learnt off an old magician." Why not? Because it won't sound believable; your audience will know it's all made up and suddenly our trick is seen for what it is, a magic trick with a fake, made up story. So credibility, or believable-ness, is important in our magic if we want people to see it as "Magical". We want our patter and our presentations to be believed so our magic becomes believable. Too big and too grand or too unrealistic-sounding and the effect simply loses its credibility.

Credibility affects other things as well. I think it also affects how you look holding a prop and whether it suits your character or not. Be honest with yourself, I think sometimes we can tell, even before we even think about what we might say with a trick, whether we look natural holding a particular prop or not. This also applies with how we justify a prop. If we feel the need to justify a particular magic prop then does our explanation or justification of the prop sound believable, or does it sound crazy?

One of my current favourite tricks is an oldie that I've enjoyed working on and is now getting superb reactions. It goes by many names but I know it as the "magic maths sticks."

Essentially the trick consists of four 4-sided wooden sticks with different numbers running down them in a column.

The spectators can arrange them to make any number they like and the magician adds the numbers in seconds. My

presentation is based on the given presentation in the instructions but extended greatly and personalised to me. I ask the spectators if they remember these from primary school and describe them as a resource used to teach addition in schools. The great thing is that very similar things ARE used as maths resources in primary schools, I know because I am a teacher. Many people do have memories from primary school of different equipment used so while these exact sticks are not really used in schools (although they could easily be-I'm tempted to incorporate them into a maths lesson) they really do look like they could be.



So how do we make our presentations believable, and how do we make our magic credible? How do we truly know what material suits us and whether our presentations suit us as well as suiting the trick? It's a tricky business but let's get practical. I am going to discuss two practical suggestions; I've found them both invaluable.

Firstly, you **MUST** know how you sound as you perform your magic. I guess most of us have set up video cameras to record ourselves or seen footage, recorded by others, of ourselves performing magic at some point; perhaps very few of us enjoy the experience (even though it's invaluable). Today I am going to suggest that you do not even need to go that far to find out whether your magic is credible or not. I don't particularly like my voice, in fact, I hate my voice, but for our magic to be believable, I need to know whether I sound believable performing it and whether my presentations sound credible. My suggestion is to use your phone to record yourself reciting your patter lines from the tricks that you are working on. It does not need to be the whole trick, sometimes hearing the first line of your presentation is enough to tell you to scrap the effect all together. Perform your tricks to your phone and listen back to them. Don't worry about doing the trick, just speak the trick. I believe this will really start to help you work out whether your magic is believable. Let me give you an example.

A popular effect in card magic is to get a spectator to shuffle a pack of cards and to give the illusion that we have memorised the cards and can recall them, sometimes with our backs turned. You will know as well as I do that there are many different ways of achieving this effect. I liked the plot and started playing with a couple of methods. At one point I recorded myself saying something like, "you've shuffled these cards and I'm going to try and memorise their order." I played it back to myself and I cracked up laughing. I sounded ridiculously fake and I quickly realized that whatever combinations of words I used, I just do not sound realistic telling people that I am going to memorise the order of a pack of cards. I suspect that the message I'd be giving was that I had learnt a clever way to make it look as if I'd memorised the order of a pack of cards.

Do the claims you make in your magic sound realistic? I can only urge you to use your phone to record yourself saying your patter; it is honestly the best use for a smart phone in magic that I have come across to this day. You will really get to appreciate whether your patter sounds believable for your character. Occasionally, you won't even need to go that far-I dropped a potential trick straight away once because I couldn't run through any kind of patter for the effect without going into a Northern accent and copying a Northern performer who I'd seen perform it. Listen to yourself, ask yourself hard questions and be ruthless in the cuts you make.

Here's the second piece of advice for making your magic sound believable. Don't use words in your magic that you wouldn't normally use in everyday conversation. I never quite understand why many magicians seem to use slightly more old fashioned words in their magic than they do when you talk to them normally. A couple of examples might be helpful. The word "attempt." Why do so many magicians attempt to do something magical but try to do something in everyday life? "I will attempt to find your object while blindfolded" or "I will attempt to tell you what word you are thinking of." Very few of us, when asked what our plans were that day, would say "I am going to the shops and seeing a friend for coffee and I'm going to attempt to mow the lawn too." I know some would but for most of us, the word "try" slips in more naturally.

Here's another word that I always feel is overused. "Treatise." I am pretty sure that I **ONLY** hear magicians use that word today. We say things like, "this book is a complete treatise on the top change," whereas we would almost certainly

never say, “this book is a treatise on how to bake bread,” when describing a cookbook. Of course, there are exceptions as we all talk in different ways but for all of us, we would do well to keep our magic vocabulary the same as our every day, conversational vocabulary. The reasoning is surely obvious, it will make us sound more “us” and you’ve guessed it, ultimately make our magic more believable.

As I write this, I’ve just come back from a few days holiday and I took Michael Close’s “Workers Volume 1” to read. In the introduction Michael suggests that everyone has their own philosophy of magic and insists that everyone’s philosophy is different to each others. The reason given is that having a personalised philosophy on magic will make sure our material does not seem false when we perform it. It must be believable to us. Of course we can do anything with our magic but to make it truly unbelievable, I am absolutely convinced we need to make it believable.

The Believable-ness of the Unbelievable.



A Slydini Classic for Stand-Up

By Jon A. Hand



Excerpted from the forthcoming book, *Magic by Hand*

The late Tony Slydini had a reputation for mind-boggling magic with simple objects. Paper balls, cigarettes, napkins, sponge balls, rope, cards, and coins all fell under his disarmingly simple-appearing spell. His use of misdirection was legendary, and his effects appeared to be impossible miracles of legerdemain.

Few find Slydini a worthy study today, which is sad. There is much to be learned from masters like Slydini, but his magic was so ideally suited to his performance character that modern magicians often find the magic awkward. Also, Slydini's magic depended heavily upon a seated performing stance, which is not as available to the average magician as it once was. Seated close-up has been largely replaced by walk-around, table-hopping, and platform magic. The bulk of Slydini's material could not be performed under such circumstances, but his misdirection concepts are essential studies for the sleight-of-hand performer.

Slydini had an effect called Paper Balls into the Hat, (*not* the same thing as Paper Balls over the Head) in which four balled paper napkins vanished singly from his hands and were found all together at the end of the routine inside an upturned hat. Sometimes Slydini would use a square cardboard box with no top or bottom, but the effect would be the same. The original routine requires much lapping and some of Slydini's peculiar (and very effective) steals from the lap. Enjoying classic sleight-of-hand as I do, I often challenge myself to find ways to adapt seated magic to a wider platform audience. I do not call any of my ideas improvements, as Slydini was the master, and I am merely a lifelong hobbyist. I do feel that my ideas can adapt classic seated plots for larger audiences who would otherwise never experience them, and so I humbly offer them for your examination and possible use or adaptation.

