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Welcome to the June 2004 edition of TopHat.

This month, Nigel Shelton kicks off by gently reminding users of the few rules that we ask you to follow when using the forums. As explained, we try not to impose a lot of rules and regulations to follow but there are a few guidelines set that will help sustain the forums. Next, Craig concludes his series on bizarre magic with another excellent piece on making an impact with this branch of magic.

Daniel de Urquiza also gives us another fantastic routine from Argentina; this time an original sandwich routine. Michael Saint Louis, in what may seem at first a wild streak, explains the workings behind a gag of his... wand from bum. Yep, that's what I thought.

In a bizarre mentalism effect, Peter Marucci explains through simple techniques how a presentation can create a miracle. Finally, Michael Jay talks on the now-extensive and still expanding library built up at MagicBunny and also about routining your magic.

We hope you enjoy this edition of TopHat and please consider sending in some of your own material - it's very welcome to be published here next moth. See the end of this edition for details.

All the best,

~Jon Snoops~

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Contents

Every issue of the TOP HAT contains original effects and articles written by readers and members of MagicBunny.co.uk. If you have a submission, please email TopHat@magicbunny.co.uk

MAGIC NEWS: *"The Latest From MagicBunny"* by Nigel Shelton

MAGIC ARTICLE: *"Spirits Amongst Us Part 5"* by P. Craig Browning

MAGIC EFFECT: *"Dumbury Eats a Sandwich (and he likes it)"* by Daniel de Urquiza

MAGIC ARTICLE: *"Thoughts From Mid-West America"* by Michael Saint Louis

MAGIC EFFECT: *"Bell, Book and Candle"* by Peter Marucci

MAGIC ARTICLE: *"From the Desk of Michael Jay"* by Michael Jay

The Latest From MagicBunny

The Latest From MagicBunny Website News

By Nigel Shelton



I am pleased to say that there are very few regulations that we ask our members to follow. You may already be aware of the basic rules regarding the disclosure of magic effects, the use of obscene language or the inclusion of text speak in postings. These rules are readily located in the FAQ link at the top of each page of the discussion boards and I am sure that many of our established members are already very familiar with these. I know that many members have been very supportive in assisting the Governing Body by complying with these guidelines or by reporting deviant users when these rules have been found to be breached.

In addition to these general rules, some of the various forums have additional directives that assist with the overall day-to-day running of the boards. A good example of this is "The Trading Forum," although many other examples exist on the boards.

"The Trading Forum" was set up specifically for the non-commercial advertising of props, books, videos and other items for members to sell or to obtain. The specific rules that apply to this forum are posted in an announcement at the head of the forum and these are essential in order that national and international laws regarding copyright are adhered to.

The moderator team perform a thankless task in ensuring that these regulations are adhered to and I am very grateful to all the members of this team (as well as members of the boards, who assist in reporting misdemeanours) for all the work that they do regarding this.

You may already be aware that we do not support commercial advertising, the sale of copied effects, books, videos and DVDs nor do we permit the sale of digital manuscripts, instructions and videos. On rare occasions these rules are flouted and the moderator team are very quick to delete the offending threads and take any appropriate action. You may rest assured that all members of the Governing Body are concerned that we do not allow the Magic Bunny boards to become a means of flouting national or international laws regarding copyright nor shall we allow deviant members to undermine the very industry that we all support. As well as deleting the offending threads, sometimes persistent offenders necessitate further action to be taken and, on occasions, some deviant users have had their access to these forums revoked. Thankfully, this is very rare and the vast majority of the membership are law abiding and supportive of our stance regarding this issue.

As the site owner, a very large proportion of my administrative time is spent in policing these boards and ensuring that the forums operate smoothly and effectively. Sometimes I may respond to emails or private messages from different individuals of the membership and, on other occasions, other members of the Governing Body may deal with these issues as well.

It has been brought to my attention that some newer, less-experienced members have bypassed our guidelines by swapping or selling copies of videos or digital manuscripts via the private message system or by email. I was very pleased to learn of one honest member, who when offered a very wide selection of copied material at a very low cost, flatly refused to have any form of association with the deviant offender. He expressed a wish to purchase the same material from a reputable dealer at an established retail cost, despite the temptation to obtain these works illegally at a considerable saving. I am sure that there are many other members who have been approached in a similar fashion and who have acted in the same way. I needn't elaborate on the ethos of this philosophy, as this topic has been raised on countless occasions in various threads across the boards, however I would wish to thank those who have acted in this way in supporting the very people who underpin the magic industry.

