



MagicBunny.co.uk

TopHat

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After just a few questions about the functionality of the ezine during the past few months, I've decided to take the time this edition to explain a few tricks you may find useful when reading this ezine. Acrobat was chosen at the beginning due to its cross-platform compatibility as well as neat features that help readers.

First off: navigation. I don't know how you're currently scrolling through this but you may have noticed that there are a million and one ways to do this. To scroll, you can use the arrow keys, page up/down keys, scroll wheel on mouse or drag up and down using the hand tool. However, what I usually do whilst reading is simply hit the spacebar which sends you down just enough to read the next screen. I've found this especially useful whilst attempting to execute some of Daniel de Urquiza's masterful creations and reading the next step at the same time. Any free finger will do.

Another aid with navigation is the Contents box below. Since Issue 10, I've been making the article names into links. By clicking on any of these you can quickly jump to a specific article further down the ezine. You'll also notice that by clicking the Bookmarks tab on the left of your screen, you can get a similar list. This works in the exact same way.

Although these tricks make it a lot easier to get around the ezine on screen, sometimes a hard copy is a lot easier to work with. Fortunately, Acrobat Reader allows printing so you can quickly and easily print directly from the ezine. If you only need one article, you can just choose to print the pages you need or print the whole thing and keep it in file for reference.

Hopefully you'll find this edition as entertaining and informative as previous ones and may now find it easier to use.

All the best,

~Jon Snoops~

Editor of MagicBunny.co.uk's TopHat Monthly E-zine

jonsnoops@magicbunny.co.uk

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Every issue of the TopHat contains original effects and articles written by readers and members of MagicBunny.co.uk. If you would like to submit a piece, please email TopHat@magicbunny.co.uk

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The Latest From MagicBunny

Website News

Tragedy

By Nigel Shelton



There can be no one who has not heard of or seen details about the recent tragic events that have unfolded around the Indian Ocean since Boxing Day 2004. Equally, there can be no one reading this who has not been profoundly moved by seeing footage of the events as they have unfolded over the past four weeks or become available to the media. We have all witnessed catastrophic events that defy our ability to comprehend the true scale of what has happened to those people involved or to even begin to empathise with the agony of those who have had their lives torn apart by the effects of the Tsunami disaster. Even so, the response of the people of this world has been overwhelming. Being a resident of the UK I do not have sound knowledge of the actions of the people of other nations but I am aware of the fact that in the UK alone, over two hundred million pounds has been raised to date. I also note the various threads that have appeared on the forums, regarding the response of the members of Magic Bunny to this disaster and how many of you have been moved to contribute to the relief operation. I was very pleased to see a prompt from Trevor John reminding us of regarding possible avenues of financial support to the work of the Disaster Emergency Committee at www.dec.org.uk and other threads, such as that by DMC who gave a first hand account of his associations with what had happened. I also have been in correspondence with other members who have explained that they are organising fund raising events in their hometowns, either using their skills in magic or some other area of expertise. I am also convinced that there is a great deal of other fund-raising that I am unaware of but is also being undertaken by other members of the boards.

One benefit of our hunger for news and information is that, when a dreadful event such as this occurs, the fact is that we become directly involved as caring viewers and we are moved to help and show compassion for those whose lives have been devastated. Unfortunately, conversely, when the attention of the media turns to some other catastrophic event there is a danger that the compassionate fund-raising that has occurred may falter or lessen due to the lack of attention that the media is able to expend to the original tragedy.

As I now sit by my laptop, writing this article for the February ezine, it is now Wednesday 26th January, exactly one calendar month after the catastrophic events around the Indian Ocean. Even today, this tragedy still receives news coverage and media attention but it is fair to say that the fund raising has lessened from the early days of the disaster. Despite this, there is still an enormous amount of work that needs to be tackled, work that is essential to help the affected peoples of this region start to rebuild their lives. I urge you, if you are not already considering this issue, to still keep the thoughts of this disaster in your minds and to consider ways of support, be they through your interest of magic or some other outlet. I know of members who are performing fund-raising magic shows, sponsored events or other forms of support. Perhaps you may like to consider using the Trading Forum to sell off some unwanted magic videos but to donate the money to the DEC, perhaps you may feel confident in your abilities to perform a charity magic show for friends or family, perhaps you may want to approach a local pub and offer to do a table-hopping close-up event for the regulars in return for their loose change for donation. I am sure that there are many other original ways that we can all assist those who have been deeply affected by this disaster so that these people will know that their neighbours across this planet care deeply about their plight.

Thank you.

Nigel Shelton

The Life of a Magician in Cyprus

The Life of a Magician in Cyprus

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

By Michael Bradbury



This has been written to give a small taste on what the life of a magician is like, in Cyprus.

If you're an American, you'll probably be thinking, "*What on earth is Cyprus?*" Cyprus is a small Greek island, based in Europe, and very near to Greece. I am not a full Cypriot, as my original country, is England; London to be specific. I have been in Cyprus since I was three years old, and grew up here.