My primary motivation was to seek ways to make the routine more visible. This meant more color, more size, and more elevation. Of course, each deviation from the original routine potentially weakens the final effect, but I feel that the choices made to increase the visibility more than offset any weaknesses induced

by alteration of the effect. Remember, the audience will not know the Slydini original, and so this routine will be taken on its own merits. This routine encompasses the following aspects in the choices made.

First, I chose to produce the balls to get a magical moment in quickly.

Secondly, I dropped the number of balls from four to three. Three is a magical number, in religion, in music, in décor, and many other fields as well. View it this way: once is an anomaly, twice is a coincidence, but thrice is a deliberate event. A fourth is then boring, predictable, and anti-climactic (wow, I can hear the howling of the Slydini devotees from way over here!).

Thirdly, I elevated the balls with a clear receptacle, increasing their visibility from the stage or platform. This routine could play to an audience of 500 due to the increased visibility.

Fourthly, I chose to do three different types of vanishes with increasing stringency to make the effect build in audience interest toward the climax.

Fifthly, I added a different color to each of the balls so that the final display was obvious to the distant viewer. Three balls in three different colors provide a clear-cut climax.

Finally, I chose to do the effect in pantomime to music, and let the magic speak for itself. Do not let the pantomime put you off, as the routine is very accessible to magic enthusiasts who have a bit of experience. I have sprinkled suggestions for this pantomime throughout the routine, and addressed it in detail in the closing section.

Materials needed (Don't forget to purchase backups for these items if you plan to do this routine on a regular basis):

1. Six soft rubber golf balls (two each of three different colors). These come in sets of four, one each of pastels pink, yellow, green, and blue. These balls, which are very



slightly smaller than real golf balls, can be found in pet stores and dollar/pound stores. I purchased four sets, giving me four of each color so that I have backups.

For the routine, I chose pink, yellow, and green, all of which will show up well against dark clothing for stage or platform. I tried practice golf balls, but their rubber is much harder and their diameters slightly larger, a distinct disadvantage for this routine if you have small hands, as I have.

2. A clear glass brandy snifter.
3. A piece of buff or tan card stock of sufficient size, when turned into "landscape" position (i.e., wider than it is tall), to be formed into a tube for covering the snifter.
4. Two small spring clips with folding handles (often called "bulldog clips"), used to hold the card stock in tube shape.
5. A stock magic table with a bag servante at the rear (an optional black art well could be used near the end of the routine, but it is not necessary if your table does not have it).
6. Music playback ability, as the routine is done in pantomime.



At first: Turn the card stock into landscape position. Form the card stock around the brandy snifter, with the overlap to the front. Experiment with the exact amount of overlap until you get the card stock tube marginally larger in diameter than the snifter, but still easily slipped on and off the snifter. Put one clip on each end of the tube's

overlap. The top of the card stock should be 2" higher than the top of the snifter to allow room for the handles of the clips to fold down. Fold one handle of each clip to the outside of the tube, and the other handle of each clip to the inside of the tube. Mark the point where the card stock overlaps very lightly with a pencil to make the tube setup go faster in performance. All of this is initial set up for learning and practice, so remove the clips in preparation for pre-performance setup, leaving them with the handles separated on each side of

each clip. For teaching purposes, I am going to designate ball one as pink, ball two as yellow, and ball three as green.

If your table does not have a servante, you can improvise one by pinning each rear hem corner of the table cloth to itself where it meets the table corners, leaving an open pocket at the back of the table. For a more permanent but adaptable solution, use two pairs of male/female Velcro, sewing them into place at each corner so that the table cloth can be allowed to hang naturally or be folded into a servante as needed. If you add a third pair in the middle of the back hem of the tablecloth, you can close off the servante later in the show to keep prying audience assistant eyes from spotting the ditched items in the servante.

If you are competent with sponge balls, or coins, or cups and balls, please understand that large balls are a completely different matter, and you will require much practice to keep from flashing them due to their 3D girth.

Important: Get accustomed to holding the back of an empty hand to the correct shape to simulate the girth of the golf ball. You will need to maintain this solid illusion with either hand during the routine. From a platform or stage setting, the balls DO appear fully solid, and an empty hand that is assumed to be holding a ball should not crush into a tight fist if you are to keep the assumed idea of solidity. Also, do not dent a visible ball's circumference in any way while holding it in display. Finally, remember that you will be working to music in pantomime, so your actions should be a bit slower than normal, and as graceful as you can manage.

Pre-performance Setup: Place one golf ball of each color into your right jacket pocket or pants pocket. Place the two bulldog clips, handles folded so that one is on each side of the clip, on top of the balls, or in the ticket pocket that is inside the jacket pocket.

Place the matching pink ball where you can retrieve it just before the start of the routine.

Place the matching yellow ball into the left jacket pocket, or left front pants pocket, or left rear pocket. If using pants pocket, wedge the ball near the top of the pocket.

Place the matching green ball into the right jacket pocket, or right pants pocket, or right rear pocket, also wedged near the top of the pocket.

Routine: If you are going to open with this routine, as I often do, have the sniffer already on the table, with the card stock flat under the glass. Otherwise, work out your setup to bring the materials to the table at the appropriate moment, perhaps on a decorative wooden tray. Just before the routine, steal the pink ball for opening position (See *options* in the routine).

I play my magic for fun, so I open with Lewis Ganson's Personal Orchestra introduction from The Art of Close-up Magic, Vol 1. With music loaded on an MP3 player or iPod and connected to a sound system, I have a timpani roll and an impressive male voice, "Ladies and Gentlemen, the Magic of Jon Hand!" The music breaks into a superhero-like theme, and I stride confidently into the performance area, beaming a smile across the room. In mid-phrase, the music stops abruptly, and the voice says, "Well, stop acting cool and get on it with it!" This punctures the moment and gets a laugh, welding the audience into a single unit.

After a moment's shock, I protest, "I am going to need some music!" The player erupts into Stars and Stripes Forever, or a punchy hip-hop tune, or loud rock-n-roll (depends upon the audience). "No, no, NO!" I shout. I need something gentle!" The music then stops for a second, then begins *Arabian Dance* from Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker, for the routine to begin.

You are going to produce the three golf balls magically before doing the Slydini adaptation. I will give you two options for the pink ball, but I prefer *Option 2* for my performances. I stand to stage left side of the table during the production, not behind the table.

