



MagicBunny.co.uk

TOP HAT

February 2003 - Edition 11 *Bumper Birthday Edition!*

I'm sure that most of you are aware that this month is one year on from when MagicBunny was started off. In fact, this day was the day that the red ribbon was cut and MagicBunny was officially opened for the first time. To celebrate all of this, we've prepared for you a special Bumper Birthday Edition, featuring top-notch articles from some of the top members of MagicBunny.

MagicBunny's own interviewer, Huw Collingbourne has gotten an exclusive interview with Black Art Master, Don Drake himself! We are also treated to the second installment of Michael Jay's excellent "The Art and Science of Misdirection" series and the second part of Craig Browning's "Being a Neophyte..." series. Also, kicking off this month, is Rich Penna's series on making a website to advertise your skills. Other features include a sample of the material available in the all new Library section, an article from our American Columnist; Michael St. Louis, and the latest news from MagicBunny.co.uk.

Special thanks go out to everyone that helped make MagicBunny become what it is today, especially Admin, the moderators and of course, you!

~Jon Snoops~
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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

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Message From Admin

Welcome to this special birthday edition of Top Hat.

It seems hard to believe that we have been online for one year. When I survey the boards, there is so much activity in the discussion threads and so many projects up and running that it hard to comprehend that all this has been achieved in the space of just twelve months.

In order to celebrate this first year, several ventures have been planned. The first of which you will have already seen:

It was planed to introduce the Library as part of the anniversary events but the need for an additional forum over took the practicalities of waiting until the end of the month. The Library is just one of the latest projects that was initially designed to coincide with our first birthday. However, the need for a suitable venue to start Huw's mentalism group meant that the opening of this additional forum was brought forward by a month. Looking at the Library now it is hard to believe that this forum has only been open for three or four weeks. A substantial amount of hard work has been put into this forum by the moderator who originally had the vision for this addition, Michael Jay, and his tireless efforts, combined with the work of other members, has resulted in a valued supplement to the forums. I would like to extend a vote of thanks to Michael who has tirelessly supported these boards since his arrival and who has been a stanch supporter and valued asset of MB. I would also like to thank the other members who have contributed to this additional forum and who helped to support Mike in his vision.

Another of the birthday projects was the revamp of the Magic Bunny store. Many new arrivals to this site mistakenly believe that this store is a professional online retail outlet, that finances the discussion boards for extra revenue but the very opposite is true. Central to Magic Bunny are the discussion boards; the shop was implemented as a way of supporting the boards and the way that they function. I have made no secret of the fact that I am a schoolteacher who comes online each evening to continue the work of Magic Bunny. It is the very nature of the store that restricts its development and growth. New arrivals to the site have asked for a wider selection of goods, credit card/debit card facilities and the ability to dispatch items immediately.

Unfortunately, with the initial balance of £1000 there is a limit to the range of items that can be stocked and, with my own private work commitments during the day, it is impossible to accommodate an expansion of the store. Despite the marginal profits that each sale generates, the store and the Amazon link have made sufficient income over the past year or so to support the work of the forums in covering the Internet charges, special projects and postal expenses of the forums. However, the expansion of the store is restricted due to the constraints mentioned above and so it is for that reason I intend to alter this project. I intend to approach other Internet sites and offer one of them the opportunity to link with Magic Bunny to offer a professional Internet store and the additional facilities that such an outlet can offer. I appreciate that such an offer cannot be made in conjunction with the operation of our existing store, which currently undercuts many existing prices by half or more. It is for that reason that I intend to exhaust the existing stock at MB and then seek to link with another site. This will mean that members may be able to use the facilities of a professional outlet and their accompanying services if they wish to do so. It is my intention to keep the format of each MB page exactly as it appears now but to alter the "shop" links at the bottom of each page to one page that will direct users to an outside site. The exhaustion of existing stock may take many months and so I suspect that members may not see this project come to fruition for some time yet. There is a considerable amount of activity on the boards at Magic Bunny and I am confident that I may be able to find an outlet that is willing to sponsor these boards in return for links to their site. It is only my intention to seek sufficient funding to maintain the activity of these forums and to support any future expansion that may occur. MB was never intended to be a commercial site nor I do not wish to see it become a puppet, subjected to the whims of an outside user. The independence of MB will be a cornerstone of such an arrangement. As you see, item-by-item, stock disappearing from the shelves of the MB store you will understand the long term aims of this venture and the reasons for it.

Another of the birthday celebrations is the opportunity to question members of the governing body in a special "Special Guest" forum. During the first week in March all the moderators and myself have been invited to act as guests in this forum. Members will be invited to start threads as normal and the moderators and myself will attempt to answer these. This is your time to understand the make-up of the governing body and to glean a little information about the background of the group of people who have responsibility for the upkeep of these boards. As all moderators will be invited to reply to threads, it will be impossible to establish dialogue with any one

Message From Admin

moderator's reply. I shall ask that members initiate threads only and then any interested moderators may reply as appropriate. If you should wish to seek clarification regarding an individual reply, you are invited to start a new thread or "private message" the speaker in order to allow the other moderators the opportunity to reply too. There may of course be questions that do not apply to specific moderators so I anticipate that some threads may result in less than twelve replies. This will be the first time that the "Special Guest" forum will be open to numerous guests at the same time and so we shall have to play it by ear to gauge how successful it has been.

Finally, as part of the birthday celebrations, I should like to offer members the ability to receive three special magic routines. The following routines may all be found at download magic and are free for any member of Magic Bunny. If you have already accessed these routines then I am sure that you can vouch for these effects. If you have not seen these three effects than I guess that you will have a treat in store for you now.

Simply copy and paste the link into your browser to download.

Fearson's Aces:

You never touch the spectator's cards but yet you are able to reveal their chosen ace. This may be one of the strongest tricks you ever do.