Now, there are good things of being a magician in Cyprus, which you may also take advantage of. But there are also bad things. Sadly, I can say that there are more bad things and then good things. The *bad things* are:

1. Hardly this art is performed in this island. People are not very familiar with Magic. They actually know briefly what it is, (tricks) but not very excited to watch it.
2. For the reason of bad issue #1, it's very hard to fix yourself on a gig or a kid's show etc, as hardly people are interested.
3. There is no future with magic in Cyprus, and this is the result of all the reasons stated above so far. Which is why I only use it as a hobby, but a "strong" hobby I can say.
4. As no magic shops exist in Cyprus, things are not easy for me by purchasing magic. Unfortunately, I will have to buy even a thumb tip, from online.
5. We cannot find Bicycle decks in here, which I just HATE. You cannot find any good quality cards in here; the only playing cards you can find, is cheap plastic cards which tourists buy for 50 cents! If we're lucky, we can find plastic COATED made in Spain, for 3 pounds. (it is pounds we use in here)
6. We have no magic clubs, with the exception of the Cyprus Convention, which they did not accept me for the reason being under the age of eighteen, no matter how much knowledge I had/have about the art.

The *good things* are: [which are very few]

1. Since Magic is not often used, no exposure occurs in here. No Masked Magician and all that stuff. YAY!
2. The Balducci levitation secret and method, is not exposed neither in here. And you can take advantage of this. How? By performing it. I am aware that many people don't use the levitation because some say it stinks, (which doesn't) and, yes, it's over exposed. Luckily for the very few people that are involved in Magic from Cyprus, don't have this problem. They can perform it correctly, and people will think we are some kind of gurus. Imagine!
3. For the reason that they don't know Magic very well, Magic is something new and spontaneous to them. They will have not seen anything like it in their lives and especially in CLOSE-UP performance. What they usually see is a magician performing magic on stage with those huge stage "special material", as they call them.

Oh no! Those are the only good things? Well, what can we do? This has been written to prove how HARD it can be being a magician in Cyprus, and not how EASY.

This is not quite lengthy with a lot of material like other Bunnies. But I really do hope that it gave you a taste on how the thing is. Look at the bad and good reasons. You'll soon know.

The Life of a Magician in Cyprus (cont.)

May I also mention, that in Greece it's quite hard, too. Some of the problems in Cyprus are exactly the same with Greece.

Be grateful for the opportunities you have by performing Magic in the US and UK, and don't be too tensed of those hecklers you may find.

Those hecklers can be faced, and there are many advices given by other Bunnies on the boards. Appreciate Magic and enjoy it!

See you around!..

Michael Bradbury
M_B

Thoughts From Mid-West America

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Magic World

By Michael Saint-Louis



Lately books and movies like the Lord of the Rings and the Harry Potter series have seeped into discussions of magic. Will the kids today be more interested or entertained by magic because of Harry Potter? I don't know and, frankly, I don't care. Magicians discuss these works because they feature magic but I think they are missing the bigger picture. Harry Potter and the Tolkien works and other pop culture phenoms like Star Trek or Spiderman are popular because they have created a magical world that people want to revisit. That is what the magic world, as performers, should be studying. After all, since I have yet to read about a post-Jurassic Park paleontology program enrollment

boom, I don't expect Ms. Rowling's novels to inflate the number of stage magicians the current generation produces. But I do expect them to share Harry Potter with their children the way so many of our parents shared The Chronicles of Narnia or JRR Tolkien with us. Why? Again, it is because a fantastic world has been created that people wish to return to over and over again.

Any performer who can create such a world for his audience will never starve! The question is how do you do this without \$75 million worth of special effects or the advantages a 325 page novel offers? It can be done but it takes a great deal of thought, preparation and effort. People are guided by essentially two main things: senses and emotions. Keeping this in mind, any performer can design an act that isn't just entertaining but draws the audience into a world of the performer's making. And, as magicians, this is so important to us if we expect the audience to allow themselves to believe in magic. In the Everyday magic is a daydream at best (some may even consider it foolishness) but in the world you create it is as real as the sky or the ground beneath us.

Before you can draw an audience into your world you are going to have to explore it yourself. You must sit down and create boundaries for yourself, create a theme for the world and decide what impression it should leave on the audience. By creating boundaries for yourself you determine your role. Are you a modern day shaman, ala David Blaine, or a living cartoon, like Sylvester the Jester, or just a poor sap being tortured by forces he cannot understand or control (think Cardini)? Each of these three very different performers manages to create their own world and clearly define their role in it. There are many more roles, though. You could be a modern day prophet, a 'legitimate' psychic, a parapsychologist, an alchemist, a martial arts or qi gong master, a fantasy style wizard, the Antichrist, a science-fiction character, a mad scientist, super

Thoughts From Mid-West America (cont.)

hero, man from the future or whatever. But you have to find a role that fits you and your performance style first. Naturally, if you perform mainly at renaissance fairs you have a natural path to follow and if you are a children's entertainer that Antichrist thing isn't the best option! Also, if you are a redheaded Scotsman please don't try to pass yourself off as the last great Crow medicine man.

