

# Magic Banning Presents Top Hat



## Table of Contents

A Letter from The Editor <i>by Michael Jay</i> .....	1
Letters to The Editor.....	2
Houdini Among the Spirits <i>by Barry Cooper</i> .....	3
The Art of Reading Magic <i>by Gary Scott</i> .....	7
The Elegant Sorcerer <i>by Joshua Shuh</i> .....	14
Three (Self-Working) Card Tricks <i>by Werner Miller</i> .....	24
Thematization <i>by Michael Jay</i> .....	31
Fee Fi Fo Fum <i>by Dave Wyton</i> .....	35
Abracadabra; Hocus Pocus; Alakazam <i>by Mark Williams</i> .....	39
The Best Haunted House I Ever Visited <i>by Tony Spallino</i> .....	42
Halloween Kids' Show, Part 1 <i>by Jon A. Hand</i> .....	46
Halloween Kids' Show, Part 2 <i>by Jon A. Hand</i> .....	52
Zombie Card <i>by Brian Tabor</i> .....	60
The Magician <i>by Michael Jay</i> .....	65
Bizarre Bursary.....	70
Strange Coincidences <i>by Tabitha Truhart</i> .....	71
I'll Keep An Eye Out for You <i>by Weepin' Willie</i> .....	74
End Page.....	82

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

# Halloween Edition

# *A Letter from The Editor*

*By Michael Jay*



October, my favorite month of the year. It is my pleasure to bring you our Halloween special edition of Top Hat, I hope that you enjoy it. Not every article is a Halloween exclusive, though, so I've taken the liberty of marking the articles so you won't accidentally skip over them. Don't worry, you'll immediately know the mark when you see it.

I'd also like to take a moment to tell you about a charity event on the horizon - Boxing for Cancer. Top Hat reader Gareth Hobson will be participating in the event and details can be found at [justgiving.com](http://justgiving.com). At the moment of this writing, Gareth has £30 of £150 that he's trying to raise. It is our pleasure here at Top Hat to do what we can to help a worthy cause and cancer research is certainly that. Please, take some time to check out the link and help out if you can (and thank you in advance!).

In issue #11 we offered two tickets to see "The Illusionists", which will be appearing on stage at the Shaftesbury Theatre in London on the 14th November, 2015 and continuing through the 3 January, 2016. We had 103 people enter to win and the drawing can be viewed here:

[YouTube Drawing Video](#)

Lastly, just a word of thanks to the staff here at Top Hat. This issue had a lot of extra work for everyone and their help was so very important in getting this issue out that I cannot thank them enough. Also, without the technical support, these magazines would cease to exist, so another big thanks to my tech guys. This would not be complete without a final thank you to the original designer of volume 2 of Top Hat. His design helped me to bring the magazine to where we are now. Thank you all!

# *Letters to the Editor*

No new letters this time around, but I wanted to address two specific letters from issues past.

The first was from Ellen Faye (vol. 2, issue 10). Ellen was hoping that we'd get some female input into our magazine, but, as always, I can only publish what is given to me. In this issue, though, it is my pleasure to offer our first article by a female performer - Tabitha Truhart. You'll find her offering in the Bizarre Bursary.

The second letter was from Matt Du Heaume (vol. 2, issue 11) and he was requesting that we offer more tricks in our issues. Of course, my answer is much the same as what I had to tell Ellen - we can only publish that which is made available to us. Well, Matt, one of our readers, Werner Miller, decided to help you out on this score and I am pleased to announce that we'll have plenty of tricks for you in this and the next 2 issue of Top Hat.

On a side note (and because you may be wondering why I did not cover it in my regular editor's column, above):

I have decided to forgo my usual overview of articles in this edition of Top Hat. There are several new writers and a lot of articles for your perusal and pleasure...I will let you discover them as you go. I would ask that you, the reader, take the time to drop me a line and let me know if you are enjoying this magazine and who you particularly like to read so that I can let all of our authors know, both the new and old, just how much you appreciate their time and effort.