[http://www.magicbunny.co.uk/miscellaneous/Fearsons Aces.pdf](http://www.magicbunny.co.uk/miscellaneous/Fearsons%20Aces.pdf)

The Ripper:

http://www.magicbunny.co.uk/miscellaneous/the_ripper.pdf

With a ripping motion, one card becomes two. Another rip and the two cards become four. Lee Asher's Ripper is a startling production of four cards that you'll love performing.

Video Vision:

http://www.magicbunny.co.uk/miscellaneous/video_vision.pdf

You tell your friends that they can chose between three movies. You can use any three movies that you want. You hand them the remote control and ask them to name a movie. They simply name a movie, hit the button on the remote and there is the movie that they selected.

I'd like to close by thanking all of our active members for their support over the past year. The achievements of this site lie in your hands and I am grateful for all the different ways in which magicians around the globe have supported this site.

Here's a special birthday wish to the next twelve months.

Who knows what exciting news this will bring.

By Admin

A Valentines Effect

EFFECT.

After been given a single, long stemmed rose by the magician, a female volunteer selects and signs a card which is then lost in the deck. She is then given a coin which she initials and writes the name of her selected card on. The coin is taken by the magician and pushed down the rose, through the petals and into the stem. The rose is examined to make sure the coin is not hidden somewhere on the rose. When the spectator is satisfied, she hands the rose back to the magician who snaps it into two pieces in the middle of the stem and pulls the spectators signed card from it. Because the rose is now ruined, the magician offers his spectator something even more special. He reaches into his pocket and produces a ring box which is opened to reveal the spectators initialled coin inside.

PREPARATION.

You should be wearing a dinner jacket to perform this effect. In the left side pocket place a marker pen and in the right side pocket place a ring box which is held open using another coin.

On the table there is a long-stemmed rose, a biro, a coin (I suggest 10p or 50p) and a deck of cards.

METHOD.

Have a card selected, signed (with the biro) and returned to the deck.

Give the cards a casual shuffle, bringing the selected card to the top. Because coins cannot be written on with a biro, you will need a marker pen. This is the perfect excuse to palm off the top card with your left hand and leave it in your left side pocket as you retrieve the marker.

Have the spectator write her initials and the card's value on the coin. Take it off her and tell her to pick up the rose. Do a false transfer and pretend to push the coin into the flower. Let her examine the rose and while she is say "I have some sheers somewhere" as you reach into the right pocket and dump the coin into the ajar ring box and push the other coin out so the box closes. Reach into you're left pocket and fold the card in half-length ways and then do it again so the card is full length but only a quarter width. All this should be done while you are apparently rummaging for some sheers and should only take one or two seconds.

Bring out the card clipped between your thumb and 1st finger and hidden by your palm and explain you can't find the sheers so you will have to do it by hand. Take the rose with your empty right hand and position it so that the folded card is hidden behind the stem but is also still held firmly in place with the thumb and finger.



card.

Snap the stem of the rose with the right hand. The left hand should not move. Tilt the stem held in the left hand towards you slightly and then pull the card to the right with your right hand. This should be done quite quickly and smoothly so that it looks like the card is actually coming out of the stem. Don't take it out of their line of sight and touch it as little as possible so there is no doubt it has always been there card and you haven't switched them. Let the spectator unfold the card to see it is her signed

Explain that because you have ruined the rose, she can have something even more special. Reach into your pocket and pull out the ring box. Slowly open it and reveal it is their initialled coin.

Everything can then be examined.

By Daniel Price



Being a Neophyte... Part 2

Being a Neophyte...

...*The Days of Innocent Discovery In The Art of Mentalism!*

P. Craig Browning (*Darmoe*)

{Part II}

*If your only theory is trickery
A Mentalist you'll never be...*

-- Robert Cassidy* *Bob Cassidy's Mentalism*

In the previous article I covered many of the "basics" I personally feel the 21st century psychic/bizarre entertainer needs to his/her advantage and the course of study that can get you there. Left from this mix was an area I feel worthy of a more in-depth look e.g. the issue of *Cold Reading* and the *art* of being a Reader.

Contrary to the belief/assumption of most "Magicians" the profiling methods many of them use ARE NOT how the genuine Shut-Eye Reader works. Though some degree of profiling exists, the genuine Reader learns how to listen to his/her gut. Ian Rowland refers to this as being a "Lucky Guess" technique in his composition on Readers and Reading Techniques but, from what I can see, this is a typical tome on the issue as composed by a disgruntled magician vs. someone that's actually come to know success in life as an entertainer. (Yes, I know that's a very provocative statement, but you will find that most "debunkers" are individuals who failed in the mentalism fields and/or magic itself. They join the band-wagon of the skeptic's movement as a commercial hook and means by which to exact revenge on and around the issue. Trust me, I'll address this in the not so distant future, for now, let's resume with the issue at hand.)

I bring out these issues and elements so that you know up-front that conflict around what I'm telling you (what is practiced by most of the more noted personalities of mentalism) and what the magic fraternities want you to believe and embrace. However, there is a contradiction here as well.

THE CANNED SHPILL... as has been outlined and discussed in numerous books, articles and manuscripts on Cold Reading can get you into trouble. Most, such as those shared in the writings of Robert Nelson, William Larsen (Sr.) and Burling "Votive" Hull aren't only out-dated, but highly lacking in the needed psychological anchors that make such material effective. If you can get your hands of Herb Dewey's "*Psycho-Babble*" and "*Red Hot Cold Readings*" you will find some more up-to-date references of this kind, that include the explanations and perspectives you need for proper application of such. On the other hand, I feel that Herb's "*King of the Cold Readers*" is one of the chief bibles of this field, offering to the student & adept valuable perspectives as well as tools that remove our previously encouraged co-dependent attitude on the canned pitch. Too, I will recommend Ian Rowland's *Full Facts Book of Cold Reading* though there are elements within the tome I have serious conflict (can you say loathing of) with.