We shall continue to effectively regulate the forums of Magic Bunny to ensure that this type of behaviour is

The Latest From MagicBunny (cont.)

not tolerated on the boards of this Internet site but it is impossible to police the actions of private individuals who operate covertly, approaching existing members off the main discussion boards. I thank those who have taken a strong moral stand on this issue and I would urge any others to carefully consider the consequences of their actions and the impact it may have on the magic industry and the knock on effects on other areas of this art. The discussions boards shall be continued to be policed as efficiently now as in the past but we must all take a role in ensuring that this action is not supported privately too.

By Nigel Shelton

Spirits Amongst Us Part 5

Spirits Amongst Us

Part V of Series

By P. Craig Browning

Thus far I've shared with you routines and insights pertaining to material I have actually used over the years, in my late summer and fall programs. In that this particular article is the last in the series I wanted to punctuate a few of the more subtle elements and points of business that's involved with Mystery Entertainment. Our "show" as it were, having the potential to culminate in one of several ways, my preference retaining the focus on Corinda's original ZARKAMORTA outline.

When I first read the ZARKAMORTA routine my mind began playing with the concept of presenting a very frightening experience that was seemingly impromptu in its nature. By adding some of the tricks and whistles already discussed in previous parts of this series, I was able to evolve the original concept and create a complete act that was unlike most Mystery or Bizarre presentations. Though it had the feel of being a Séance, it was more accurately an exploration in Ritual Magick – a frontier that's far more taboo in the minds of most, than speaking with the dead. However, my thinking went much further, taking into consideration a way of "personalizing" all that's being presented. In other words, I wanted the events as well as the experience to draw a direct line back to me whenever people spoke of it. That's where my estranged grandfather comes in...

One of the first rules of thumb taught to aspiring writers is to draw from their own personal experiences and observations within life. My personal fascination with things bizarre as well as the occult making me a prime sucker for programs in which the macabre were of key focus. Add to that a legitimate sense of *pedigree* that tied me to actual historic characters like Edgar Allan Poe and Alester Crowley and... well, let's face it, it's far too great an advantage to not exploit. Making it even more natural were my own lifetime of participation in things metaphysical and pagan. After all, that's where much of my earlier writing experience came from as well as personal reputation. My ties within certain aspects of the American Pagan movement being substantial.

The point is, I have discovered ways of exploiting these facts about my family, ancestors (and their rumored association with certain types of individuals or spiritualistic practices), as well as myself. Being careful to not get into the really covert and loathsome realities, such as those distant cousins and uncles active in American politics and Evangelism. It is however, this kind of personal expression that helps you, as an entertainer, to create your character as well as a sense of personal "legend". The fact that the tid-bits of information I share in the stories used in my presentations can be verified to some degree adds to the public's perception when discussing the things they've seen me do. (Or better yet, heard that I've done... some of that stuff is much better than the cold hard truth.) It also adds to my primary goal, to leave them uncertain as to if or not the things I do are genuine or pure trickery.

Spirits Amongst Us Part 5 (cont.)

If you think about it, all aspects of myth and lore contain some element of truth and logic, you just need to weed through the illusion or fantasy woven into said tales by the orator. By creating your own personal sense of lore, as I have done in my life and work, you will find yourself in the midst of one of the greatest illusions any magician can develop – the esthetic of being a magickle entity vs. an actor that does tricks.

Why so much focus on such things?

If you look through the annals of my postings and articles over the past few years you will discover certain patterns. The most important being how I tie my grandfather and his rumored ties with Alester Crowley into the things I do. This is a signature bit of presentation that takes the focus off of me and creates an alternate explanation behind each manifestation. Too, the adoption of my grandfather as an outside player within the game, lends to me a common thread that can be woven into most any of my featured presentational pieces e.g. it's a conversational hook that lures the curious into my web of general deception.