Option 1: Just before taking the stage, place the pink ball under the left upper arm, pressed against the body. When the *Arabian Dance* begins, dust off the hands in three quick movements in front of the mid-chest, and turn slightly right (pivot on the heel of the right foot, leaving the right foot facing forward). Flex the right hand open and closed, as if warming up. At the same time, use the left hand to grasp the right sleeve between the cuff and the elbow, pulling it down and back. Shift the left hand to between the elbow and the shoulder, tugging at the sleeve to pull it back a bit further.

Reversing the foot pivot actions, turn slightly left, and duplicate the hand flexing and arm actions with the left hand and left sleeve. As the right hand moves above the elbow to tug at the left sleeve for the second time, steal the pink ball and classic palm it in the right hand.

Option 2: Just before taking the stage, place the pink ball in left hand classic palm, and allow both hands to hang toward the floor, naturally curled. When the *Arabian Dance* begins, pivot fully right (pivot on the ball of the left foot and the heel of the right foot), and extend the right arm fully away from the body, flexing the right hand open and closed and twisting it front and back, as if warming up. After a second or two, reach to the right sleeve between the cuff and the elbow with the palmed ball, using the left hand to pull the sleeve down and back.

Turn the head toward the audience and smile just as the left hand pulls at the sleeve, and begin to reverse the pivot to center, continuing toward full left. Continue to keep the full face to the audience as you pivot (not difficult, but takes some practice). When the right hand is 45 degrees toward the left side, begin my version of the Changeover Palm:

As you are finishing the pivot, release the right sleeve, and slide the left hand (with its palmed ball hidden behind the right sleeve) up toward the right hand. As the pivot completes, the right hand gently rolls the ball into right classic palm, immediately grabbing the left sleeve to pull it down and back. Keep your eyes front until the changeover palm is finished. As the changeover palm ends, move your eyes to the left hand as it flexes in warm-up, and the right hand pulls the sleeve back. Caution: keep both thumbs down next their first fingers, or they will waggle during the changeover and draw attention. Notice that this version of the changeover palm does not attempt to pass the ball just as the hands are perpendicular to the audience, and the hands barely touch for a brief instant; in addition, your eyes are on the audience, further drawing them away from your hands to your face, helping to cover the move and normalize it.

Whether you used *Option 1* or *Option 2*, you are ready for the three ball production.

Pink Ball -- The pink ball is now classic palmed in the right hand. Let go of the left sleeve, holding both palms relaxed and open (although the back of the right



hand is to the audience). Remember that you are communicating in pantomime: Changing your gaze from the left hand, you look up, and to your left, while dropping the left hand to your side naturally. Look around a second with quick head motions. Then pick out a definite place to look to your left, as if you see something, and drop your jaw, mouth open in personal amazement. Form a pointer with the palming right hand (crush the hidden ball a bit if you wish), move slowly toward the spied position as if you are preparing to grab an insect from the air. Open the hand from the pointer, and suddenly snap the hand closed. For me, the right fist jerks toward the rear and up a bit to telegraph the grab, which increases the illusion of snapping something out of thin air. *Remember that the unseen object has girth, so make sure the back of the fingers now reflect that girth.* Pull the right fist back toward you, push the ball to the second fingertip and thumb, turning the palm toward the audience and lifting the third and fourth fingers out of the way. Smile, and turn face front to the audience, displaying the ball at the right fingertips and twisting the right hand to view it from several angles appreciatively. *Smile! Remember to handle the visible golf ball as if it is solid, not soft.*

To back up a bit, just as you snap the pink ball from the air, your left side is away from the audience. Dip into the appropriate pocket with the left hand and remove the yellow ball, rolling it into classic palm during the production of the pink ball, thus loading your left hand for the yellow ball production. As you turn to the front to admire the pink ball, the relaxed left hand hangs down with the yellow ball in classic palm. Shift your gaze to the audience, lift the back of the left hand in front of your left shoulder (with the yellow ball palmed), lift the forefinger, and mime, "One," with the lips and the forefinger. Glance once again at the pink ball with a smile. *Do not look at the left hand at all!*

Yellow Ball – Pivot right, relax your left hand and drop it to your side as you reach over the table with the right hand, leading with the wrist to add a bit of delicacy to the pantomime, and roll the hand rightward in preparation to drop the pink ball into the snifter. Following all with your head and eyes, make a delicate toss downward of the ball, again with the wrist leading, the ball dropping as the hand passes the wrist to enter the snifter. Even as the ball lands in the snifter, follow it with your head slightly.

Still facing left, look to center, then up, then right up, as if searching again, bringing the right hand back down to your side. Smile, or drop the jaw in amazement once again, but give the audience time to get the pantomime. Simultaneously to looking up and right, lift the relaxed left hand (with the palmed yellow ball) to chest height, fingers pointed right. Pick your spot toward the upper right, form a pointer with the left hand, deftly snap the yellow ball out of the air, in mirror image of the pink ball production. As before, *smile*, and turn face front to the audience, displaying the ball at the left fingertips and viewing it from several angles appreciatively.

In mirror image of the first production, at the exact moment when the left pointer hand snaps the yellow ball from the air, your right side is away from the audience. Dip into the appropriate pocket with the right hand and remove the green ball, rolling it into classic palm, thus loading your right hand for the green ball production (which will be produced by the LEFT hand in a moment). As you turn to the front to admire the yellow ball from several angles, the relaxed right hand hangs down for a second or two with the green ball in classic palm. This time, however, finish the admiration of the yellow ball by twisting the back of the left hand toward the audience, holding the yellow ball at the tips of the thumb, first, and second fingers. The expected count of "Two" will come a couple of seconds later than previously, because of the upcoming method of producing the green ball.

Green Ball – Now we are going to catch the audience by surprise for the third ball. Lift the right hand, with green ball in classic palm, toward the left hand. Simultaneously, point the left fingers to the right and roll the visible yellow ball to side of the first finger's first phalange, holding it from behind with the thumb. Look at the audience and smile as the right hand approaches with the green ball palmed. The momentum of the approach will propel the green ball into the left palm beneath the yellow ball, the right fingers passing in front of the left fingers, and the right hand takes the visible yellow ball into its fingers. You have loaded the green ball into the LEFT hand under the cover of taking the yellow ball with the right fingers (This move came from a continuous ball production by Laurie Ireland/Magic Inc., Chicago, IL).