Now for that phase where I contradict everything (seemingly) I just said... When you learn to do a *legit Reading system* like the Tarot or Tea Leaf Reading, you are learning "the profile" of each symbol/shape; you are literally learning to associate a given item with a set meaning. This applies to all aspects of the divinatory arts, bar none!

The "Science" of divination comes about long after you've learnt the basics and start discovering the correlations of these symbols based on their locations in a spread, towards one another, etc. Eileen Connolly's trilogy on the Tarot reveals this (these three books are an easy 5-10 year course of study.) As you will see over time and by working regularly with nothing other than the stock systems your preferred divinatory method comes with, your natural hits and accuracy ratio far exceeds the explanations given by some "authorities" involved in Psychic/Paranormal investigation. The more you understand the logical elements associated with these systems and learn to trust your own gut level guidance (a.k.a. intuition/instinct) the more accurate your Readings will become as will your "prophetic" hits. But, this is where we hit the gray-elements of this kind of work.

Jean Dixon, Edgar Cayce and most of the other major personalities associated with the shut-eye side of the

Being a Neophyte... Part 2 (cont.)

psychic/spiritualists realm will tell you point blank, that there is a serious difference between "Prophecy" and "Divination." What you are doing when it comes to the divination arts/sciences IN NOT THE SAME AS PROPHETIC VISION. This is a massive misnomer that has been intentionally abused by the supposedly open minded investigators of Psi phenomena.

The reason many "predictions" made by "psychics" do not come about or only come within a certain level of accuracy is because it is based on a set of ingredients that can be changed. In other words, the client/sitter still has his/her free will and nothing is written in stone. They can choose to change their mind, claim their power and thus, change whatever future circumstances the Reader may be seeing during a session. They may only change a portion of whatever said outcome may be or they might very well change it all -- good & bad.

Prophecy on the other hand, is nearly impossible to change or augment. It is also the more fantasiful side of Psi phenomena that even the more ardent supporters of metaphysical idealism contest, when it comes to validity and application. Long story short, Prophecy contradicts the core premise of most world spiritual teachings concerning humankind's freedom of will. It is more of a fate based idea that says more or less, if you are to be at the corner of Melrose & La Cienega on Oct. 15th 2005 where you will be hit by a car... no matter what you do YOU WILL BE THERE AND YOU WILL BE HIT BY THE CAR.

The "equalizer" to these two extremes is what is known as a "*Premonition*" which, in truth, is a heightened "suggestion" one feels or senses at the intuitive or impulse level of the subconscious. This includes such things as having dreams that seem to forebode future happenstance; answering the phone before it rings and knowing who is on the other end; telling someone not to get on the plane because of a deep feeling of dread and doom, etc. Such "psychic" impulses are typically localized and pertain to close friends and relatives. They rarely ever extend beyond one's immediate circle of influence but are known to reveal a stronger sense of manifestation in instances such as Twin siblings, between pets & their owners (especially if the owner has a chronic health condition), etc.

Learning To See... is the biggest tool any Reader or Psychic Entertainer has to their advantage. When you learn to look beyond the surface levels of your environment and absorb what's around you, you are literally "*tuning into your environment.*" As you learn to focus that awareness towards individuals you begin to see how to build your own classifications or profiles around certain types of individuals that fit your way of thinking and relating to life as a whole.

In the previous article I mention the art of Asian Face Reading as an area to study and become familiar with. When you combine that simple piece of data with other techniques you will eventually learn to develop, you add to your accuracy level when doing a Reading or, in your ability to communicate (as the result of understanding things about that person you are talking to that they aren't aware you know.) Add to this element an understanding of body shape translations, related health indicators found in a person's complexion, eye coloring, etc. and even how they walk, carry themselves, etc.

As you can see, observation allows for a *Domino* type effect; the more areas of subconscious communication you study (as mentioned above) the greater your ability to reach into the life of a total stranger and deliver uncanny hits time and again, about their lives and their potential future. But there is more to this one area of skill development.

I believe Joseph Weed's book "*The Secret Wisdom of the Mystic Masters*" reveals several known mental exercise methods used "secret societies" that aid in conditioning one's memory and one's ability to "know" the environmental setting they're in. These techniques have been used in major University studies and even offered as part of interactive courses that aid the student in general mental development. As I'd mentioned before, the old timers of mentalism promoted the dogma that a mnemonic system had to be in place and a matter of personal habit in order to achieve heightened mentalism. Though preached I can tell you for fact that the majority of the big name mentalist can't remember their name half the time. But, they do work with various modes of associative memory training, which is the point here. Learn to discipline you mind and to be aware of your surroundings at all times... Learn how to walk into a room, look around it for about 10 seconds, close your eyes and accurately describe the layout to the most minute of details. I know that sounds far fetched, but it is a

Being a Neophyte... Part 2 (cont.)

method that is used even today, within the homes of those "Ivy League" types so many of us envy and can't quite pin-point as to how they gain such "advantage".

Think about it... there may just be something to all this metaphysical hokum...
Now that I have your mental machinery churning a bit I'll leave you be till next time.

Craig Browning
Surrealist Entertainer
Old Time Mystery Shows

Thoughts From Mid-West America

CONTEXT BY LAUCK

... the kid takes a big puff off the cigar, ashes on right on his foot and says, "What the hell do you think?"

If you have spent much time seriously pursuing magic, I'll bet you have a junk drawer by now. You know, all that magic that didn't perform as advertised or doesn't quite fit into your image or just hasn't really seemed worth doing. Oh, yeah, that junk drawer. I knew you had one. Believe me, everyone has bought at least one piece only to discover that it's revolutionary new concept is the same old concept with a magnet attached. Or some well meaning person gave you some magic knick-knack that you have never even been tempted to buy because they know "you are into that sort of thing." Or maybe you were just young or new enough to buy something you would never buy now... there's lots of ways to build a junk drawer (I personally can't pass up a children's magic set; the cheaper the better... I've bought'em at the grocery store). And how do I know you have kept all this crap? Simple: I have yet to meet a magician who could bear the thought of throwing any magic away. Give it away, maybe there are alot of very generous folks in our world, but then you would have to admit that you were sucker enough to buy this junk! So you have a junk drawer; welcome to the club. Get ready to go revisit yours.