I don't care who you are or your position on the validity of things paranormal, when someone begins to tell you a ghost story, you are prone to take on a slightly different attitude and allow yourself to be sucked into the plot. It's just a matter of human nature; even the most ardent skeptic wants a reason to believe. They'd love nothing more than to be proven wrong and experience something genuine.

As a Mystery performer our job... our first obligation... is to allow our guests to commit themselves to the fantasy at hand. This "investment of belief" is what separates us from the world of traditional magic and places us on that tightrope between theater and con-artistry. Our actions offering just enough "corn" so as to allow room for doubt, when it comes to the public crediting us as being a Super Swami or whathaveya.

If you look at how the routines I've shared are staged, as well as the original outline on ZORKAMORTA you can see for yourself how each routine pulls the group deeper and deeper into the mystery. At the same time allowing them both reason and excuse to saying "No" and put an end to all the happenings. Don't just look at the script however; consider the props that are employed. Though most items are "borrowed", you do introduce two or three items here and there, like the old and weathered diary filled with cryptic pros and archaic symbols, which lends outline to each action. In short, it's a grimoire or Book of Shadows – one of those pieces of paraphernalia associated with the Black Arts and Demonology... at least in the mind of the less educated and superstitious. There's the urn in which the pieces of paper are placed (either to burn or for the Dissolve L&D routine), and perhaps a candle or two. You also need to consider the ambiance; not just the fact that all are gathered in a casual circle in someone's living room, lit only by the light of a single candle. But consider the memories shared by those gathered based on what you have already demonstrated in the course of the evening (that is assuming you've presented a more traditional PSI Party earlier in the evening and this action is done in follow-up).

One other point of psychology that I feel fits within this series is the idea that *"Less is more."*

Several years ago I was talking with Glenn Falkenstein about a Headline Prediction. He explained to me two things. First, his favorite and possibly the easiest and least explainable HP bit was the *Air Tight Prediction* (See *Mind, Myth & Magic* pg. 561 – STABALLOON) Secondly, he pointed out that the performers that gained the strongest PR from an HP presentation, were the ones that used it the least. Apparently certain old timers would buy an excellent Prediction Chest and use it only once in a decade, for that extra special occasion.

I bring this out because of the nature of the routine and material we've been looking at. Aside from the fact that you are doing less than a half-dozen effects over a 40-50 minute period of time, you are only working with a small handful of individuals (as few as six to about 18 total guests.) Let's say that you only get to perform this routine two or three times during the month of October and that's it! Does this mean you have failed?

NO!

We all know how powerful as well as important *word-of-mouth* can be to our business. In situations of this

Spirits Amongst Us Part 5 (cont.)

kind the dozen or so folks that do catch your Halloween season antics are the ones that are going to be telling people (for years to come, if you did your job right) about their encounter. You will be pointed out in crowds, you may even have some local minister dragging your name through the mud because of the "evil" you participate in (don't sweat it! This can be a major boon for a Bizarrest.) Remember you're out to create a personal sense of legend and that is exactly what you will get.

Getting back to the routine however, let's consider all that's been done. The appearance of the Dark Crystal, the name revelation and a great deal of curiosity within the minds of those gathered. As I stated in the opening of this article, you can wind things up simply by following Corinda's thoughts on ZORKAMORTA there is no need to do anything else (though you may be tempted to.)

As far as marketing this routine, I sell it as a seasonal bonus to my normal Home Party services. It's a great way to ding a client for a couple of extra C-notes and gives to them a Halloween season intrigue their guests will not easily forget. You can also use this routine as an audition piece with a local constabulary in which you would like to bring a more complex Séance program. The thing to keep in mind when talking with the owners and management of a Food & Beverage facility is that you are selling an interactive theatrical experience, NOT a magic show! The minute you mention the latter, is the instant you will lose the client's interest and support. Too, you can get a much stronger rate of admission from visiting patrons for live theater – dinner and a show – than you'll ever get promoting a night of Halloween Magic.

I do hope I've helped shine some light on things for those of you interested in working the more bizarre side of our craft.

Until Next Time...

By Craig Browning

Dumbury Eats a Sandwich (and he likes it)

Dumbury Eats a Sandwich (and he likes it).