Once you begin to visualize a role for yourself you can begin to create a world. Don't be too rigid! After you create the world and temper it with the impression you wish to leave upon the audience your role may be a little bit different than it was in the beginning and that's okay because it is the final package that matters. Certain roles will naturally bring out certain themes. True, Blaine and Cardini's roles are kind of vague, but by being billed as a living cartoon Sylvester invokes an almost prefabricated world because we are all familiar with the Looney Tunes and Tom and Jerry laws of physics and reality. If a magician claims to be Merlin, again, he will start with his audience having a certain understanding of the world he moves through. Don't think that this makes the overall process any easier; in certain ways it probably makes life a bit more difficult because you get less of a chance to mold your audience's expectations!

How do you create a world if your role does not have any preconceived notions attached to it? You must determine a theme for this world and then build it up by choosing props, costumes, effects and even patter that enhances it. All of these things will help the audience grasp the world you are presenting because they will appeal to the senses. But first, how does one choose a theme? A theme should be something that you can realistically portray, so drawing from your own interests or background may help. In the past I have performed magic under the guise of a Chinese charlatan faking martial prowess to sell miracle cures because I have a deep interest in martial arts, some skill in the area and speak Mandarin Chinese. Also, this was a character type I was familiar with from Chinese books and films. Other times, when performing impromptu close-up, I draw a great deal on my Native American heritage to flavor performances. What do you have to draw from? Or what can you learn?

Finally, what do you want the audience to take away from your performance? Awe, joy, what? Do you aim to teach them something? A performance geared towards entertainment only is going to have to be different than one attempting to remind the audience of the importance of family. Making an emotional attachment with your audience is so important (I'll not recover that territory here!) and your world should be geared towards this goal. How you hope to touch your audience emotionally should set the tone of your act.

It has only taken a few short paragraphs to get this far but do not be fooled into thinking that this should be a short process. You are attempting to define your character and the world he walks in so that you can then design an act that fits into this world and invites your audience to accompany you. This should take a bit more than ten minutes or even ten days! Even if you have a firm idea of how you want to portray yourself to the audience you still need to flesh out as much of the world you are creating as possible! This will be the foundation of everything in your magic career. Do not take it lightly!

Here is a good time to question the validity of my assertions. Does one really need to go to all this trouble? Is it not possible to build a good act around some other principles, such as a great piece of music or the props you already own? The answer is yes, it is possible. If you want to be a good magician, good for you. Good luck on your incredible journey to attain "good." Good riddance! Aim for greatness; and rest assured that great achievements rest on deep foundations! If nothing else, think of this magician (we have all seen him somewhere): he starts with a few funny tricks and they go over really well. Then he switches gears and goes into his "Blaine stuff" or his psychic bit, but after his light start, who buys this new persona? Who is willing to think even for a fleeting moment he really has some second sight? No one. It is awkward and, rest assured, he will eventually conclude that the "Blaine stuff" or psychic acts are simply corny and audiences just don't buy them.... He has no world, no defined character and even if he manages to pay the rent with magic gigs, he'll only ever be good at his best! Doug Henning, Harry Anderson, Le Homme Masque, Cardini, Mac King, Jeff McBride... defined characters inhabiting engaging worlds we wish to visit!

Once you have defined your character and their world to yourself and determined how it is you want to stir your audiences' emotions, it is time to start building our bridge to this world. I said earlier that people are driven by senses and emotions. Your bridge needs to appeal to their senses. The best place to start is how you will look. Not all characters will demand any special costume, but many will. Obviously, Merlin needs to dress a certain way, but how does a modern day urban shaman dress? Depends on your world! If you are going for an overall New Age Eastern Mystic feel, maybe feng shui jewelry and a Nehru jacket are a good

Thoughts From Mid-West America (cont.)

start. If your world is going to pull heavily from Celtic legends then dress to invoke this with knot work designs and such. Don't be afraid of stereotyping yourself. Stereotypes gain that status for a reason... Accountants wear white shirts and ties, super heroes wear tights, scary wielders of dark psychic powers have widow's peaks and goatees!

After you have outfitted yourself, it is time to examine your props and the stage (if you have one). Okay, you are going entertain children as a crazy 50's B-movie style mad scientist. You have a lab coat, disheveled hairdo and a monocle. Your first bit involves a great box you picked up to transform silks to doves; it's red with Chinese characters. Why, because it came that way? Since when do mad scientists use wooden boxes with "TAKE OUT ONLY" in Chinese written on them? Since never. Your clothes establish your character and your props are real, physical, tactile examples of the world you are creating. If you can not afford, build or find new props suitable for your world, adapt what you have. I am always shocked by the fact that magicians seem to be afraid to repaint props. Take that great silk to bird box, glue reflective mylar over it and throw a small box with a battery and some blinking LEDs on top. Now that is a mad scientist's prop! Once I was approached by a court jester who pulled out a deck of red backed Bikes. I swear I wanted to slap him! It reminded me of that old movie Somewhere in Time (I'll admit, a favorite) in which a man mentally time traveling is ripped back to his own time when he pulls a modern penny out of his pocket. It goes beyond props, though, if you have a stage show. Your music should be appropriate, too. The great thing about music is that it can start to draw an audience into a certain frame of mind before you even hit the stage. If the audience is listening to R. Carlos Nakai-style modern American Indian flute music while they get seated my modern American Indian shaman character won't seem such a shock.