They say there is no bad magic, only bad illusionists (insert your own illusionist joke here). Seriously, I am beginning to think that it is actually true (the no bad magic part... I know there are plenty of bad illusionists!), and it is all because of the Man in Black, Johnny Cash.

Johnny Cash is an American icon. He was country when country was cool and his kind of country soon became rockabilly and eventually gave birth to punk rock, not the crap they pass off as country now. He sang about prison, redemption and the need to occasionally shoot some one back when Doris Day was still on the charts. He cut his first albums at Sun Studios about the same time as Elvis and is still recording. His last four albums have been produced by Rick Rubin, the guy that made the Beastie Boys, Slayer and Metallica stars.

Johnny's new album is mainly cover songs. Several are older alternative rock songs like Depeche Mode's "Personal Jesus." He also does Nine Inch Nails' "Hurt." You know what I have always hated? Nine Inch Nails' "Hurt;" it is just a whining junkie crying about his life. I have little sympathy for junkies and never really liked Nine Inch Nails anyway. You know what song I love? Johnny Cash's "Hurt." Slowed down a bit, the lyrics take on new meaning when sung by a 70 year old in ill health whose voice doesn't quite boom out with the magnificent bass it once had. And the video? It nearly makes me cry to see the Man in Black, shrunken with age, once coal colored hair now snow white and thin, sitting among mementos and film footage of his youth singing as he shakes from his Parkinson's Disease. Johnny Cash brings "Hurt" new meaning; when he sings the song it is in an entirely new and much more effective context. It turns out that context is everything.

It is a lesson that I should already know. It's a lesson we should all know, but it is so easy to forget. There's no shame in that, but there's no reason to keep ignoring it. All tricks can be good in the right context! C'mon, say it! All tricks can be good!

I have probably mentioned my old weapon twirler act combining magic and Chinese martial arts. I used to produce and vanish knives with silks (many Chinese weapons have colorful silks or tassels attached). Made

Thoughts From Mid-West America (cont.)

sense for my act, but Sylvester the Jester doesn't really have a reason to make weapons appear at his fingertips and it would be startling during one of his shows. The context is all wrong! When I did this act I was surrounded by martial arts enthusiasts and Sinophiles. If I had broken out a set of Johnson 'Chinese' coins I would have been exposed for using gimmicks even though I know lots of magicians (probably including some reading this) who love their Chinatown Halves and CSB sets. It wasn't that coin magic didn't fit into my act (the character I portrayed was basically a beggar or busker and, besides, more than one guy in Ancient China found himself on the wrong side of a sharpened coin), it is just that real Chinese coins just don't look like their magic counterparts! Most people wouldn't know that, but a good percentage of my audience would! The Johnson stuff is great (they are my preferred coin magic manufacturers), but would have been out of context for me!

And context applies to magic in many ways. Your act should have an overall feel and you should have a definite personality. A trick may be great but not fit in with your personality (why would a fast-talking street hustler like Harry Anderson have an ancient mystic, well, an ancient mystic anything? And should a Renaissance harlequin be running around doing tricks on his PDA?) or have a place in the overall routine (the world's best Zig-Zag Girl illusion probably isn't ever going to fit into 45 minutes of sweet Ricky Jay style card work). On top of that, even if the trick fits into the routine and meshes with your personality, it may not be visually in context. If your spooky bizarre magic routine cries out for a great Square Circle bit in the middle, you can't use a yellow and red set with a bunny shaped cut-out in the square, can you? Of course not.... All too often when these things happen we file the effect in the junk drawer. When someone asks about it we say, "Well, I bought one last year but I have never used it."

Having made these revelations I have recently gone through my own junk drawer asking questions to help me figure out where these misfit tricks fit in the grand scheme of things. First, is this thing just a cheap piece of junk? It's a little rough, but I think we have all made that purchase that ended up being a poorly made or barely operable money waster; this isn't a matter of context but quality! Does this fit in with what I do? Personally, I don't do card magic so anything that can be described with terms like Rider Back or Bridge Size is out for me (but that sure doesn't mean that all card tricks are bad, does it?). Will this fit in with my other material? Does this look right? Now, after weeding out the things I can't currently use I have a few more questions to ask before I put it back in the old junk drawer. Does this have a solid method or clever principle I can apply to something I can use? That is a big one. Also, I surveyed all my remaining misfit magic and asked myself if they had any commonalities? Simply put, could this magic fit together into a routine? Is there a new character and routine lurking among my junk drawer? It's all a matter of finding the right context.

Oh yeah, I almost forgot, that opening line is really a punchline. Out of context it doesn't make much sense, does it? Here's the set-up:

A door to door salesman knocks on a door and a five year old with a martini glass in one hand and a seven inch long cigar in the other answers. Trying to be professional, the salesman says "Excuse me little boy, but is your mother home?" and...

By Michael St. Louis

A Magic Website Part 1

There are many magicians out there who do wonderful magic and get rave reviews, but who actually knows about them? This is where a web site comes in. Having a web site on the Internet opens up all kinds of opportunities, from enquiries, to information about you, and maybe a few promotional pictures. This brief guide will explore what kinds of things a magician's personal website could and should contain for visual and business reasons, as well as the technical part of building a site. It will attempt to assist fellow members of Magic Bunny who are looking to produce their own web sites for magical or other purposes.

CONTENT – WHAT SHOULD BE ON A TYPICAL SITE?

Let us assume that the web site is for personal use, most likely for advertising yourself as a magician of some description. This type of site should contain some or all of the following:

A Magic Website Part 1 (cont.)