More than a sandwich effect

By Daniel de Urquiza

Ok; this routine it's not a regular sandwich routine. I know I'm the author, and I should be modest about it; but it has several features that make me proud. The more interesting one is that, although it's completely impromptu, you can stack in front of the spectators what you need to produce a result. Finally, it has 'another turn of the screw', as Henry James would say, that I think you, as one performing this, will enjoy.

THE EFFECT

3 spectators select a card each. Cards are lost. Magician says he/she is going to use his/her favorite pair of cards as finders. The thing is that magician names one of the select between his/her pair. So, if selection was a 3C, magician says he/she is going to use the two black 3s. Magician finds card number one, using this pair.

Then, magician asks spectator to select one of magical pair. Spectator inserts it at the deck, where he/she wants it. The second selection is below the inserted card.

Finally, magician very clearly places the magic pair in his/her pocket, asking the name of the third selected card, claiming that this selected card is going to magically appear between the magical pair, in the pocket.

When 3rd spectator says the name of the selection, wow, big fail, it's one of the magical pair.

Magician uses magic to fix it. I'm not going to tell you yet how.

Dumbury Eats a Sandwich (and he likes it) (cont.)

METHOD

a) The selections

This is very simple. 3 spectators must select a card each. The selection is absolutely free. Once they are selected, you must control them to the top. In actual performance, I use the pass, because I want absolute fairness and lack of any 'action' from me, like mixing or whatever. You have at your disposal everything from a double undercut to multiple controls (Marlo, Vernon, D'Amico), the TPC, Erdnase Diagonal Shift, etc. Your choice.

b) The glimpse

Again, you have a myriad of methods to choose from. I simply riffle the inner corner of the deck while talking, thus obtaining a glimpse of the index of the top card of the deck.

This is going to be one of the magical pair.

c) The culling and stacking.

I'm supposing you are familiar with Hofzinsler's spread cull. Explain that you are going to find the 3 selected cards using your magical pair of detectives (or whatever other explanation your fancy advises), and name them out loud. Start openly to look for them, while at the same time culling and controlling to the top the other 2 cards of the 4 of a kind.

So, if the top card glimpsed is a 3c, you name 3c and 3s, start looking for them, while culling and controlling to the top 3h and 3d. This is one of the things I like of this routine. When I started to create it, I forced a queen among the selection, and had previously prepared the necessary stack on top. This way, spectators can shuffle before, and, in a way, you are absolutely free as a performer. You are creating a situation right there, on the spot. I love it.

Besides, the culling and stacking is technically correct, because you have your last card of the pair on top. You have all the time and justification to do the spread control.

When you get to your named pair, simply extract it from the spread, and leave it at the table.

So, you have two red 3s, two selections, and a black 3 and the 3rd selection on the table.

Mix a little, reversing the order of the top four cards, keeping them on top. I assume you know how to do this. This is an appropriate moment, because you have manipulated the cards; they deserve a shuffle.

d) The sandwich

Say you are going to find the first selection using the pair as magical detectives. Please, note this: YOU are saying which card is the first selection. This is also very nice; YOU are changing subtly the meaning of 'first selection', from 'first selected' to 'first selection I'm going to find'.

Do a tilt, and place the pair face up below the top card, apparently in the middle of the deck. Say they are looking for the first selection.

Do Erdnase's First Colour Change, and bring one of the magical pair to the top of the deck.

The idea is that you do your magical gesture, and the cards come to the top, with the first selection among them.

Credit: Peter Duffie 'Erdnase's Meets Hofzinsler,' plus Alex Elmsley ideas, plus my own ideas, plus, of course, Erdnase.

Show them the result, ask the name of the first selection, turn it face up dramatically, first climax.

e) The magical placement.

Ask them to choose one of the magical pair. I've noticed they usually select the 3rd selection, with a face like "let's see what you do if I pick this one." You do nothing, because, in theory, you know nothing. Use your best poker face. While talking, place this card face up on top of the deck, and square it with the top card of the deck. Lift both (it's a new technique I've developed. I'm think of calling it – 'Daniel de Urquiza' s one card seemingly but really two') and, while riffing the outer corner of the deck, insert this double where spectator tells you.

Now, the familiar bit of business of ambitious card routine. You leave the double protruding out jogged from the deck, insert the lower one with your index finger tip while supposedly out jogging a little more the card, ask spectator to push the face up card. Spread.