Without further ado, I welcome you to issue #12 of Top Hat, the Halloween Edition.

# *Houdini Among the Spirits*

*By Barry Cooper*



Halloween  
Special

Harry Houdini died on 31 October 1926, and he is still a household name almost ninety years after his death. In the minds of today's public his name is synonymous with escapes, but Walter Gibson, in *Houdini on Magic* (1953, p.xiv) comments that “. . . in the final analysis, Houdini's great claim to permanent fame lay in his crusade against fraudulent mediums and other charlatans who preyed on the public.”

Despite his aggressive campaign against fraud, Houdini was not an 'unbeliever':

“GLADLY would I embrace Spiritualism if it could prove its claims, but I am not willing to be deluded by the fraudulent impositions of so-called psychics, or accept as sacred reality any of the evidence that has been placed before me thus far . . . I believe in a Hereafter and no greater blessing could be bestowed upon me than the opportunity, once again, to speak to my sainted Mother who awaits me with open arms to press me to her heart in welcome, just as she did when I entered this mundane sphere.” (Houdini 1924, Preface, p.xxi)

Houdini's principal written work on the subject is *A Magician Among the Spirits* (1924). After an Introduction and Preface setting out his position on Spiritualism, Chapter 1 deals in detail with the story of the Fox sisters,<sup>1</sup> generally considered to be the founders of modern Spiritualism. The chapter ends with Margaret Fox's confession of fraud, her alcoholism and later 'recantation', which Houdini points out had little effect, either on her life (she died shortly afterwards) or the public's perception.

Chapter 2 of the book concerns the Davenport Brothers, Ira and William, whose stage demonstrations were “complicated exhibitions involving the use of a cabinet, rope tricks, bells, and various horns and musical instruments” (Houdini 1924, p.17). The chapter is based on correspondence and meetings between Ira Davenport and Houdini, and contains a good deal of inside information.

---

<sup>1</sup> Ada Calhoun's excellent article on the Fox sisters can be found [here](#).

Houdini points out that the brothers never claimed themselves to be genuine mediums, although they did allow others to make that claim.

In Chapter 3 Houdini discusses Daniel Dunglas Home. Houdini was not impressed by Home's reputation:

"It may or may not be true that he was never completely exposed but many of his manifestations were discovered to be fraudulent and every one of them can be duplicated by modern conjurors under the same conditions. The principal reason why he was never completely exposed was that he gave no public sittings . . ." (Houdini 1924, p.41)

Chapter 4 covers the mediumship of Eusapia Palladino. Houdini gives a detailed account of her fraudulent techniques and their exposure, and clearly does not subscribe to the view, held by Thurston and others, that some of her phenomena may have been genuine.

Ann O'Delia Diss Debar is the subject of Chapter 5. Her name is not as familiar today as that of Home or Palladino, although she is mentioned briefly by Corinda in *Thirteen Steps to Mentalism*. Houdini's account is mainly concerned with her conviction and imprisonment for fraud.

In Chapter 6 Houdini discusses the slate-writing phenomena of Henry Slade. Houdini refers to his arrest and conviction in London, but points out that the conviction was later quashed on a technicality. The chapter is mainly concerned with Slade's history and exposure; slate-writing techniques are discussed in more detail in Chapter 7, which also covers rapping, levitation and other phenomena.

Chapter 8 covers spirit photography. Houdini outlines the history of the phenomenon since its first appearance in 1862, dealing with a number of court cases and exposures. Next, chapter 9 discusses Houdini's friendship with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and includes an account of the séance, with Lady Doyle as medium, in which Houdini's mother purportedly appeared:

"The more so do I hesitate to believe and accept the above letter because, although my sainted mother had been in America for almost fifty years, she could not speak, read nor write English . . . however, Sir Arthur has told me that a Spirit becomes more educated the longer it is departed and that my

blessed Mother had been able to master the English language in Heaven.”  
(Houdini 1924, p.154)

Chapter 10 is entitled “Why Ectoplasm?”, and is mainly an account of séances held with Eva Carriere ('Eva C'). Two distinguished investigators from the Society for Psychical Research ('SPR'), the Hon. Everard Feilding and Eric Dingwall, were also present. Houdini believed that the unimpressive 'ectoplasm' produced was either regurgitated or 'an inside job' with the help of an accomplice.