- Information about yourself
- One or several professional looking photographs
- Contact details (usually a telephone number or e-mail address)
- Description of your act, or what you perform
- *Optional but recommended:* A short video of your act
- *Optional:* A Links page, containing hyperlinks to other websites that a visitor may find interesting

The first four are pretty much mandatory. The information on you and your act will tell the prospective booker exactly who you are, and what you have to offer them, and of course they need some way of contacting you which is where the phone number comes in (your home address probably should not be mentioned here as people usually call to book anyway).

The photograph is there to either give the booker a further look at the man/woman behind the site, or simply something that makes the site look more pleasing to look at. A nice and original piece of clipart may do here, but try and avoid anything you may find in packages such as Microsoft PowerPoint, as they tend to be slightly cheesy, simple and often overused in similar sites.

Additionally, if you want to look extremely professional and really give visitors a flavour of your magic, then a short video demonstration is recommended. This can be an excerpt from a recorded act, or just one trick that you specially perform in front of the camera. Either way, it gives the visitor a visual idea of what kind of thing they can expect from you, so this has to be your best. More on making a video clip will follow in the next part of this guide.

Finally, a links page. This is optional, but gives you a chance to show some of your favourite web sites to your visitors. These may be things that are personal to you, or just that visitors may find interesting. It could simply be a link to your local magic society's web site. But don't overload your page with links, just two or three is sufficient as it's you who the visitor came to read about.

Many magicians (such as myself) have a single page to advertise themselves, and others choose to have several pages with their content spread out, but the most important thing is that it looks good, and that all of the content in your site is easily and instantly accessible.

BUILDING A SITE – HTML AND 'FLASH'

Almost all professional web sites are authored using a computer code known as Hyper Text Mark-up Language, or HTML, which is quite complicated in terms of the code, but allows for fairly complex page structures to be built. Some web sites also use 'Flash' for parts of a page. This is usually embedded in the page and can contain more advanced animations, attractive/animated buttons and other things not possible with HTML. However, it is not recommended to build an entire page using flash, as navigation is made more limited and refreshing a specific page will not work, but it can be used to build a navigation panel or to have an animated picture or introduction on your site for more professionalism. A trial of Flash is available at www.macromedia.com if you wish to experiment with this method.

Many people do not know HTML, but there are web sites that have special user-friendly 'site editors' and will even host your site for you in return for the odd advert popping up. An example of a site that offers this service is www.geocities.com, which features a 'drag & drop' site builder feature with a reasonable amount of web space and a www.yourname.geocities.com domain (although you could easily link a purchased domain to your index page).

Alternatively, many books are available on the subject, such as 'The Little Internet Guide to HTML', which is the book I used to get what knowledge I needed to build up my site. One other option if you don't want the bother of learning HTML is to pay to get the site made by a professional, who will also advise you further on content and layout. www.magicwebdesign.co.uk is one place that will make and host a site for you, and at reasonable rates. (Magic Web Design is particularly experienced in using frames, see below.)

DESIGNING A SITE VISUALLY

When designing your site, try not to cram too many things onto the page and avoid having any purposely put adverts or banners, except on a links page if you have to. One other bad move is to put endless 'Top 50 Magic

Thoughts From Midwest America (cont.)

Websites' logos on your site, which not only look messy, but also can look slightly cheesy and despite the recognition they give you, most professional sites don't display these. If you must, one is enough, and put it in just one place, out of the way somewhere.

A simple, neat layout is recommended, with plenty of space between things and with easy to read text, non-intruding images and preferably a plain background. Try to have a noticeable pattern or structure to your content instead of placing things all over the place. www.sanderson-magic.com is an example of a structure, with everything on the main page centralised, and very professional looking photos, which blend nicely into the black background. The whole site has a dark and mysterious look with plenty of open space and clear links.

Having a simple and neat navigation 'panel' on the left hand side or top of your page is a good idea, instead of spreading links out all over the page. This panel should be identical on every page (or in a separate frame, see the next section on frames), and always include a 'home' button or image. A visitor should be able to get back home from any page in your site with just one click, and any other page with a maximum of two or three clicks, as most people just won't bother to wade through endless links.

Also, try to limit the amount of animation on your site, if you have any at all. Repetitive movement can start to become distracting and even strain the eyes with continuous movement, which may even deter a visitor from returning.

The Use of Frames

A web site can be split up into sections called frames and each 'frame' has its own closed off space within the browser window and has its own scrollbar. This means for example, that you can click on a link in a left hand frame, and the relevant page appears in the right hand frame, but the original left hand page remains in its own frame. This is commonly used for a navigation panel when all hyperlinks are the same for every page, and usually contains an obvious link back to your main page, sometimes as an image.

One tip when using frames is to make sure that the smaller frames (especially those with a navigation panels inside them) are big enough to hold their content without having to allow scrollbars, which can make the page look untidy as well as obscuring some links partially. An example of a web site that uses frames to the highest level is www.magicweek.co.uk, which has a navigational panel on the left, magic advertisements on the right and the main page in the bottom centre.

The positive factors about frames is that you can have a permanent navigation or title panel with all links clearly accessible, but a small minority of browsers have trouble displaying pages that contain frames, and unwanted scrollbars may appear if a visitor's screen resolution is too small. For these reasons, you should only use frames if you're pretty sure what you are doing.

Now the basics have been covered on content and layout, next time we'll look at how to create pictures, video clips, titles and other features that make your site look good.

Until next time,

Best Wishes,
Richard Penna

From the Desk of Michael Jay

Happy Birthday to Magic Bunny. One year has passed since Magic Bunny opened its doors on the internet to all magicians who wish to better themselves through discussion, consideration and debate. We've come a long way since then. With over 500 members and over 30,000 posts credited, it has truly been a successful year. So to all the members, the moderator team both past and present and to Nigel for making it possible, I say, "Thank you all."

Our newest forum, The Library, is growing immensely. If you've not taken the time to peruse that forum, you may just wish to have a look around. The easiest way to navigate the forum is to use the indices, which are

From the Desk of Michael Jay (cont.)

second from the top where they stay, wherein you'll find everything in the library, listed by subject matter and alphabetized.