Ask spectator to name 2nd selection. Ask spectator to pull out the card below the face up inserted card. Turn it face up dramatically, again.

Climax (again).

Dumbury Eats a Sandwich (and he likes it) (cont.)

f) Magic can do everything

Ok, for the finale now.

You have two face-up red 3s, rest of the deck, your hand, the floor, the core of the earth, China, the sky, the clouds, the outer space, and so on.

Place the magic pair face up on top of the deck, the 3rd selection above, while saying you are going to find the 3rd selection, again using the magic pair, but this time: **INSIDE YOUR POCKET.**

So, take your break below the first face down red 3, square, lift all, peel the 3rd selection face up on top of the deck, leave the double showing a face up black 3 on top. Standard sandwich move. Justification: showing that there is nothing between the magical pair.

Now, thanks to Elmsley and 'Economic Point of Departure,' simply lift the top face up 3, and insert it in your pocket. What they see? A face down card. So everything is ok. Now, c'mon, admit it: I'm so clever!

Cut the deck (if you can, do the pass), and give it to the spectator, to hold it.

Give a few steps back, and repeat your conditions and effect: you are going to produce a miracle. The 3rd selection is going to be between the 3s.

Note that you don't say this time: 'In my pocket.'

Ask the name of the 3rd selection. They tell you. First, you don't understand. Then, you think spectator didn't understand. Then, others confirm spectator, so you begin to understand what happened.

But there is no problem, you believe in magic. Say out loud, almost screaming, very fast: "The 3rd selection between the 3s: I can do it!!!".

Ask a spectator to introduce his/her hand in your pocket. There is only one card. Which card? The 3s. Is there anything else? No?

You are surprised. Look to the spectator who is holding the deck. Tell him to spread it face up. You don't go even near the deck. Tell him to stop where he finds a face down card. And it's between which cards?

Which card is face down?

Climax.

Enjoy.

KR

Daniel de Urquiza
AltaCartomagia
Argentina

Thought From Mid-West America

Thoughts From Mid-West America

Wand From Bum

By Michael Saint Louis

I have a three year old daughter. We spend alot of time watching cartoons together. Sure, she likes the new Disney stuff, but I have her hooked on the classics. Tom and Jerry frequently grace our TV screen and we argued just this morning over whether it was duck season or rabbit season. Great stuff... soon, I plan on introducing her to the comedic genius of the Three Stooges. Mark my words, so long as our modern western culture survives, so shall classic cartoon and physical comedy. That stuff is timeless and trans-generational. In fact, Sings-A-Song said to me just the other "Tom's keister is on fire! Kiesters are funny!" Out of the mouths of babes come the golden notes of truth my friends. Kiesters (or backsides, asses, bums, butts, seats, poopers... whatever you prefer) are funny. Almost, but not quite, as funny as the groin.

And that reminded me of a dumb but entertaining little gag. Magic wands aren't funny, but magic wands produced from your kiester are! This little trickette is pretty easy to accomplish with a bit of needle and thread and the right pants. Yup, this is one of those stunningly obvious gags ("Hey! I'll bet he has a hole in his pocket!") but it can be made a bit more effective if you steer clear of the loose fitting Dockers, the pleat

Thought From Mid-West America (cont.)

fronted khakis and the tuxedo pants and instead use a pair of jeans as your production bum. They can't be all tight and '80's looking (I am sure a few of you are still sporting that Loverboy look), but they don't need to be (and in fact shouldn't be) super baggy. Just a normal cut with the regular 'panel' pockets. That is the rear pockets that are separate pieces of fabric sewn onto the back of the jeans. Got pants? Good, now you'll need scissors, a magic wand, a needle and thread and a strip of fabric about two and a half times as long as your wand and 3 or 4 inches wide.

Sit down in your jeans and mark where your knee bends on the back of your pants leg. A piece of tape or safety pin will work fine for this. Now, drop your drawers and measure from the mark to the bottom of your back pocket. You'll want a wand no longer than this and preferably an inch or so shorter.