But the world is still far from seeming real. The clothes, the props, the music, even a beautifully painted expensive custom backdrop for your stage show can't create your world. They can set the mood, but you have to draw the audience into your realm. You must become a storyteller, and a good one, to make your new world real. To this end I suggest all of the following: take public speaking and/or acting lessons, study storytellers and storytelling, get outside help if you can't write a decent script yourself (most magicians seem to avoid this, but they use other magician's tricks or sleights, so why not let someone else help provide patter? Most other performers use other people's material!), learn to ad lib if you are going to interact with the audience (improvisational classes) and learn the vocabulary of your world! The last is so important. I am an avid listener on an American radio program on the paranormal. It features many so-called psychics or visionaries and many of them reference the lost continent of Lemuria; many of them describe it as the mortal enemy of Atlantis. I always am particularly interested in how their spirit guides or second sight or whatever has filled them on so much of this forgotten history of our world without mentioning that Lemuria is a term that was coined by a scientist seeking to describe a land bridge that he thought once allowed a species of lemur to travel between today's modern continents! There are no legends, no fables of Lemuria before his paper on the development of lemurs. Similarly, the occasional self-proclaimed Satanist will casually mention The Necronomicon, apparently unaware that it was purely the invention of HP. Lovecraft for his Cthulu stories and the text that exists today was written as an homage to Lovecraft. A slip like this can destroy all of your hard work if heard by the wrong person, and their indifference to you will spread to others when they speak of you. If you are going to portray yourself as a parapsychologist, do more than watch X-Files reruns. Get on the internet, go to the library and read what those seriously pursuing the topic have to say. Learn the common tenets and assimilate the terminology so that you can use terms like "orbs," "EVPs" and "cryptozoology" sensibly and with confidence. Ultimately you are the bridge to the world you have created; you must paint the pictures of that world with your words.

Perhaps an example would be helpful. There have been rumors that busking may be legalized in my area. Because of this, I have created a busking persona and I hope by explaining his origins my ideas will become a bit more clear. First I thought about reviving my old "Da Lu" character (the Chinese charlatan), but that act tended to take up a great deal of room and this would be a sidewalk performance. I decided instead to run with my heritage and create a Native American storyteller character who punctuates his stories with magic. Cheating, I decided to use my own Indian name for the character, otherwise I would have researched something suitable (truth be told, even Da Lu is my Mandarin nickname; Lu being the closest approximation they have to my last name and Da meaning big... because I am big). Wanting to be obviously Indian but not an extra from Dances With Wolves, I decided to go with an adaptation of turn of the century Indian dress. Blue jeans, boots or moccasins depending on the weather, a breach cloth, a t-shirt, long sleeve western shirt when it was warm, black leather jacket with beadwork when it wasn't, a beat up fedora with a beadwork hat band (somewhere between Cain from Kung Fu and Billy Jack), a bracelet of

Thoughts From Mid-West America (cont.)

beadwork or leather and a leather fringed bag with beadwork. Something I could walk around in without attracting much attention once I ditched the breach cloth, but still said "Native American." Covering the visuals, I figured I would try out my courtship flute as a way to attract attention between performances (although that would mean working on my flute playing). It's very common to see elders or shaman telling stories while beating a small hand drum (a drum skin with a frame under it to hold... kind of like a tambourine without the cymbals), so I wanted to include that into the act. Not only would it help set the tone because of the mystic quality of drumming, but it would attract attention by appealing to another sense and, between it and the drumstick, become a proxy wand for misdirection. If space and local laws allowed, I might have a small piece of pottery with some dry sweet sage burning for the aroma and the smoke; it sets a mood and the tradition of burning sage would be known to many of the New Age people that would be in this neighborhood. Being of mixed blood myself, I figured I would tell not only various Indian nations' stories, but stories from other cultures as well, using magic as a condiment to the meat of the storytelling. After all was said and done I really wanted to convey to people that white, red, brown, black or yellow we are all people, all family. Although I have ideas, I haven't actually worked out a routine yet since his is a character that will probably never be used (busking is still illegal in my town, and even if that changes, I have a day job, a video production business, illustrate on a freelance basis, write and have small children to chase around... oh yeah, I teach martial arts still, too!). This is all just the framework I need so that I can sit down and work out a routine and the patter I would need.

Hopefully you will now be inspired to try to create a magical world of your own to share with your audiences. It won't be easy, but it will be worth it. Be patient, be thoughtful... after all, you are creating a whole new world!

By Michael Saint-Louis

Those Old Jedi Mind Tricks

Those Old Jedi Mind Tricks

Star Wars?