Smile, and look at the yellow ball. Glance back at the audience, turn the left fingers upward, back of the hand still outward, and mime, "Two," with the lips

and two fingers up (the green ball is in the left classic palm). Wait a beat for the audience to get it. *Again, do not look at the left hand!* As you pivot to the right, relax the left hand to natural curl, drop it to the side. Use the right hand to drop the yellow ball into the snifter, following with your head and eyes, as you did with the pink ball. Now you are set up to produce a third ball from a hand just shown empty a second earlier.

Pivot back to face the audience and gaze around, as if searching in front of you. Smile, perhaps nod, or raise your eyebrows, to signal the coming magical moment, and lift the left hand toward the chest, back of the hand outward. Don't bother to point this time, just reach *straight ahead toward the audience with fingers down at an angle*, rolling the ball to the fingertips and lifting the hand at the wrist. Remember to snap the hand backwards a bit as you pull the green ball into view. Smile, delighted with finding another one, and view it from several angles by twisting the left wrist. Finally take the green ball into the right hand, mime, "Three," with lips and three fingers, back of the left hand to audience (consistency of the count motion), and drop the green ball with the right hand into the snifter.

Consistency of movement, particularly with delicacy of leading slightly with the wrist, will give the sort of smoothness that the pantomime needs. Watch Slydini on YouTube to see his table movements, which we are attempting to emulate on a larger scale.²

Lift the snifter above eye level with the right hand around the stem, smile, and gesture toward it with the left hand, which is an open invitation for applause. The production is complete, and you are getting ready for the Slydini effect (which could now be called Invisible Flight of the Balls).

Acknowledge the applause with a smile and a slight nod of the head. Take two backward steps to clear the table, and walk behind the table as the applause fades, still holding the snifter. With the left hand, gracefully pick up the pink ball from the snifter, display it at fingertips, and put it on your left side of the table. Follow suit with the yellow ball, placing it closer to the center of the table. Finish with the green ball, placing it nearest the snifter's former position (and in front of the optional black art well, if you have one).

² Slydini's Paper Balls Into Hat (YouTube link - click on it)

Pick up the buff/tan card stock from the table with the left hand from a narrow end, and place the snifter on the table. Hold the card stock in both hands in landscape position. Rotate it back and forth with one hand at each end to show both sides, ending with the pencil mark on your side of the card. Form the card stock into a tube around the snifter with short ends overlapping a bit on the audience side. Practice for a smooth single wrapping motion, as fumbling looks amateurish and suspicious. Align the top of tube with the pencil line by viewing it through the snifter, and hold in this position with your left fingers. Reach into your right pocket, palm any one of the balls in finger palm and remove a bulldog clip with the thumb and forefinger poised to open the two handles. Emerge from the pocket with the last three fingers curled over the hidden ball, and place the clip over the overlapped joint. Fold the handles down over the card stock, the left hand folding one outside the tube, and the right hand folding the one inside the tube. Keep hold of the ball in finger palm for now.

Lift the tube from the snifter with the left hand by grasping the clip. Turn the tube upside down, grasp the new top with the right thumb and forefinger, and place it over the snifter. Drop the single ball into the snifter as the card stock settles into place. Use both left and right hands you align the overlap, and hold the card stock in place with the left hand. Reach into the right pocket, and crush the two remaining golf balls between the last three fingers and the palm. Then grip the other clip between the thumb and forefinger and emerge from the pocket as before. Place the second clip over the overlapped tube ends. Fold down the handles as before, left hand on the outside handle and right hand on the inside handle. When folding down the inner handle, lower the right hand a bit into the tube and release the two golf balls, which fall into the snifter in necessarily random order.

When you practice this part, you must be focused on forming the tube and adding the clips, as that is what the audience is seeing. Caution: the balls are soft enough to bounce, so be careful that they do not spring into view. Again, practice until the forming of the tube is primary, and the loading of the three golf balls will be automatic. You are now three ahead, but the audience has seen mere introduction of the props.

I have opted for three different vanishes for the balls. These three vanishes keep the audience interest up, especially since no climax is seen until the end of the effect. For ease in learning, I have labeled the vanish of each ball by its color.

Pink Ball -- A modified dump vanish will be combined with a Slydini lapping move to ditch the ball in the servante. Pick up the pink ball from the left of the table with the left hand. Display at the fingertips, and look at it from several angles. Turn right and take a long step with the backstage (right) foot, raising the heel of the upstage (left) foot off the floor and keeping it poised. Ostensibly, this step is to clear the tube so that the audience has an unblocked view of the vanish to come, but it also sets up the Slydini lapping move, which will ditch the pink ball into the servante.



Hold the ball between thumb and first finger of the left hand, with the back of the hand to the audience.

Approach with the right hand cupped below the left hand, i.e., with the right fingertips facing the right.

Look at the audience as you turn over the left hand to

dump the ball into the right hand, but gently curl the left hand to retain the ball. At the moment that the ball should arrive in the right hand, slightly bump the bottom of the left against the right, which makes the right hand dip and look as though the ball was received. The left hand stays still, curled, inside



the closing right hand. The right hand slides/rotates its fingers down the back of the left hand as if moving away with the ball. Using the right thumb as a hinge, rotate the right hand back away from the left hand, so that the right hand is palm down, passing behind the left hand. Look back to the right hand as you lift the



elbow to turn the right hand with its full back to the audience, the right hand simulating the girth of the mythical ball. Raise the right hand to almost shoulder level, which Slydini called the Maximum Misdirection, and follow with your eyes. If you lean slightly to your right as you reach the summit of this lift,

all eyes will be on the right hand. *Simultaneously* to this right hand lift, dead drop the relaxed left hand to your side, behind the table, back of the hand out, and ditch the pink ball into the servante with no perceptible finger movement. With some practice, you could even arrange the left hand to fall behind the snifter/tube as it discards the ball, but this is not necessary if you execute a good vanish, correctly use your eyes, and the hands move simultaneously at the moment of Maximum Misdirection, right hand up and left hand down.

Remember, if you look at the audience at the time of the dump, the spectators will attach even less importance to the move. The lifted and poised left heel psychologically puts the audience following the body to the right, to follow the lifting arm. Then, looking back at the right hand at the moment of Maximum Misdirection pulls all eyes to the right hand as the left hand dead drops behind the table edge. (My thanks go to the late John Ramsay and the late Tony Slydini for these illuminations on controlling interest direction of the spectators. The poised heel idea is my standing extension of Slydini's seated body lean.)