“By-products of Spiritualism,” is the theme of Chapter 11, “the average man does not seem to realize the suffering, losses, misfortunes, crimes and atrocities of which it is the underlying cause and must bear the primary responsibility.”  
(Houdini 1924, p.180) A number of sad cases are considered, and there are dire warnings about the use of Ouija boards.

In Chapter 12 – “Investigations - Wise and Otherwise” – Houdini comments that the desire of some investigators to be fooled does in fact lead them to be misled. A number of cases are discussed, including investigations conducted by Professor Sir William Crookes and Sir Oliver Lodge, both past presidents of the SPR.

Chapter 13 – “How Mediums Obtain Information” – is concerned with hot reading techniques such as doing local research to discover information about individuals. Chapter 14 discusses “What You Must Believe to be a Spiritualist”. Houdini refers to a number of “extravagant feats” attributed to spirits, and tells several purportedly true stories, including the well-known materialization of medium Mrs Guppy at a séance held by another medium.

Chapter 15 considers “Magicians as Detectors of Fraud”. Here Houdini calls attention, “to the incompetence of the opinion of the ordinary magician with a knowledge of two or three experiments in Spiritualism who stands up and claims that he can duplicate the experiments of any medium who ever lived.”  
(Houdini 1924, p.244) He points out that magicians may be mystified into temporary belief and make comments that they regret later on, citing Maskelyne, Kellar and Hoffmann as three who changed their minds. He is not complimentary about Bellachini, who “was solely an apparatus or mechanical conjuror with an adroit



and daring address.” (Houdini 1924, p.248) He also discusses in detail Robert-Houdin’s comments on Alexis Didier and Kellar’s investigation of Eglington.

The final chapter, “Conclusions”, ends with the comment that it is not up to investigators to prove that mediums are dishonest - it should be for the mediums to prove that they are honest.

The overall impression that one gains from Houdini’s book is that it is well-researched and sensibly written. His comments that neither scientists nor magicians are automatically qualified to investigate fraudulent mediums are well supported.

One major exposure by Houdini which is not covered in the book is that of the medium 'Margery' (Mrs Mina Crandon); his report, along with several other short pieces on mediumship, is reproduced in Gibson & Young's *Houdini on Magic* (1953, pp.134ff). Margery’s case was controversial at the time and remains so today; there have even been suggestions that Houdini may have arranged some of the evidence against her to be planted.

A number of Houdini’s manuscripts on mediumship were left to Joseph Dunninger; these appear, in edited form, in Dunninger's *Magic and Mystery* (1968), under their original publication title of *Houdini’s Spirit World*. Mostly short pieces, the articles include instructions for duplicating mediums’ tricks and also commentaries on well-known mediums, such as Palladino, Eva C and the Davenport Brothers.

**Reference:** *A Magician Among the Spirits* by Houdini (1924) New York: Harper & Row

(The book is available as a download from numerous sources.)

# *The Art of Reading Magic*

*By Gary Scott*



## Part 1 Books vs. Books

In conjunction with the release of my brand new YouTube channel, [Gary Scott's Book Chair](#), I proudly bring you my treatise on the most neglected tool in the modern magic world:

### The Art of Reading Magic

- “Books are a uniquely portable magic.”  
— Stephen King

Have you ever seen those hand-drawn fantasy pictures of Wizards of old? The ones where a spell is about to be cast over a cauldron or crystal ball? Bet you never noticed the library of books in the background. And there's your first lesson in misdirection. Your focus of attention was on the Wizard doing his thing and not his surroundings.



So let me concentrate on that library and tell you why learning magic within the confines of books is so important on your quest to being a magician.