Please feel free to use the library as you do our other forums. If you have an essay to share, post it. If you have a biography of your favorite magician, past or present, put it up there. If you want to share the working of a special magic trick that you do, feel free to write it up. I shall quickly see to the indexing of your material, for ease of reference, and this offers one very important benefit to you, as the writer - it dates your material. Once you've posted it, you retain the copyright to that material and you have undeniable proof as to the date that it was published. The copy will always be there for you and easily found in the index.

Again, thank you all for your contributions to our terrific site. You've all made the difference between magic sites that drag along, getting one or two posts a day, if at all and a site that thrives as a veritable metropolis. You all take care and I'll catch you 'round the boards.

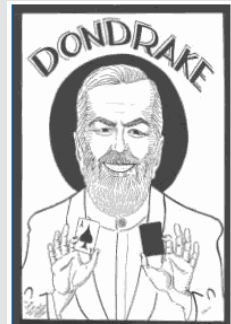
Mike.

An Interview With Don Drake

MASTERING THE BLACK ART - from the stage to the parlour...

What is the Black Art and how can you use it? Find out in our exclusive interview with Black Art master, Don Drake.

If you've never used Black Art, you are missing out on one of the most powerful tools in magic. From levitation to decapitation, the Black Art can help you perform just about any miracle you could dream of. While the basic idea is not new (according to Don Drake, it may have been used in a Chinese Dragon Dance as long ago as 200 BC!), it really came into its own in the 19th Century when dark backgrounds and special lighting enabled stage magicians to exploit this technique to the full. In the present day, most people probably think of the Black Art as rather a specialised type of magic, suited only to big stage shows such as those of Omar Pasha. In fact, this is not the case. As Huw Collingbourne discovered when he spoke to the leading Black Art innovator, Don Drake (aka Dondrake).



Huw: You've worked with some great magicians, Don. Out of all of them, which has been the greatest influence on you personally?

Dondrake: There are two actually, Jeff McBride & Darren Romeo (Siegfried and Roy's protégé).

Huw: Apart from Black Art, what other types of magic particularly interest you?

Dondrake: I like close up, having studied under Slydini many year ago, and any magic that carries a lot of misdirection. I also like doing benefits for underprivileged or sick kids.

Huw: For most of us Slydini is one of those almost mythical greats of magic. Can you tell us a bit about him? What impression did he make on you? What was the most important thing you learnt from him?

Dondrake: Tony Slydini and I met in 1959 when I was a demonstrator for The Wizard Shop in NYC. Tony would come around just about every day, and do something for us. When he published his first book, *The Magic of Slydini*, I got to go to some of his classes, as I was the gofer for the many pictures in the book. Slydini's magic is describable only as a complete misdirection and pure magic! The most important thing I remember about Tony was of course his ability to completely make you look where he wanted you to. He was the master of misdirection.

An Interview With Don Drake (cont.)

Huw: Obviously, you are now best known for all the innovations you have introduced in the area of Black Art. How did you first become interested in this and what is it about Black Art that fascinates you?

Dondrake: I became interested in Black Art in 1960, when my mentor, Alwyn Stevenson introduced me to an improved version of the DeGraham Utility Board (Donald Graham Palmer, aka DeGraham, was the first person to do Black Art magic in the parlour - see *Linking Rings* 1945, and the manuscript by Don Potts, entitled *The DeGraham Utility Outfit*).

Huw: Forgive my ignorance, but I wonder if you could explain what the DeGraham Utility Board is, exactly?

Dondrake: The DeGraham Utility outfit was a black velvet covered board that allowed the performer to do parlour sized black art tricks, such as silk productions, card vanishes (one sided only), and other impossible looking effects. To quote US Grant: "This was the closest thing to real magic I have ever seen!" DeGraham is credited with the FIRST use of parlour sized black art!

Huw: Probably most magicians would associate Black Art with big, expensive stage shows. But your description of 'parlour sized' Black Art makes it sound as though maybe this is adaptable to other kinds of magic too. Are there any ways in which Black Art can be adapted for performances on a smaller (and less expensive!) scale?

Dondrake: YES, definitely! That is the whole point of nearly everything I've done so far. The Wizard's Window (my first invention) is based on a portable, parlour sized black board that does miracles at small venues. I also do some amazing stuff with a Black Art close up board and tiny things like coins, etc. My entire lecture is aimed at the practical working magician who does tradeshows, close up and platform magic.

Huw: In terms of close-up black art, what is the minimum basic set-up that would be needed? And what would be the cost?

Dondrake: You're giving me a chance to get in a sneaky ad here <g>. The minimum set-up would be The Wizard's Close Up Board and the cost is around \$150.00. Of course you can make your own close up board and props if you have the knowledge and experience. You'll need a triple-velvet covered board (black of course) and props that will 'blend in'. I'm not going to give away all my secrets here, it took me too long to learn them. For more information on this one, check out the website <http://blackartsecrets.com>.

Huw: Can you give us a few examples of some of the range of effects that can be achieved using Black Art?

Dondrake: You name it, you can do it. And you can do it inexpensively. I'll never understand why people spend thousands of dollars for one big illusion, when for about \$1,200 bucks they can set up an entire Black Art stage and do ANY illusion, cheaper, better and with less hassle! If you doubt the veracity of this, check out Darwin's best selling book *'Inexpensive Illusions'*. He shows you how to improve on, and build almost 40 different classic illusions with a simple black art backdrop and a black art table!

Huw: Of all the Black Art illusions you've ever seen, which would you say is the most remarkable or memorable?

Dondrake: Omar Pasha doing his present day act! Without a doubt! Also, I'd have to mention Richiardi Jr.

Huw: Has modern technology made any significant improvements to the effectiveness of Black Art magic?