Now it's time to take your strip of fabric and fold it in half (so that you have a 3 to 4 inch wide double thickness about one and a quarter length of your wand). Starting at the fold, sew each side of the fabric to make a pocket. You'll want to leave the end unsewn, so only sew about the length of your wand plus a half inch or so. This is going to be your new wand holder. You are going to pick a spot in your pocket near the bottom of your pocket to cut a small slit (maybe two to three inches long). Don't slit the very bottom, leave maybe an inch because you need room to attach your wand holder. This is by far the hardest part of the procedure. You need to sew the wand holder to your jeans so that the slit you have made in your pocket will serve as the entrance or mouth of the wand holder. The easiest way to do this is to (best you can) turn your pocket inside out. Safety pin the wand holder into position and then hand sewn it down. After this is done you can cut off any excess material on the wand holder. Although you can do this anyway you want, I always found it easiest to make the slit in my pocket perpendicular to the waist band so that it is horizontal when you are wearing the jeans. This gives you a little space where you can slide two fingers down into the wand holder to grab the tip of the wand and start to pull it out.

Ideally, the wand will fit all the way into the wand holder and be invisible. If your wand holder is too short the tip will stick up into the pocket and cause a bump (this will make you look like your butt has a nose and is no good). If your holder is too long you will not be able to smoothly retrieve your wand.

And that's it. Quick, easy and goofy. If you want to have a pocket that can be examined (and that's pretty anal of you... get it? pretty anal! hahahaha!) you can always cut a piece of denim to the inside dimensions of your pocket. It'll be too tight to sew in the pocket cleanly so you will have to use hem tape (it's tape that holds like stitching after you put it in place and iron over it) to hold it in. You'll also have to figure a way to hold your pocket open so that you can cover the top of this false piece with your hand. It's a lot of work to make a stupid sight gag clean, so if you are considering it then you should examine your true motivations (do you just want people to check out your bum?)!

That's all for this month. Except for this thought: if a wand from the can is funny, then an appearing 8 foot pole out the keister is pure genius!

By Michael Saint Louis

Bell, Book and Candle

Bell, Book and Candle

Bizarre Mentalism

By Peter Marucci

A while back, in a one-man Parade in the Linking Ring magazine, Max Maven offered a wonderful routine involving those tools of exorcism - bell, book, and candle. He called it Toll, Tome, and Tallow (which is stretching alliteration a bit far, even for the Maven!).

I loved the routine, the props, the handling, the works. But it was a bit long for table work and so I came up with the following. It is completely different from the Maven's routine; the only similarity is the props - and they are crucial; the more charismatic the better, because the routine is 99 per cent presentation and 1 per cent working.

Bell, Book and Candle (cont.)

BELL, BOOK AND CANDLE

By Peter Marucci

EFFECT

The wizard gives an ancient scroll to a spectator and then puts three items on the table: a tiny bell, a tiny book, and a tiny candle in a candlestick. The spectator has an absolutely free choice of any of the items and yet, after the choice is made, when she unrolls the scroll, it confirms her choice.

WORKING AND PRESENTATION

As I said, the props here are critical so you'll need a miniature bell, book, and candle. I got a tiny brass bell in a curio shop, the book and candlestick at a shop that sells doll-house miniatures. The scroll is about an inch or two wide and three or four inches long, parchment paper, burned on all edges to give the appearance of age. On it is written, in calligraphic-type script, the words: "Ye shall choose the candle."

Giving the scroll to the spectator, you say: "In the 16th century, a wave of witch hysteria swept Europe. In England, seeing a golden opportunity, one Matthew Hopkins set him self up as a self-styled Witchfinder-General. He would go from town to town, village to village, seeking alleged witches and proving them to be just that - or blameless. There were very few who were found to be blameless. Hopkins used the traditional tools of exorcism in his rituals - a bell, a book - usually the Bible - and a candle. (Put the three items on the table.)

"To our modern minds, such simple things would seem unlikely to have any power. But, to show you the inherent magic in these three items, I would like you to pick up one and give it to me. (If the spectator chooses the candle, ask her to unroll the scroll and read it aloud. The routine is over at this point. If, however, she chooses one of the others, continue:)"
"Now I would like you to pick up one of the remaining two items . . .
(she does so - if it is the candle, continue as follows)
. . . and hold it yourself. I will now eliminate the book. So what has happened here? You chose the bell (if that was the first choice) for me, you chose the candle for yourself, and you eliminated the book. Now please unroll the scroll and read it. (She does and it names her choice.)
(If the spectator chooses, from the two remaining, the piece that is not the candle, continue as follows:)"
". . . and give it to me as well. You may now pick up the candlestick, since you have eliminated the other two items. Now, unroll the scroll and read it aloud."