In previous essays, right here in Top Hat, I've touched on the subject of reading. Specifically, magic books. It's a touchy subject as many newbies proclaim to be 'Visual Learners'.

If you think about it, reading *is* visual learning and my task in these following essays is to help give you the tools to learn magic from a book.



- “There is no scent so pleasant to my nostrils as that faint, subtle reek which comes from an ancient book.”  
—Arthur Conan Doyle

Before the world was dominated by the internet and googling was a word that wasn't part of our nomenclature, the world's super highway of information was known as a library. It was a physical thing. A large building that contained erudition crammed into book upon book. Compendium or omnibus. Topics that covered all manner of subjects be it fiction or fact. It was somewhere to go. A place to visit.

I remember my mother taking me to the local library every Saturday morning. A glutted collection of books on highly polished wooden shelves. It was a musty smell. The same smell that can be found in books where the pages have been exposed to the confines of time. I would walk around this coliseum of knowledge and digest all the subjects on offer. I would pull random books from a shelf and flick through them, giving most attention to those books where I found the title, which was printed on the spine; truly fascinating. I loved the feel of the book. Dust Jackets had artwork. Symbolic of the contents inside each of the tomes.

I was five years old.

My mother had made sure I could read even before I started primary school.

- “You want weapons? We're in a library. Books are the best weapon in the world. This room's the greatest arsenal we could have. Arm yourself!”  
—Russell T. Davis

So let's begin with what advantages books have over other mediums and even themselves in relation to the study of magic.

Magic books, ultimately, give you better value. Within the confines of a typical hardback publication, the amount of knowledge in just one good book surpasses the video medium by leaps and bounds.

Let's compare the value of the popular 'DVD release' which is also slowly becoming the 'instant download', with an average hardback book. The first thing

that comes to mind is bang per buck. What you get for your money. A typical video release, in any format, has an average price tag of £30 - £50.

A book averages £20 - £40. So what's on the video releases? Back in video releasing infancy and the past popularity of L&L publishing, there were some classic DVD-sets that were stuffed with content. Daryl's Card Revelations series averaged 30 tricks per DVD over four volumes. That's over one hundred tricks. Well, apparently our modern magic community is now happy to pay for one effect and maybe a few bonuses.

The modern 'releasers' don't care and release an unfinished product. The worst thing is that we now have a bunch of twenty year olds with twelve months of experience trying to sell us their ideas, not well-rehearsed and perfected routines that have taken a decade to develop. (The subject of 'releasers' has been discussed as part of my essays in Top Hat volume 2, issues 9 - 11. Please do read them.).

A book on the other hand is not as easy to produce and takes time and knowledge to develop.

If you find a teenager publishing a book, you may want to give it a miss. Even an early twenty-something has not the experience to deliver the knowledge. This is where the older books from the golden era of magic (1880 - 1930 approx.) have the advantage. A book was not written until a master magician had a fully working repertoire that had been worked in for a couple of decades. Every nuance and detail had to be known before any publishing could occur. You need the experience to deliver. Be very careful when choosing your next book purchase.

- “The worst thing about new books is that they keep us from reading the old ones.”  
—Joseph Joubert

Some of the modern books are vastly superior to the older books.

The main reason being the quality of publishing. The majority of the authors now work hard to provide an almost index style, systemic approach to the

contents. There are vastly improved illustrations over some of the older books. Even improving dramatically over the number of illustrations provided.

In fact we can use Tom Stones' Vortex as a good example of a modern improvement. It is bound lengthwise so that the book lays flat and open, on any page, to help your learning process.

Be wary of a nice looking book though. Many of my older books which are rare and tattered by time contain much better information than some of the newer books. The newer books may also be written by somebody, as previously mentioned, who does not have the experience to publish material or even teach. You may also find that, in many cases but not all, the young author is simply regurgitating information from the past. There have been many cases where older material has been hijacked from public domain releases and put forth as an author's own work.

- “It is a good rule after reading a new book, never to allow yourself another new one till you have read an old one in between.”  
— C.S. Lewis

So how do you choose the books that matter or contain the best information to learn from?