Dondrake: You bet. Not only do we have better materials now (Triple Velvet is the best) but lighting is much easier and more portable. In my new book, *More Black Art Breakthroughs*, I'll be explaining a lot of this type of set up.

Huw: Why is Triple Velvet better than ordinary velvet?

Dondrake: The composition of triple velvet is 35% rayon, and 65% acetate. For some reason this is darker and tougher than normal double velvet. The idea is for the velvet to have a deep pile, and no nap or grain to the finish.

An Interview With Don Drake (cont.)

Huw: What about the lighting? Don't you have to have a special lighting set-up to make Black Art magic effective?

Dondrake: NO, not most of the time, IF you use Triple Velvet in the right way. I won't go into details here, but I've gotten away with using the method in terrible lighting situations. Again it's all in the new book.

Huw: Can you give us some idea of the possible lighting situations in which black art can be used? Could it be done in an ordinary room at home, for example? Or in daylight?

Dondrake: I'll give you this much: It can be done in an ordinary room and in daylight, but only when certain conditions exist, either natural or artificial. Sorry but I've put too much research and time into this one <g>.

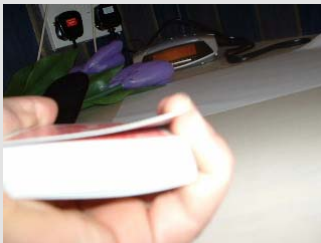
Huw: OK, so how about a few clues as to what exactly will be in your new book?

Dondrake: There will be an entire chapter on lighting, materials, construction and even many close up black art effects. Black Art has so many uses people never think of, such as *Covert* black art, the kind you use that allows you to vanish, produce and change props without visible fluctuation. You can read it all when the book comes out, which should be April at the latest.

Don Drake (aka Dondrake) is best known for his innovations in black art magic. He is author of Dondrake's *Black Art Breakthroughs* as well as several books on easy-to-do magic tricks with special decks such as "*Gambler's Marked Deck*" (De Land), The "*Wonder Deck*" (Svengali), The "*Blank Deck*" (Hull's Mental Photography) and the "*Invisible Deck*" (Ultra Mental). Resident in Las Vegas, Don consults with some of the top names in magic, and continues to produce new and exciting ideas in black art magic. Over 60 performing magicians have used his illusions, including Lance Burton. Visit Don's web site: <http://blackartsecrets.com>

An Illustrated Instruction of Vernon's Light Lift

To begin, hold the deck in your left hand and obtain a pinkie break below the top 2 cards.



Grasp the cards from above with the right hand. Thumb at the bottom end, forefinger at the top end.

Move the cards, as one, about an inch to the right and hold them aligned with the rest of the deck with the left thumb.



An Illustrated Instruction of Vernon's Light Lift (cont.)

Put the right thumb on top of the cards and the right fingers below the cards and bend them up, creating a concave bend in them.



After sufficient bending, allow the cards to fall, face up, onto the deck. Because of the bend, there will now be sufficient space to grasp the cards again, thus eliminating the need for another break.



To turn the double face down, grasp the 2 cards with the right thumb and forefinger as before and move them an inch to the right. Hold them in place with the thumb.



Once again, take hold of the cards and bend them the same way. This will take the bend out of the cards.



Allow the cards to fall onto the deck face down.

By Daniel Price

Editor's Note: This is a sample of some of the excellent material that you can view if you gain access to the Library - see the forums for more details.

The Art and Science of Misdirection Part 2

Written by Michael Jay

In the previous article, we have looked at misdirection in general. There are several specific forms of misdirection, however. In the following article, we will endeavor to list several different forms and look at how they affect our routine. In fact, misdirection can make the difference between a trick and a miracle.

1. The Ricochet - This very powerful form of misdirection goes straight to the heart of the psychology of misdirection. Termed "The Ricochet" by Tommy Wonder, this is psychology at its finest.

When dealing with spectators, there are several reasons to ask them their names and use those names while working with them. One reason is listed in "How to Win Friends and Influence People," by Dale Carnegie. It is explained, in that book, that the sweetest sound to someone's ears is their own name. By using people's names, you not only get them on your side and help them to like you, but you also put them at ease. This is very important on several levels. When someone likes you and they are at ease, they are much more easily directed in the way that you desire. Influence, a form of mind control, is what you desire in any situation where you show magic as that is exactly what misdirection is - influence.

The next thing that using someone's name accomplishes is that it almost forces them to look at you while you address them directly. "Hey pal," does not carry the force that "Excuse me, Bill," does (assuming, of course, the spectator in question's name is Bill). So, when covering up a special maneuver and you need a second or two, a question directed at Bill will immediately get him to make eye contact with you. He is at ease because you are using his name, he is on your side because he likes to hear his name used and he looks at you because you directly used his name in conjunction with a question. This, however, is not the ricochet itself.

The ricochet occurs when the other spectators look at Bill as he answers your question. Their attention is drawn to Bill as he answers you. This is the ricochet. It is deeply ingrained within the human psyche that when somebody is talking that they should be given attention. By putting the spot light on Bill, you have influenced the spectators to look at Bill while he answers you. Let's assume for one minute, however, Bill's greatest desire in life is to catch you doing your special maneuver - Bill only wants to see how you are accomplishing your magic. Let's further assume that Bill is with his girlfriend Joannie. Bill simply will not look up at you, his eyes won't leave your hands.

Here we will invoke the ricochet to misdirect Bill. You see, you will look at Joannie and ask, "Joannie, have you ever seen anything like this before?" Joannie will look at you as you ask your question, having used her name she is compelled to give you attention. Bill, hearing another man use Joannie's name will be compelled to look at you out of curiosity and hearing another man use her name. Even if he still manages to keep his eyes on your hands, he will be overwhelmingly drawn to look at Joannie while she answers the question since the need to look at her is ingrained into Bill - this is his girlfriend, she is conversing with another man and she deserves Bill's attention when she speaks. This is a very powerful tool. If this doesn't work on Bill, don't worry, there are still more techniques to use in misdirection. This only serves to show you one very powerful tool that you wield in your misdirectional arsenal. Always keep the ricochet in mind.