Bring the right foot back to the left foot and pivot the body to the front, which eliminates the poised heel. Simultaneously bring the right arm forward, leading with the wrist, with the back of the hand following. Keep the back of the hand to the audience, with the (simulated) girth of the ball evident. Do not realign the wrist when the arm is in position above the tube, but leave the hand hanging below the wrist with the mythical ball inside. The right hand rises to a foot or so above the tube, holding its mythical ball in a fat fist. Again, leading with the right wrist adds a delicacy factor in the pantomime.

To go back a bit, as you pivot to the front to bring the right fist forward, the empty left hand swings naturally to your left of the snifter. Open the left hand, fingers spread slightly. Leading with the left wrist, raise the left hand over the right, but swing the hand up until the palm faces the audience. Make your best magical pass with the left hand. I wiggle the fingers, grab at the air with thumb and second finger coming together over the right fist, and make a downward toss toward (but nowhere near) the tube, pulling the thumb and finger back apart. Freeze the left hand in open position. Do a slow crumple vanish high over the tube with the right hand, and open the fingers from pinky to thumb. Glance down into the tube, turn the left hand back outward, as in the productions, and

look to the audience to mime, "One," with your lips, forefinger and a knowing smile.

Yellow Ball - After giving the audience a beat or two to comprehend this first vanish, lower both hands toward the table, palms down in resting position. Turn left, and take a large step with the upstage (left) foot, raising up on the ball of the downstage (right foot). Pick up the yellow ball with the *right* hand, holding it between your thumb and second/third fingers. Display it briefly, looking at it from different angles. Turn the left hand palm up, tips of the fingers to the audience. The left fingers are almost flat, and the wrist is then tilted downward to give the audience a good view of the open palm. The right hand approaches the left with the yellow ball to execute a retention-of-vision (ROV) vanish, apparently putting the ball into your left hand while actually retaining it in your right. Try this one, which I adapted from coin ideas of David Roth, and sponge ball ideas of the late Patrick Page and the late Gary Ouellet: Hold the yellow ball with the right thumb and second-through-fourth fingers, allowing the forefinger to float ever so slightly above the ball. Place the ball on the front of the left palm (the fleshy area below the fingers), with as much of the ball showing as possible, following with your eyes, but don't let go of the ball with the right fingers. With no hesitation, look up at the audience exactly as the left fingers close in front of the ball. The left wrist and forearm follow the folding left fingers to lift slightly, helping push the ball into the right second-through-fourth fingers, which curl the hidden ball into right classic palm in a pointing fist. Remember that the right first finger is NOT used in any way, staying gently curved so that an unnecessary sudden pop-up of the right first knuckle will not expose the steal.



Once the mythical ball is supposedly in the left fist (simulate girth, don't crush it!) move the left hand away to the left, turning your head left to follow with your eyes as the right hand rotates slightly hide the ball fully, pointing to the left hand. You will be slightly leaning to the left, again drawing all eyes to where the ball is thought to be. [This is an easy move, so don't labor over it. Timing is

crucial, so practice by really putting the ball into the left palm a few times, lifting the hand and forearm to curl over the ball, and moving the left fist away while closing the right hand into a pointing fist to get the timing correct. Then work with the sleight to make it look the same.]

Several things now happen simultaneously. Turn the left hand palm down, and move both hands to the right. Bring the left foot back to center and face front, eliminating the poised heel. During the body turn, the left hand, leading by its wrist, goes about a foot over the tube holding its mythical ball, and keeps the hand dipped below the forearm upon arrival as the right hand did with the mythical pink ball. The right hand simultaneously relaxes its pointer into a gently curved hand and moves in an arc, downward and to the right, setting up the Slydini lapping move by bringing the right hand behind the rear edge of the table. Follow the mythical ball in the left hand with your eyes as the right hand ditches the ball into the servante. Probably this servante ditch is completely covered by the placement of the tube and the snifter. The important thing is that the ditching hand simply grazes the back edge of the table in a natural manner with no movement made during the ditch.

Immediately after the servante ditch, and as soon as the left hand has reached its apex over the tube, swing the empty right hand up around the right side of the snifter, leading with the wrist, open it with the fingers apart, and raise it over the left hand. Do the magical spell's invisible grab & toss with the right hand, as the left hand did for the pink vanish. Freeze the open right hand. Do a slow crumple vanish over the tube with the left hand, and open the fingers from pinky to thumb. Glance down in to the snifter, and look up with a smile. Turn the back of the left hand to the audience, and mime, "Two," with your lips, two first fingers and that winsome smile, as the right hand drops to your side.

Green Ball -- The vanish of the third ball is a bluff, but it follows my idea of making each vanish of a ball under more stringent conditions than the previous ball, thus keeping the audience interested and more puzzled as the effect builds. This time, the right hand never approaches the left. Instead, in appearance the left hand merely picks up the ball, holds it over the tube, the right makes its spell gesture, and the left hand crumple vanishes the ball into nothingness.

Reach your left hand to the table to scoop up the green ball, with the side of the hand on the table top, eyes following. In actuality, the ball is either scooped

into a black art well under the cover of picking it up, or ditched into the servante under the cover of dragging it to the back of the table to pick it up. *In either case, once the ball is in hidden by the back of the hand and in motion, you look up at the audience.* The right hand is hanging to the side and never moves until spell time. The left hand assumes the proportions of this mythical ball, turns palm down, and leads with the wrist around your left of the snifter to the familiar position about a foot over the tube, hand hanging below the forearm, with your gaze shifting to the rising arm. The right arm comes up to perform the magical spell's invisible grab & toss, and freeze the open right hand as before. Perform the crumple vanish with the left hand, and open the fingers from pinky to thumb once more. Glance into the snifter for this last time, and smile. Lower the right hand to the back of the table, and mime, "Three," with your lips and left hand's first three fingers, back of the hand to the audience (consistency throughout the routine).



Wait a beat for this to "sink in". Use the left hand to reach to the tube, and lift it by the top clip with thumb and forefinger. Allow the left hand to lower the tube behind the table to put all attention on the snifter. Grasp the snifter with your right hand, gracefully between the forefinger and thumb around the stem, and lift it to the audience in a gesture of toasting as an applause cue.

Swirl, as if containing brandy, to show all three colors swimming together in the bowl.

Alternatively, you can try catching the bowl's stem between the second and third fingers of the palm-up right hand, and lift up with the flat hand, as if you are warming brandy. Try out both ways, in both close and distant mirrors, and see which way looks the more graceful for you, and/or which way shows the three colored balls better for you.

Don't discount this bluff vanish. It is very effective after seeing the dump vanish and the ROV vanish, building to an impossible-appearing climax for the third ball. You have built audience association when taking the ball from the table in the first two instances, and that association makes this vanish a total surprise. The simplest, cleanest way to achieve a result is to be desired, and the audience association works strongly in your favor.