First you need to know what kind of magic you want to learn. Most magicians are all-rounders and have a good eclectic mix of books in their library.

Just to help you out, I'll list the three main genres of magic and some books associated that are good for study. I'll also list some books that cover all genres and some magic related performance books. Please remember that these books are not an exhaustive list but they are definitely books that I've had a lot of pleasure studying. I've missed out so many good titles that I feel guilty. Perhaps by using the following lists as a guideline, you may find other titles through your own work.

**Close-up**

Card College vol.1-5 by Roberto Giobbi  
New Modern Coin Magic by J.B. Bobo  
Unexplainable Acts by Gary Kurtz  
The Art of Astonishment vol. 1-3 by Paul Harris  
The Royal Road to Card Magic by Hugard and Braue  
Revolutionary Card Technique by Ed Marlo  
Expert Card Technique by Hugard and Braue  
Expert Cigarette Magic by D. Deveen  
The Art of Switching Decks by Roberto Giobbi  
Dai Vernon Book of Magic by Lewis Ganson  
The Magic of Slydini by Lewis Ganson  
Fingertip Fantasies by Bob Ostin  
By Forces Unseen by Ernest Earick  
Dai Vernon's Inner Card Trilogy by Lewis Ganson  
Sachs' Sleight of Hand by Edwin T. Sachs  
Encyclopedia of Card Tricks by Jean Hugard

**Mentalism**

13 Steps to Mentalism by Corinda  
Practical Mental Magic by Ted Anneman  
Thabbatical by Phil Goldstein  
Prism by Max Maven

**Stage**

Create Your Own Stage Sets by Terry Thomas  
Create Your Own Stage Make-Up by Gill Davies  
The Black Book: Illusion Systems of Paul Osborne 1981-1991 by  
Paul Osborne  
Begin to Build Your Own Illusions by Paul Osborne

## General

The Art of Acting by David Carter  
The Tarbell Course in Magic by Harlan Tarbell  
The Five Points in Magic by Juan Tamariz  
The Big Book of Magic by Patrick Page  
New Magic of Japan 1988 by Richard Kaufman  
The Complete Course in Magic by Mark Wilson  
The Vernon Touch by Richard Kaufman  
Hellis in Wonderland by Will Houstoun  
The Magic Way by Juan Tamariz  
Our Magic by Maskelyne and Devant  
Modern Magic, More Magic and Later Magic by Professor Hoffmann  
Classic Secrets of Magic by Bruce Elliott  
Maximum Entertainment by Ken Weber

- “Books are the quietest and most constant of friends; they are the most accessible and wisest of counselors, and the most patient of teachers.”  
— Charles William Eliot

So what are the disadvantages of the older books?

Definitely for some, the language. If you go back so many years even the spelling of some words we use today has completely altered. If I was to ask you what this word was, *gaol*, it might surprise you that this is the older spelling of the word Jail. This was the common spelling between 1760 and 1830. The word Knave is also used in Sachs' Sleight of Hand instead of the word Jack. I go into the history of this a bit more in my book review. Another disadvantage of the older books is that times have changed. There are a lot of books that contain effects that require chemicals that are no longer obtainable or illegal. Some are even very harmful to your skin and internal organs. So if you read a book with such and such a requirement, try and think about how to find your own way of producing the same effect without resorting to the chemical issue. One of the problems I have with these 'classics' is the need for some of the tricks to have special apparatus built. The role of engineer is not within me, nor indeed is carpenter.

You will need to find a specialist woodworker or steelworker to make some of the more elaborate offerings. But, this means if you went to the trouble of producing one effect out of any one of these troublesome tomes, you will be performing a magic trick that has not seen the light of day since the book's publication.

It's no secret that the old books are my personal favourites. I love dealing with the issues I mentioned above. I love sitting with a Thesaurus, ready to go, in case I come across new words. One book offered thirty plus words that had either been retired or had been notably changed. I love reading the grammar used and the attacks that were so prudent on race, culture, age and sex. It's part of our history and we shouldn't cover it up to appease the liberal masses.