By P. Craig Browning



I was all of 16 when the original STAR WARS motion picture hit the scene and took the world by storm. Hesitantly I confess that I was reluctant to drop the \$1.50 to go see some corny Sci-Fi Space movie. Little did I know what I was in for! The opening six minutes of the film introducing me to a brand new world of fantasy that I'd not previously considered. Let's face it, space adventures were rather hookey up to this point; obvious toy models hanging on a string with a sparkler stuck in their butts. Nothing this real feeling or mind appealing had ever before been presented. And to think that the studios wanted to use it as a lost income tool because they'd made too much money that season. Obviously that wasn't the case. As a die-hard fan I was there for every opening to each sequel. A group of young Hollywood hopefuls and I were the initiators of the famed line on Hollywood Blvd. when the last of the original three films was released. Lending to the studio millions of dollars in FREE international press. After all, for a group of 14 "kids" to sleep in front of a theater a week prior to a movie's premier was not "normal" back then. Members of that particular group moving on to bigger and better things, the most noted personality of said click being actor Patrick Labyorteaux of the JAG Tv series (Lt. Bud Roberts).

Of course, as a Jedi Knight in training my activities while standing in the line included such things as using *the Force* to compel my trusty light-saber to float and dance about the streets (Creekmore made the best *Dancing Light-Sabers* in those days a.k.a. Dancing Cane). My work, in the years since have ranged from working undercover, not revealing my true Jedi nature, as a master manipulator of the mind, to sporting the guise of our arch-nemesis, Darth Vader. Demonstrating for the fans of such, the genuine power found behind the dark side.

Those Old Jedi Mind Tricks (cont.)

"So," You're questioning. *"How did I do it and too, what's all this got to do with mentalism?"*

Those old Jedi Mind-tricks are plentiful and believe it or not, many of you already know of them. Techniques associated with psychological modes of forcing, Muscle Reading, and my favorite, the power of suggestion. When I speak of *The Power of Suggestion* I am not referring to Hypnosis but rather, a little known and rather bold technique. The oldest reference to this I've ever encountered was a treatise by the legendary Orville Meyer (*"Telepathy in Action"*). Unfortunately, (at least, in the minds of some) this is not a technique that's seen a significant amount of ink, outside the realm of stage Hypnosis. I will warn you however, more than any other facet of Mentalism, this technique requires (pardon the phrase) balls of steel! You cannot be shy if attempting this type of act and you must be able to think quickly, on your feet. Too, it works best for those of us who have a natural propensity towards bold face lying and keeping a straight face.

As the term implies, this style of work involves "suggestions" for actions that you put forth via your command of words, the cadence of speech and of course, body language. There is some psychological set-up to this style of work that is very similar to the warm-up demonstrations seen in many hypnosis programs. More than anything though, this type of demonstration centers on your skill to control and work with volunteers from the audience.

Now, let me point out something that may seem non-related that was shared with me some years ago, by animal trainer Karl Mitchell. *The trick to training animals is to find the things they do naturally and learn how to take credit for it.*

This is, in an indirect way, exactly what you do when presenting demonstrations of this ilk. You do your best to lead the participants down a particular path but, no matter the outcome, you take credit for making them do exactly what you wanted them to do. The original Meyer treatise using this modus operandi as "proof" of telepathic influence. In truth, it's only proof that people will do just about anything for their five-minutes of fame. Something that's been proven in just about every hypnosis show throughout history.

I'll not go into extreme detail concerning this route of course. Suffice it to say that you can do some limited footwork and discover a plethora of material, you just need to look into the right places. I've given you a few hints but I just can't bare the thought of making such a potent piece of business too easy to replicate. You may however, want to look at some of the offerings found at WonderWizards.com

When it comes to the issue of Psychological Forces, there are ways of employing this knowledge that far exceed the limited manner by which most exploit said concept. Again, I find myself repeating something I've said 1,001 times – **stop thinking like a magician!** Learn to look beyond those demonstrations outlined in the various tomes that have introduced us to this wonderful tool.

I am not saying this to belittle the contributions given us by Banachek. He's a dear comrade in this business and I value his amazing in-put on most everything. But, as Steve himself would tell you, what's been shared is but a foundation – a starting point from which YOU can build and evolve said technique. Like the aforementioned, it requires some strong confidence and that's where so many of us fall short. We're in the habit of working with "sure fire" methods e.g. magicians present material that works 100% of the time. It is what we are accustomed to and thus, we fail to understand the psychological advantages that come into play, when things are "iffy". That is to say, we don't like to take chances. But, as mentalists that act of taking a chance on something not coming out perfectly, is to our advantage. It makes what we do appear more "real" and thus, makes it much easier to solicit that investment of belief that's required in our line of work. As the old saying goes, "Less is more!"

Play with your knowledge when it comes to this particular concept. It can be fun and if my experiences are anything to weigh things on, it can prove to your advantage. I'll warn you, what I'm about to share has been booed and moaned over time and again. It suggests that "Telepathy" might just be genuine, but in truth, it reveals how easy it is for us to learn how to use established techniques in daily life, which sustain the idea of that old Jedi Mind-Trick.