Attempts to strengthen the effect with patter will ruin the effect. Do it in pantomime to music. As mentioned earlier, I like to use *Arabian Dance* from Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker*, but any mysterious music with an almost hypnotic character will work. Recordings of the above run from 2:40 to 3:10 (min: sec), depending upon the conductor's tempo. The advantage of the *Arabian Dance* is that it has several places where the music could be faded if or when the routine ends early. Take several timings of your finished routine, compute an average, add 10 seconds to that time *just in case*, and there is your music length.

Remember that you should *move a little slower than usual in pantomime*, so you don't lose your audience. At the beginning of the routine, don't say anything about what you intend to do. Just start the music, produce the balls, assemble the tube with the clips, and place it over the snifter. Proceed with the remainder of the routine as outlined, and the slowly building music will help lead the audience through the routine.

Don't omit the counting bits, as they signal that as-yet-unseen magical events have taken place. When combined with the music, each counting gesture causes the interest level of the audience to rise.

Final thoughts: Many magicians are frightened of performing magic without patter, as though the audience will see through their effects without that "distraction." When placed at a show opening, this routine will establish a level of magical expertise that will put the audience on your side, as well

Jon A. Hand is a retired college music professor, occasional professional musician on saxophone, and a current Director of Music Ministries for a good-sized local church. He does an occasional magic show in his community, usually consisting of his own routines. He has pursued magic as a hobby for 55 years as of this writing, as he is assembling his first book of routines for publication.

as weld them into a unit from a mass of individuals. Placed in the middle of the show as contrast, the music and pantomime will settle a raucous audience into a quiet, intrigued one. I hope you will give this routine a try, as I have tried to capture the smoothness of Slydini for a standup performance.



Worlds Apart

By Matt Horan



My name is Matt Horan and I'm a mentalist. I felt, much like some sort of magicians anonymous meeting, I should get that out of the way first. This is because we, as mentalists, have a rather large problem – that of believability, or more precisely trying to convince others of our believability.

It is simply put a problem with our presentation. Unlike sawing a woman in half or producing wine bottles from thin air we don't have that cushion of "We know it's not real magic but it's still amazing." As an art form we shy away from trying to suspend disbelief and frankly I think that is wrong. For too long we have, as mind readers, tried to make ourselves look real in this world that everyone so dearly knows, and for the most part would rather escape, so why not bring them out of this world into a world where what we do is possible and could be real?

Most other magicians do this all the time. They take us away to an alternative universe, much like reading a good book, so why don't we? Is it because we still hold too many ties to mediums of old or just simply want to separate ourselves from the world of magic and be something different? If either of those guesses are even close to correct we have a serious problem either with our ethics or with self-esteem. Do we really think laymen actually believe we have these powers?

With that in mind I propose a solution.

Let us create our own worlds and bring our spectators into it. Let us build these worlds as an escape from the daily humdrum of everyday life and make them a slight tweak on our normal reality, bringing what we do to life, where in this world our skills, whether psychological or the result of being hit by lightning, are real. This means we no longer have to stick to what we think our set of "powers" are or what we deem impossible because in our world we decide what is possible.

For this you need a character that blurs these boundaries; someone bigger and more fascinating than some bloke that just read a load of textbooks; someone

straight from the pages of a novel.

Once you have this character, slowly introduce the audience to your world tell them what it's like there. There doesn't have to be purple trees or everyone is only 5'6" high (I wish that place existed, then I wouldn't be so short), just a place where what you do isn't outside of reality.

Now you can do what you do best, astonish and amaze. And, when it is all over, those who go to slip into a different place will feel less like someone was trying very hard to convince them what they saw was real and, instead, as if they got a little escape from their day to day life.

Do what other magicians have been doing since the start of the modern age. Don't pretend to be real – bring your audience to a world where you don't have to pretend.

Did You Know?



Spidora, the sideshow illusion of a huge spider with a living woman's head, resting on its unholy web, was the invention of Henry Roltair (1857 - 1910). In his teens, Roltair, born British, emigrated to the U.S. and worked for Alexander Herrmann as an illusion builder. Roltair's life and works can be found in the book, "Roltair, Genius Of Illusions," written by John A. McKinven.





Bizarre Bursary

The autumnal equinox is near. I can smell it in the air, kiddies. And as that important date approaches, I have two offerings for you. Don't worry, they're not human sacrifices.

First I give you the fanciful meanderings of young Master Williams. He attempts to whet your imagination with the story of how magic was conceived.

Following that, our good friend Weepin' Willie returns to satisfy your hunger for the macabre and challenges your preconceived notion of whom resides in Lincoln's grave.



How Magic Came To Be

by Brandon Williams



One dark and misty night atop Mt. Olympus, an amazing thing happened. Gothik, God of Darkness, was strolling through the flower garden. Although, he felt gloomy that evening, he started to feed all of the white doves, which were perched on top of nearby bushes. He watched how they flew effortlessly through the darkened atrium. Gothik also noticed how Luna's moonlight touched the dove's wings and made long shadows onto the pavement below. Gothik became lost in thought for the next several hours.

Meanwhile, Balderdash, the God of Confusion, was also outside taking a midnight walk. Balderdash was trying to clear his mind after having a very busy day. Suddenly, he heard the noise of fluttering wings in the distance. Balderdash followed the intense sound until he saw Gothik sitting in a remote garden area. Balderdash began to approach slowly, so as not to startle his friend. He arrived inside the garden to see several doves flying about, lighted only by bright moonbeams. Gothik soon noticed Balderdash and they exchanged welcomes. After they briefly told each other of their days' events, both began to think about the doves. The beautiful white doves flew and dipped within the light of the moon. As they passed outside of the atrium, they seemed to disappear into the darkness. When the doves flew back into the garden; they seemed to reappear from nowhere. Gothik and Balderdash both had an idea at the very same time. They thought that combining their realms, bringing darkness and confusion together, they could bend reality. They would be able to trick people into thinking something was not there. The two also figured out that they could make people believe anything. Onlookers would see doves vanish and reappear, as well as other seemingly impossible things.