At this point, all the ensemble fall down and worship you, as you so well deserve.

SECOND THOUGHTS

This is, of course, just the Magician's Choice dressed up to go out and go dancing. I said earlier that this is 99 per cent presentation; the props should be as authentic as you can make them - calligraphic, aged scroll; brass or gold bell, miniature Bible, brass candlestick with tiny candle. Please do not use a Christmas bell, a paperback book and a birthday candle. You want to take the heat off the method and put it on the innocent props.

Also, the wording is important. It must sound to the spectator that she is making all the decisions. Have fun with this - and scare the knickers off your audience!
cheers,

Peter Marucci
showtimecol@aol.com

From the Desk of Michael Jay

From the Desk of Michael Jay

The Library and Thought on Routines

By Michael Jay

THE LIBRARY AT MAGIC BUNNY

Are you using the library? If not, you're missing out on one of Magic Bunny's best features. The amount of information that can be found in that area boggles my mind. When I first started that forum, I knew that it would grow into a fantastic area filled with valuable information. I am impressed with the wealth of knowledge that our contributing members have placed in that area.

Of course, we've had several false starts on topics that, in the beginning, looked like a good idea. The real beauty of that, though, is that those topics remain for members to find and possibly start again in the future. The information remains in the library and you simply never know who is going to come upon it and when. I've seen it happen several times and the information just continues to grow.

My thanks goes out to all members who've taken the time to give of their valuable insights, including provocative thoughts and full blown routines. One member stands out as the most prolific of contributors, and that would be Steve Jones. I suggest that you look up Mr. Jones' material in the index that is provided and see what you can add to your bag of tricks. I personally find some of the sleights to be beyond my abilities in his contributions, but the fact is, I learn from reading his material.

Speaking of the index, if you're not using it to peruse the library, you are passing up an important part of the library's power. The index points not to just information in the library, but all over the internet. Are you searching for a specific item from a shop? You'll find that the index provides you with a myriad of internet shops, some with reviews in our review section. Of course, the review for the shop is also indexed, right next to the shop's URL in the index. How can you lose?

The study groups are also indexed. Some of them are just waiting for new members with recent access to jump on board and breath new life into them. Still, the information already in there is unreal. I mean, just unreal. Have you ever wanted a massive library right at your fingertips to research your ideas for new routines? Have a look in the Magic Bunny library. It makes for an excellent launch point. And, it's all free!

One other thing I'd like to add on this plug for the library. If you are using it and you find it to be an excellent tool, then add to it. Put up one of your favorite tricks (always keeping in mind that you may not publish other people's intellectual property) or add a sleight that we don't have in the library as yet. Or, put up a biography of your favorite magician. This is the greatest strength of the library. Everyone using it contributes. Over time, if everyone contributes, the library grows. As the library grows, it becomes an even more powerful tool. Take a moment and consider the potential of this vision. Hundreds of contributors to an area that is kept indexed for future ease of reference. Can you imagine? Again, if you use the library and you like it, then contribute something to it. The bonus is that you have immediate proof of your copyright (that is correct, anything you publish in the library is copyrighted, with proof of date and time, to YOU, the contributor) and, if you are challenged as to your right of ownership, you have indisputable proof.

ROUTINING THE ROUTINE

The late, great Milt Kort said that sometimes you should routine your routine. I've discussed the interpretation of this statement with other magicians. The way I see it, though, what Mr. Kort was trying to say was that you can take a routine and use it to segue into another routine. That is the subject of the following part of this article.

We, as magicians, are always talking about the importance of a routine versus a single trick. However, have you ever considered routining your routine? Rather than just do a routine, you do two, or possibly three, routines in a row. Two or three separate routines then become a single, long routine. Of course, you'd not want to go overboard on this idea, however, it is an excellent idea to use or at least give serious consideration.

From the Desk of Michael Jay (cont.)