Some years ago, when living in Reno, NV I was a known creature of habit. Every morning I would arrive between 7:30 and 8:00 a.m. for my medium cup of coffee at the same coffee shop, without fail. One morning I showed up and ordered my usual but in my mind, I was focused on and thinking one single word – Large. It worked! The barista gave me a large and only charged me for a medium.

Those Old Jedi Mind Tricks (cont.)

Granted, this could be because I was a regular client. So, I went to another coffeehouse down the street and applied the very same technique and gained the very same results. In fact, over a three-week period of playing with this technique I had total strangers that waited on me in various venues, mistakenly charge me for a smaller sized beverage, be it soda, coffee or whathaveyou. I'm not saying that it worked each and every time, but it did work at least two-thirds of the time.

I'll not go into some of the other experiments I've done with this technique. I leave it to each of you to conduct your own experiments and play with physical actions, body language, etc. that can "guide" everyday people to do certain specific actions. It may be something as simple as scratching their head or moving a specific item from one place to the next, but it can be done and with regular practice, the results can be quite spooky.

I came into this line of thought via a Docc Hilford card effect some years ago (sad to say I can't recall which it was. I do believe it was from his "*Real Mindreading*" video however.) In his handling, you visualized one particular card throughout the sequence and amazingly, it was generally the card named by your sitter. Granted, there are some psychological principles at work, but the deeper principle remains unique and down right spellbinding for all involved in the experiment; performer and participant alike!

Now we come to the issue of Muscle Reading, a little something that a great deal of material has been introduced on over the past five or six years. The bulk of which extends the same basic details as to "How" it's accomplished and the types of demonstrations you can deliver. Like everything else we've discussed in this column Muscle Reading is a skill that requires a great deal of practice as well as guts, if you are to do it "right". The beauty of Muscle Reading is the fact that it can prove exceptionally versatile, allowing you a very wide range of ways to manipulate the syndrome to your advantage. Truth is, the human subconscious mind is an amazing instrument and when you learn how to play with it, using its little quirks to your advantage, the end results can prove astounding. So much so that many a magician have elected to not practice this technique, simply because it really is thought reading and it gave them the creeps.

Numerous times over the past few years I've stressed the importance of creating the aura of being a "Magickle Entity" around ourselves. As Corinda stated, *Nothing Is More Satisfying than To Fool an Audience, When You Haven't Done Anything!* We obtain that level of notoriety over time, as we become adept at the type of magic we present, and learn to carry ourselves in a manner that says for itself, that *this person is unique!*

When we take it upon ourselves to learn how to apply the techniques and ploys of our craft within the auspices of daily life, we begin moving the "energy" if you would that will bring about such a manifestation. Our actions and attitudes go beyond the limitations of theater and become tools by which to create transformation within society. I know, it sounds like a tall order and even a bit preposterous, but such things are being done daily by way of the Spin Doctors of the corporate world, Advertising Agencies, politics, etc.

Like the master Jedi Knights of Lucas' imagining, the magician of old was seen as a being learned in the ways that go beyond the common person's understanding. They were masters of mathematics, language, and of human nature itself. The "Miracles" they performed were not the result of magickle rites, but of know-how. Granted, it was "primitive" by today's scientific standards, but the course of "high magick" has always been the same – to strive to learn how the mysteries of the world, the universe and life operate and most important, how to use that knowledge for the greater good of all.

With such things considered it becomes apparent that being a magician has nothing to do with that worn-out idea of being *an actor playing a part* and much more to do with being a human being that goes beyond the common constraints of the social norm. It is to be someone that is magickle, aware, educated, and focused. Something that alludes many within our craft, simply because they are content being a clown that does tricks. Then again, many holding this mind-set fail to realize how much our kindred have given to the world; everything from the extension ladder and home security systems to the artificial heart and camouflage. In composing this particular article I sought to instill within the mind of the reader, two key things. Firstly, I wanted to share perspectives about some of the skills we have and how they can be evolved and applied in

Those Old Jedi Mind Tricks (cont.)

both, daily life and via our lives on stage. Secondly, I wanted to nurture that seed of thought I'd planted long ago, about being a real magician in modern times. Our obligation to use our knowledge and perspective, as a way to bring about good things for those within our communities and the market regions we serve. How to create around ourselves that aura of reputation, that speaks for itself – I am different and I am responsible!

More in the next issue!

By P. Craig Browning

Copper/Silver/Okito

Copper/Silver/Okito

Coin Work

By Peter Marucci



The following is a solution in search of a problem. It uses one of my favorite magic props, the Okito Box.

EFFECT

The magus shows four half dollars on the table, which he puts into a small brass box and covers with a lid; the box is untouched.

He then shows an English penny in his right hand.

The penny is tossed into the left hand, which closes, and he does whatever 'hocus pocus' suits the occasion.

He opens his hand and the penny is now a half dollar.

He removes the lid of the box and dumps the contents onto the table; there are now three half dollars and one penny.

He picks up the penny in his right hand and shows it to those on his right; he tosses it into his left hand and shows it to those on his left.

He then drops the penny onto the table with the silver coins and everything, including the box, can be examined.