It was at that moment, Athena, Aphrodite and Hera walked into the garden. The three girls saw Gothik and Balderdash talking. They also saw the beautiful doves vanishing into the darkness and reappearing back into the moonlight. To the girls, the whole scene looked so unreal. Athena, Aphrodite and Hera walked over to Gothik and Balderdash and began to talk. They demanded to know what tricks these two were up to. Balderdash and Gothik were forced to think quickly. They agreed to tell Athena, Aphrodite and Hera everything, provided the three girls took an oath of secrecy. The girls really wanted to be part of something special, so they all agreed to never break the

oath. These maidens often assisted

Gothik and Balderdash when presenting these tricks for others. Word spread fast about all of the strange things Gothik and Balderdash were doing. Soon, people from all over would pay their hard earned money to see the wonderful tricks being presented within the flower garden. Often times, the tricks were so amazing, the audience would cheer and clap loudly. Balderdash and Gothik were pleased with their creation. Athena, Aphrodite and Hera were also glad to be part of the show. Gothik and Balderdash, with the agreement of the three girls, decided that they would call their new found fun, Magic. They also agreed to never tell anyone about their secrets. This oath was given the name: The Magician's Code. Darkness and Confusion would become one, from that day forward. This then is how magic came to be. The Magician's Code became part of both realms; darkness and confusion. Gothik and Balderdash were the first two to present their magic for the world. All they ask in return is, for the readers here, to keep their secret safe.

Brandon Williams, son of regular contributing author Mark Williams, wrote this essay when he was 14 years of age. While a light-hearted look at the origin of magic, it's still a wonderfully bizarre piece.



Who Is Buried in Abraham Lincoln's Grave?

by Weepin' Willie



Watch out for that water on the embalming room floor. I have not had time to clean it up and would hate for you to slip and fall. You can sit right there next to the cadaver if you wish. Good! Glad you stopped by today. It has been slow and I could use some live company.

My dear friend, never assume the obvious when it comes to Death, because assuming anything has the potential to make an ASS out of U and Me. While we are talking about assuming things, let me tell you the story about Abraham Lincoln. No, not the one that was President of the United States, but a local man who was named Abraham Lincoln Jones, although his parents were surnamed Smith.

When Abraham was born, it was a surprise to Mr. and Mrs. Smith because Mr. Smith had been diagnosed as sterile from birth. In those early days there were no DNA tests so the paternity tests mostly consisted of determining who the child favored. Some people would disagree but in my opinion infants really do not look like anyone; they are lumps of clay, yet unformed, and we project an image ourselves and believe it to be true. Some will say, "He looks just like his Dad!" Others may say, "Sure favors his Mom!" In Abraham's case, they said he looked like the milk man, Ted Jones. He, for sure, did not look like any of the Smith family members. No cross eyes, beard or receding hairlines. It was logical since the milkman came every day and the kid liked milk. Ted denied it, of course, and no child support was ever paid, but the Smith's did get a free quart of milk delivered each day free.

Abraham Lincoln Jones was very intelligent and people expected that he might go to Harvard and become a lawyer or to medical school and become a doctor. However, the stigmatism of being considered an illegitimate child in a small Bible Belt town pushed him to choose ordained ministry in an attempt to redeem his soul. He spent the next forty years traveling from church to church and preaching the Good News to the Saints and the Bad News to the Sinners. He told me that sometimes it was hard to tell who the Saints was and who was the Sinners because they acted so much alike. "In those cases," he said, "I just let tha Good Lord sort 'em out." Abraham eventually returned home, his lactose intolerance had wreaked havoc on his body from all the years of milk drinking.

Abraham knew his time was short, so he came to my funeral emporium to make his final arrangements, unbeknownst to his wife.

“Tha’ Bible says a man who don’t take care ah his famly is worse ‘en ah infidel. I don’t wana burden my wife wit ma passing, so I wana finlize everything and have it paid in full by then. When Ah pass it’s ah dun deal.” (He did not chose cremation so don’t read anything into the word ‘done’, such as 'stick a fork in it' type of meaning.)

“Mr. Jones, do you not think it would be best to include your wife in the planning?”

“Uhhhh, no Sir! She’s never been willin’ to discuss my demise. Ize have tried and tried and ever time she just sez, “Maybe we’ll be raptured afore then.” I wish I could share her faith in that, but if ah day is as ah thousand years, as the Bible sez, I figure I’ll be dead long before tha next coffee break up thar is over.”

“So, you think they drink coffee in heaven?”

“That girl angel on Touched by an Angel does. Why wouldn’t tha others?”

I learned a long time ago never to question the logic of those either dead or dying. If they say they talked to grandma, who has been dead for a decade, just nod and agree. After a comparison of options, we had everything planned for his funeral service except the actual place to inter the body. We knew it would be in the town cemetery, across the street and two blocks down from the church, but exactly which spot was a budgeting decision waiting to happen. Now, for those of you who are not in-the-know, not every lot in the cemetery is priced the same. It is like buying a ticket to the ball game; where you are seated (or laid) determines the price. The closer you are to a roadway the higher the price and likewise, the further away the cheaper. Mr. Jones again, quoted the Bible, “Want not waste not,” and opted for the cheapest site next to the edge of the swamp. In days gone by, with the help of a good rain, the caskets would float right out of the grave and go visiting around town, stopping in the kinfolk’s driveway or front porch, so the city requirement was passed to cover each grave with a slab of cement to prevent the dead from washing up. (That is why I never refer to a grave as the ‘final’ resting place. Sometimes it is not.) Even with the additional price of the concrete, it was a cheap plot and Mr. Jones was able to pay cash for the total price. For the next ten years, Reverend Abraham Lincoln Jones remained an upstanding citizen in the community, but like everyone else he finally passed away, leaving behind an elderly widow.

Abraham Lincoln Jones and his wife had no children. The doctors said he was impotent and it was hereditary, which may have had a bearing on proving he was genetically a

Smith, after all. He also had no siblings, since the milk man fiasco put a damper on the hanky-panky. There was only the Widow Jones, the townsfolk, and hundreds of friends from far and near attending Abraham Lincoln Jones' service. The three member choir sang the 'ole going home' songs and Reverend Jones had left a short video to play for the sermon; however, with the many friends and preachers present, the service was anything but short as each took liberty to share their decades of remembrances. The service ended with a love offering for the Widow Jones. Now, I know offerings are not usually taken at funerals, but the kind reverend always said, "Tha good Lord sez where two or more are gathered in ma name I will be present and if it gets ta four, take ah offerin." (I have never read that last part about taking an offering, but it might be in there somewhere.) The plan was that the body would be transported in the hearse from the church to the gravesite, the aged widow would ride in the family car, and everyone else would walk the short distance. Everything was going as planned, until we made the right turn just beyond the cemetery gate. You see, the road comes to a "Y" and the cheaper sites were to the right, the more expensive ones to the left.

"Where do you think you are going?" Mrs. Jones asked.

"To the grave site your husband chose in his planning." I explained.

"Not down there in the marsh he ain't."