2. Entertainment - This sounds simple but is probably one of the most important parts of misdirection that we can use. This not only runs on a psychological level, but on a biological level too. The fact of the matter is, when people are entertained they are at ease. Alright, maybe not all the time, since deeply emotional things can be entertaining but still not put an audience at ease, like a disturbing and scary movie, for example. However, as a general rule, entertainment comes in the form of having fun and enjoying oneself.

On the psychological level of entertainment, we have something similar to the ricochet above. We've put our audience at ease through entertaining them and this opens them up to being properly directed by the entertainer. This feeling of ease is used by the magician to force the spectator's attention to where it is desired. By using this feeling of being at ease, the astute magician will use this in conjunction with other powerful forces of misdirection, such as the ricochet. The audience, already at ease, is more susceptible to the effects of other misdirections.

Which brings us to the biological factors of entertainment. Normally, when the performer is entertaining, he/she

The Art and Science of Misdirection Part 2 (cont.)

is evoking laughter. It cannot be denied that laughter causes powerful enzymes to be created by the brain - this is a biological fact and has been studied under laboratory conditions. These enzymes, called endorphins, give the spectators an overall feeling of well being and this, in turn, helps them to like the performer. Once again, when the spectators are on your side, you're using their names and you are entertaining them, they are much easier to lead along in the direction that you want to take them.

3. Temporal - This is a misdirection of time. Temporal misdirection comes in many forms, from the physical to the psychological. One of the most powerful of temporal misdirections is in the classic illusion, "Metamorphosis." In this illusion, the magician and his assistant use temporal misdirection to make the impossible happen. Anyone familiar with the workings of this illusion will understand what is being explained. In this example the temporal misdirection is both psychological and physical.

Another temporal misdirection is when the maneuver that the magician needs to make to get the magic to happen has already been done and the magician spends time building to the end of the trick. You are leading the spectators farther away from the actual maneuver and misdirecting them psychologically. The farther you get from the maneuver, the less are the chances that anyone will figure out the technique that made that magic happen.

As an example, let's look at a simple coin vanish. Using a French Drop, you pretend that you have the coin in your right hand while secreting it in the left. If you immediately show the right hand empty, attention will naturally go to your left hand since the coin must have gone somewhere. Rather than immediately showing the right hand empty, we will use temporal misdirection. The coin is now secreted in the left and the spectators believe that the coin is in the right. Reaching into a pocket to pull out a wand, the magician leaves the coin behind. Then, explaining the use of the wand, the magician takes the spectators even farther away from the time of the sleight. The farther the magician gets away from that second when the sleight occurred the harder it will be for the spectator to realize that anything at all happened.

The above may not be the most powerful of misdirection, but coupled with the next example of misdirection, it becomes very powerful...

4. Subtlety - Subtlety is a way of drawing attention without actually drawing attention. Sounds like a paradox, but it isn't. Subtlety is proving something fair without actually saying, "As you can see, this is completely fair."

One example of a subtlety can be found in a cups and balls routine. While the human hand is capable of doing several things while secreting an object, as magicians well know, the general belief is that the human hand is only capable of doing one thing at a time. By using this misconception, we can point out that our hand is empty while using a wand wherein a ball is secreted. Using the wand in conjunction with a secreted item subtly tells the spectators that there is nothing in that hand, except the wand.

Subtlety in conjunction with temporal misdirection would be something like this: Using the example above, the spectators believe the coin to be in the right hand. By using the Ramsay subtlety just prior to garnering the wand from your pocket you've proven that the left hand is empty in a very subtle way, prior to accessing your pocket. Now, the spectator has no reason to believe that you've done anything wrong and will not suspect the left hand when it goes into the pocket to retrieve the wand. Using temporal misdirection, you move their attention farther away from the point where you accessed the pocket and dropped off the coin. When you make the coin disappear, you've not only proved to them that your hand was empty prior to accessing your pocket, but you've moved them farther away from the time that the sleight was done. You've now taken a simple coin vanish and have come closer to a miracle.

5. Repetition - When something is done the same way, time and time again, the spectators come to expect that it will be done exactly the same way, every time. By using repetition, you draw off any suspicion of what you are doing. When you do a specific maneuver once, it may draw attention, when you do it the second time it may garner a passing glance but the third time it will go completely unnoticed simply because the spectators expect it and will pay it little, if any, attention.

As an example, when doing a double lift, if you've turned over every card prior to your double lift exactly the

The Art and Science of Misdirection Part 2 (cont.)

same way that you execute the double lift, it will always go unnoticed. Now, there are many ways of executing a double lift to make it look completely fair. However, no matter how fair the double lift may be, if you've flipped over any cards in a different way prior to executing a double lift, you will immediately draw attention to the maneuver. Repetition is a very important thing to remember when putting together any routine.

Using the coin vanish example above, if you've reached into your pocket earlier in your presentation and used the wand, the repetition of going in to retrieve that wand, in conjunction with the Ramsay subtlety, will overwhelmingly go unnoticed by even the most discerning of spectators. You've now moved from a puzzle (the coin vanish) to a near miracle (the coin vanish with subtlety and temporal misdirection) all the way to impossible miracle (subtle, temporal and repetitive misdirection) and, with entertainment added in you'll have a real winner from something that started off as a mere coin vanish. Any time that you can use several forms of misdirection in conjunction with your routine, your magic just becomes more powerful and more convincing.

In the next article, we will continue to identify more forms of misdirection, how to use them together and eventually how to build a routine properly by building in misdirection as we go.

...and so, that's the end of this month's ezine, and the end of a very successful year for MagicBunny.co.uk. Please keep visiting the forums regularly to give support to other magicians who need it and send any submissions for the March Issue to TOPHAT@magicbunny.co.uk

All the Best,

Jon Snoops