WORKING

Have three half dollars and a copper-silver (silver side up) on the table, a penny at the right fingertips and a half concealed in the right hand.

With the left hand, put the half dollars and C-S into the Okito Box. Show the penny and toss it into the left hand, Bobo switching it for the half.

Open the left hand, showing it is now silver.

Open the box and dump the contents on the table; by inverting the box, the contents spill out as three silver and one copper.

Pick up the copper (C-S) with the right hand, show the copper side around and toss it to the left hand, Bobo switching it for the real copper in the right hand.

Drop the real copper on the table and let the specs examine the coins.

Pick up the box and lid with the right hand and drop it in your pocket, ditching the C-S at the same time.

Okay - that's the solution.

Now, anyone got a routine?

Peter Marucci

A Year Into Magic

"A Year Into Magic"

Thoughts and musings

By BrucUK, (age 40^{1/2})

In the January 2005 Editorial 34 of TopHat, I could not help feeling that there was a strong case of "Editor's Plea" from Jon - that feeling editors of Newsletters get when they want more contributors. I felt the same once on something I edited, so, like it or not, here goes....

This is not some learned piece of magical lore, or a long explanation of a new sleight, it's just a small piece written by a middle-aged newbie, who is a little over 1-year into this obsession that we all seem to share. I wanted to look back at the journey so far, and try to explain where I think I've got to, and the steps that I've taken to get there. To do this, I reviewed all my posts on MagicBunny so far, and pulled out some of those which formed significant milestones for me in this first short time. For each of these, I want to try and explain why they were significant points in my journey into magic

WHAT FIRED UP THE OBSESSION?

At a Christmas dinner in December 2003, a work colleague at the same table (Myles Hannon for the record, just in case I ever become famous...), made a red silk handkerchief disappear using a TT, and then did a short routine with a Boston Box. That was all it took to excite me, and re-introduce me back into the world of magic, which I had not visited since the early 1980's with a trip to see Paul Daniels in the West End. I had actually started looking around magic sites already, and had already bought a TT, however it was the excitement that I remember, the rekindling of something that I had forgotten, and seeing how powerful a performance could be that made me want to pursue this hobby.

Why was this particular experience important to me?

I realised that if done well, you can hold an audience of 10 or 12 transfixed with a TT and a silk. If I now perform, I always start by rolling up my sleeves, and saying "*As a magician, you might expect me to start by making something disappear - but I'm not going to do that...*", (whilst doing a TT + silk vanish, and then just moving on). Some people here may not like this approach, but I manage to get dropped jaws and that "*look of amazement*" that I remember when Myles showed this to us. What a great feeling it is.

HUNTING RABBIT...

In February 2004, I found, and immediately joined MagicBunny. At an average of 1.93 posts per day I admit that I'm not the most prolific of posters, but I hope that I make up for this in quality ;-). I'm not sure that I have had much to contribute to others in the way of help and assistance so far, as I have mostly been seeking answers, but I hope that even after only a year that some members have benefited.

MAY 12TH 2004 - MATRIX

I discovered "Matrix" effects, and settled on trying to learn the Classic version. I downloaded a fantastic 75-page eBook from WorldMagicCentre - the site owned by the inventor of Matrix - Al Schneider. The site no longer sells this, so you will just have to see the review that I did in June - <http://www.magicbunny.co.uk/phpBB2/viewtopic.php?t=13324&highlight=matrix>

Why is this one important to me?

I instantly loved the Classic Matrix for it's simplicity, which is still one of the things that attracts me to it. Simplicity and beauty combine to show everyday objects moving in an impossible way. I know that there are many "finger-flinging" versions of Matrix, but I think that the original is still gorgeous, and it still fries people whenever I show it.

SAT MAY 15TH - PANIC AND SELF-DOUBT SETS IN

I quote - "Just went to <http://www.dougconn.com/classroom.htm> and saw how to ****really**** do everything that I'm trying to learn how to do...."

Anyone who wants to see what I class as perfect technique and presentation should look at <http://www.dougconn.com/videos.htm>. Here is someone who I've never met or bought from (yet), who combines humour, timing, great music, and economy of movement to produce what look like powerful yet beautiful effects. On seeing this, I began to doubt that I could ever achieve my goal of confidently performing in public.

A Year Into Magic (cont.)

Why is this one important to me?

It's funny, the more I read Bunny articles, the more I see references to this, or similar issues, (such as people getting panic attacks). I have an abject terror of performing magic! Why - I do not know, as I'm perfectly happy e.g. presenting to several hundred people in my business-life, and have been doing presentations for 25 years. I think it's all about self-belief, and my personal need for perfection. Recently, (having taken time out to think, listen to others, and having seen some other professional magicians in action), the advice seems to be coalescing into one major theme..."**Practice. Believe in Yourself, and just get out there!**". This is what I will do this year.

MAY 23RD 2004 - CUPS AND BALLS - COMPENDIUM?

I "discovered" the Cups and Balls in this week, (just after the self-doubt). I cannot now believe that there was a time less than a year ago when I didn't know what a Chop Cup was!