"But that is the site he chose."

"Probably because of his skin flint attitude. You ain't burying him there!"

It did not take long for me to realize that this was not going to work out and people were getting 'closer than they appear' in my side mirrors. I explained that there were a lot of people here today and we could not make a change at this time, but that if she would go ahead with the graveside service, we would take the body back to the funeral home after everyone left and if she would come by the office on Monday (this was Saturday) we would bury him where ever she chose at no additional charge. She agreed and we proceeded as planned. The service concluded with the 'ashes to ashes - dust to dust' declaration and, when everyone had left, we took the coffin back to the funeral home as we had promised. Unfortunately, we now had an open grave and no occupant, but as fate would have it a homeless man died that day and we buried him there. He had no identification and was thought to be a transient so we left the grave marked with an unnamed, but dated cross.

On Monday, Widow Jones came by and we buried her husband the next day, Tuesday, in a spot she had chosen. Even to this day, people come back to pay their respects to the kind reverend Abraham Lincoln Jones at the place of the unmarked graveside where the service was held, and everyone who was at the Saturday burial thought the poor Widow had lost her mind because she kept telling them on Tuesday, "They're burying my husband today."

So when anyone asks you, "Who is buried in Abraham Lincoln's grave?" you can tell them, "I don't know, but you can be sure it is not Abraham."

Performance:

(For this effect you just need a regular deck of cards and a lot of confidence. It is a BOLD move that makes this effect work, and at first reading you will think no one can fall for this brazen display of mentalism. However, after years of using this effect, no one has ever called me out.)

Take the cards in your hands and display them front and back in an effort to show they are normal cards, without verbally stating such. Do a few overhand shuffles while talking. You can even let the spectator shuffle if you wish.

"It's important to know where people are buried, but the truth is we are not always sure a person is where they are said to be. Sometimes, the body will be buried in a secret unmarked grave that only the family may know the location of. Other times, people are buried in a secret location because they have been killed or somehow buried without the help of human hands. I want you to help me locate a particular body, as an experiment."

(Place the cards in your front trouser pocket, secretly glimpsing the bottom card as you do so. Let's say it is the Ten of Spades.) Look at your spectator and say,

"There are four suits: Diamonds, Hearts, Clubs and Spades. Chose two."

"Hearts and Spades."

"Okay, we'll use Hearts and Spades; now chose one of these."

"Hearts."

"Great! We'll use Spades. Two through nine are low cards while ten through Ace is high. Would you pick high or low."

“High”

“Perfect! Now, out of ten, jack, queen, king and ace, pick two.”

“Ten and jack.”

“Now pick one”

“Jack.”

“Then we’ll use Ten. Your card is the Ten of Spades. We both know it is buried somewhere among the fifty two locations in my pocket, but not exactly where.” (Only you know it is the bottom card on the deck) “How many cards would you like for me to remove before I locate the Ten of Spades?”

“Four”

“You want the Ten of Spades to be the fifth card out of my pocket?” (It is important to clarify whether it is the fourth or fifth to avoid confusion.)

“Yes.”

(Place your hand in your pocket and remove the cards from the top of the deck, one at a time, and show them. It is not uncommon for the progression of cards to support getting closer to the chosen card. If so, remark on that such as, “Six of spades, getting close.” After removing the number of cards, you remove the next (in this case fifth card) from the bottom of the deck and it is the Ten of Spades.)

The secret:

I really should not have to explain the secret, but here it is: The spectator never chooses the card, you do. As you can see, if you read carefully, you are totally in control of their choice and if stated as if it were their choice, they never suspect that it isn’t. The spectator assumes you are just randomly choosing to discard their choice or use it. One thing that disguises the working is that even if you chose the card, how could you know where it is in the deck, and then pull it out on their chosen position.

Credits: In order to be fair, I must say this trick is not original, although the script is. I did not learn most of my magic from books (or DVD’s as some do today. If things keep changing I will need to upgrade from my reel to reel to an 8 track soon) but from people who performed them. I learned this effect fifty years ago from a fellow Marine as we were passing time on a four day military cruise from USA to Vieques, Puerto Rico. He

claimed to have learned it from his nanny, who claimed to be the daughter of the seventh son of a seer. I suspect this principle has been used many times and in more creative fashions, but the origin has been lost in the misty recesses of the past. I also need to credit a few large retail stores for their bait and switch tactics; they know who they are. You go in for the sale price and it is sold out, but an upgrade model is always available. Laws have been passed to prevent this tactic but I don't think they would apply to this magic trick, even though it is a similar method: You choose a Ten of Hearts but get a Ten of Spades instead.

Annemann, in his 202 methods of forcing, mentions the ambiguous questioning principle in a few of his effects and I imagine this is about as close to this effect as one can get because it is similar in principle although not in set up. I doubt it is original with him but since he credits no one else I will mention him as a possibility and leave it at that. It could also be considered a two choice magician's choice, I guess.

Lastly, I would like to credit Joe, the drunk on the corner of Main Street, for his many hours of watching me perform this trick while emptying the trash from the Funeral Emporium.

Hopefully I have covered anyone who may have possibly contributed to this effect, in whatever arena they operate. If you have any credits to add please notify me or the editors of this magazine. Thank you for reading.



Weepin' Willie

House of Discount Funerals and Birthing Center

"We cover you from the womb to the tomb!"

Production Team

Designer & Publisher: Michael Jay

Editor: Michael Jay

Proof Readers: Gary Scott

Shaun Robinson

Scott Fridinger

Paul Rey

Technical Advisor: Wayne Clancy

Assistant Tech Advisor: Tam McLaughlin

Based on the design of Wayne Trice

The next issue of Top Hat is due out the 15th October. If you are interested in submitting an article for publication please direct your inquiry to tophatv2@gmail.com - the deadline for submissions is the 30th September.

If you have any comments, questions or criticisms, please send them to the e-mail address above. We welcome all feedback.

PARTING SHOT:

Th[e] skilled magician is an adept at disguise and attention control. He employs physical disguise with his apparatus. He employs psychological disguise-simulation, dissimulation, maneuver, ruse, suggestion and inducement. He exercises absolute control over the attention of his spectator by forestalling it, by catching it relaxed, by dulling it, by scattering it, by diverting it, by distracting it, and by openly moving it away.

He cleverly, skillfully and dexterously mixes the true with the false. With equal facility he convincingly interprets matters to accomplish his own ends. He contrives to so influence the things the spectator perceives that the latter is aware of them *as the magician desires*. All is built upon an unshakable foundation of naturalness, plausibility and conviction.

— Dariel Fitzkee —