Recently, I've been working on a routined routine. I'm going from a ring and string routine into a ring and silk routine. Two separate routines worked into a single routine, linked by the ring (pardon the pun). Please understand, I'm sharing with you something that I have yet to test in front of an audience. I've shown this to several magicians who see the value in it, but it is far from ready. I offer this only as food for thought.

You will need a strong ring on string routine. The two that I find to be the most magical is "Ring Leader," by Gregory Wilson and the routine that is offered by Daniel Turcotte on youdomagic.com on the internet. Wilson's is a 5 phase routine and highly suggested for the beginner with ring and string. Turcotte's is a highly commercial 3 phase routine and the one I presently use myself.

You will also need a silk and a Jardine-Ellis ring.

After finishing your ring and string routine, using the solid Jardine-Ellis ring, put the string away, the ring sitting flatly on your palm, and come out with your silk, the shell of the Jardine-Ellis ring finger palmed. Place the silk over the ring, allowing the corner to sit squarely on your forearm with the opposing corner hanging over your finger, the ring covered by the silk. The silk must be thick enough to keep the spectator from seeing the ring sitting on your palm.

Allow the dirty hand to fall to your side and move the shell into classic palm. Come up with the dirty hand and place your index finger on the silk, just behind (or the area closest to you) the ring. Have the spectator lift the silk to prove that the ring is, in fact, still resting on the palm of your hand. Tell the spectator to put the silk back as they found it and begin waving your dirty hand over the silk. As you wave, bring the dirty hand into contact with the silk, directly over the ring, and put the shell on top of the ring. Bring your now clean hand back, while continuing to gesture magically, and the ring will appear to have penetrated the silk.

Pick the shell up and show it to the audience, while you prepare to hold the real ring in classic palm. Hold the shell at the tips of the fingers and clip the silk's corner with that hand. Drop the hand holding the real ring down, classic palming the ring, and grab the other corner of the silk, using both hands to give it a shake. Show the silk on both sides, still retaining the real ring in classic palm and the shell showing at the tips of the other fingers. The spectators will naturally want to see your dirty hand, but don't sweat it, just act natural.

Using the dirty hand, re-grip the silk and hand it to a spectator for examination. Immediately, drop the dirty hand and simultaneously come forward with the shell. Attention should focus on either the silk, or the shell. As your dirty hand drops to your side, move the ring into finger palm. Ask the spectator if there is anything fishy about the silk. They will say that there is not. As you ask this question, place the shell onto the fingers of the dirty hand, covering the ring itself and you can now show the ring and your hands both clean. In order to facilitate the movement of putting the shell onto the dirty hand, reach out to take the silk with the now empty hand - this gives you a reason to transfer the shell to the dirty hand, because you want to grab the silk.

Now, have a spectator make a fist with their thumb pointing up (like Arthur Fonzerelli saying, "Ayyyy!" or a thumbs up gesture to avoid having to kill the losing gladiator). Place the ring over the spectator's thumb, shell up, and put the silk over the top of that. If you reach under the silk and remove the shell but drag the shell against the spectator's thumb as you remove it, they will not feel the ring you left behind. You can now place the ring in your pocket and have it reappear on their thumb. You finish clean.

To end it off, take the ring and do a false transfer. Lean forward to hand the ring to a spectator and, as you do, with your dirty hand, reach across your body to the other side's pocket and drop the ring in that pocket. All eyes will be on the empty hand that they believe contains the ring, allowing you to easily and gingerly ditch the ring.

The ring on the thumb comes from Steve Hart. The ditching of the ring as you feign to hand it to a spectator comes from Doc Eason.

As I said, this is a work in progress for me. I give it to you as something that you can work on or use to come up with something even better. Either way, this is a workable routine given the proper time, research

From the Desk of Michael Jay (cont.)

and work. Watch out for the weaknesses in this routine, such as transferring the shell onto the ring (immediately following the silk penetration) - if you're not careful, you'll flash the ring in the dirty hand just prior to placing the shell on it. Something to watch in the mirror and work heavy misdirection into.

Good luck with this and always remember, sometimes it is good to routine your routines! Thank you for reading and you all take care.

By Michael Jay

All contributions are verly welcome from any member at MagicBunny, please send next month's articles and effects to TopHat@magicbunny.co.uk.
A big thank you to this month's contributors for sending their articles in good time.

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