Why is this one important to me?

Beauty of movement, complexity, sleight of hand, a chance to practice misdirection. It **has the lot**. All of these can be amplified when you start to bring Combo sets (normal + Chop) together, and I want to spend some real quality time this year developing a workable routine. I think that the Cups and Balls, (and Chop Cup) have that same timeless, elegant quality as Ring Linking and Silk-work. It's this that I have not yet been able to find in cards.

MAY 26TH - EXCITED AGAIN AS I BOUGHT MARK WILSON

I bought **Mark Wilson's Cyclopaedia of Magic**, and immediately got my self-belief back, and sky-rocketing. Here was a book that I could understand. I was beginning to realise that virtually every "Self-Working" or packet trick I had owned required another sleight, or something else to be bought, or used terms that I did not understand.

Why is this one important to me?

Here was now a book that could provide a lifetime of magical presentations, or a starter into different areas where you could then go off into more complex material as your interests grew, (for me this has been rope magic, sponge magic and Cups and Balls), yet you could do a great act just based on Wilson's work alone.

JUNE 14TH "NOW I UNDERSTAND WHY YOU PERFORM...."

My first (tiny) performance outside friends and family

Why is this one important to me?

I felt "the buzz" that I had done years before performing in bands and /or plays - yet here I was doing it with a new art form. Great feeling

JUNE 23RD - CLASSIC MATRIX eBook - BY AL SCHNEIDER (REVIEW POST)

I think that this was the first post where I actually felt I had something to contribute, a review on an eBook, the Al Schneider Matrix, (now gone from his website).

Why is this one important to me?

I'd seen Matrix effects, and was learning the classic version, however, I had **NEVER IN MY WILDEST DREAMS** thought that you could write **75 pages** on it. For the first time I was getting into the mind of a creative magical genius, and understanding that what not to do is as important as what to do. Each time I practice this effect I feel I get better, and there are so many facets of the performance that I have not even covered yet. The Doug Conn and Dean Dill versions will just have to wait for a while....

SEPT 18TH - WONDERFUL EVENING OF SIMPLICITY...

Spent an evening at a John Derris lecture, and had an important lesson reinforced....

What was the important point here?

KISS - Keep it Simple Stupid. **Simplicity + great performance = powerful**

Here is a man who is "...not rich but lives comfortably..." who uses simple techniques but with **great** presentation and audience control, and produces a great evenings magical entertainment.

PS - after this evening, I threw out many of the gimmicks and unused card tricks that I had purchased in the previous 9 months. My next article may well be called **"...what I've got stored away in my #2 suitcase, which is never used..."**

A Year Into Magic (cont.)



*OK, so it's 5/6 months in, I know what emotional response I want to achieve, and I've bought a load of stuff. I've joined an online community, (and realised most of what I've bought already is c**p), and I've realised that learning what looks like simplistic beauty is harder than I thought.*

***KAPPOW!** - suddenly I realise that I need to be in this for the long-haul...*

Nov 1ST - FIRST FILE SHARING POST ON SPONGEBALL VANISHES

Normally I like to perfect anything before I do it "in public", (such as a presentation for work etc.), so the important thing for me here was to get peer review. Some great feedback and assistance came back. It's funny, I was almost scared of posting, because as a "friends and family performer", it puts you in a place of great danger - perhaps the "real performers" will fry you, but you actually hope that they will like your effect.

What was the important point here?

What I found out with this posting, and the subsequent 5 or 6 is that the wealth of knowledge on these boards ***is there for us all***. I learned a lot from posting these videos, and found out that not only was I not doing too badly for a newbie, but was also doing some stuff that was new to people!

Great feeling again. MagicBunny provide a great place to test the waters on your presentation, and the advice back is always valuable. I just wish I had a decent camera so that I did not have to restrict myself to recording in my tiny office with limited range and space!

CONCLUSION AFTER 12/13 MONTHS...

That pretty much brings me up to today, and Top Hat version 34, where I felt the need to get this out of my system. Firstly, I wish I'd started this all 10 years ago, I feel rather like Dai Vernon at 86 when he said *"I've been doing magic now for 80 years, I wasted the first 6 years of my life..."*

What will this year bring? Certainly I will look more critically at everything I do, do less tricks, but better magic. I will also decide what to work on for a complete performance. Issue 27 of TopHat has an article on "Routining your Routine", and this is beginning to take shape, using safety pins, rings, pencils, and rope as the linking themes. Perhaps I'll do an update this time next year, when I'll tell you all the lessons I learned in the 1 or 2 evenings where I performed - and if the rumours are true, I will have learned 10 times more than I learned in 2004 in its entirety!

Who knows, I may even learn a card trick ;-)

Anyway, I'll stop now and let you get on with reading a more "serious" magic article.

See you on the Bunny Boards
Rgds - Bruce Graham, (BrucUK)

Many thanks to all contributors, particularly those who have responded to the article requests that have been sent out in the past few months. Please email tophat@magicbunny.co.uk if you're at all interested in contributing to the ezine next month.

All the best,
Jon Snoops
MagicBunny.co.uk