So in my follow up to this introduction of sorts, I will tell you how to begin with the study of magic from a book. You may even get one of the books from the above list and follow along? I'll give you the tools you need to get away from the fear of being just a 'visual learner' and give you extra tips on why tools such as DVD's are not as effective. Until then I'll leave you with this quote:

- "Classic' - a book which people praise and don't read."  
— Mark Twain

Siya on the boards.

# *The Elegant Sorcerer*

*(A Thesis) By Joshua Shuk*



## Part 1

Before attempting to read any of this essay please watch the following link:

[Video Found Here](#)

The video itself is moderately entertaining, but more importantly it illustrates a type of deception which we will discuss later. I say again, it is imperative that you watch this link:

[Video Found Here](#)

You must watch it so that you may understand part of the essay that is to follow. I know it's ten minutes, but you can do it! Here's the link again just in case you missed it the last two times:

[Video Found Here](#)

***WARNING:** The following thesis was originally intended to be a chapter in a book. I have shortened its overall length where I could, but it is still immensely long. Enjoy or turn back now!*

### The Story of a Kind Old Magician and his Well-Intentioned Advice

After months of pleading my parents had kindly agreed to take me to the Columbus Magi-Fest. This was equivalent to winning the lottery for me. It was going to be my first real foray into magic-dom! Who knew what I was going to see there!? These thoughts, coupled with constant excitement, meant days without sleep (this is not an exaggeration). Instead, I would stay up reading and

re-reading 101 Easy to Learn Classic Magic Tricks by Bill Tarr (it was one of two magic books I owned at the time). I wanted to make sure that any magician I met knew how serious I was.

When I arrived a few weeks later it was more than I had hoped for. Magic was everywhere. Guys (magic conventions are defined by a lack of females) were doing card tricks, coin tricks, ball tricks, you name it! Contrary to today's magic conventions there was more than just sleight of hand and artifice in the air. Even though I had no way to describe it at the time, it was my first exposure to brotherhood. This, ladies and gentlemen, was the first time in my life I can recall experiencing true happiness. In fact, it is one of only two times in my life where contentment found me and refused to let go for weeks (the other being when my girlfriend said "yes").

Magic was my everything at the time and that was obvious to anyone who spoke to me longer than a minute. (As an aside, magic is still one of my great loves. It saved me from a darkness I generally prefer not to speak about. For that, I owe this great art more than just this thesis. I owe it my life). I like to think that reason among others (pestering) was directly responsible for the older magicians that weekend taking an interest in my magical well-being. Of the many regrets I have in this life, failing to remember the names of those first instructors still produces an unexplainably profound sense of guilt. I'm thankful for this feeling, however; it never allows me to forget the lessons I learned or the joy I experienced under their brief, but enlightening tutelage. They will forever be known in my thoughts as The Kind Old Magicians.

One particular Kind Old Magician, who fooled the pants of me with a ball trick, agreed to teach the method behind this powerful sorcery. When asked how he performed his clear awesomeness, he replied, "The big move covers the little move."

Being 10 years old, the concept whizzed right by. I'm sure the expression on my face said as much. So, with patience and understanding, the Kind Old Magician began to explain. He stated, in simple terms, the psychology of moving objects. When an individual is presented with two objects that move at the same time (like two hands) the attention of the individual will shift towards the object that makes the larger movement in space. If he were to move one of his hands by



moving his entire arm (a large movement) it would act as cover for the movement of the hand which was moving at the wrist (the smaller movement). As a child this made perfect sense to me. Even if it hadn't, it was backed by his absolutely mesmerizing magic tricks. The Kind Old Magician's big movements, acting as distractions, proved him to be the most amazing and capable sorcerer I had ever seen.

Finishing his instruction, he smiled and then handed me a copy of Shute's book on the Chop Cup. Why he gave me this particular book still puzzles me, but it was a generous gesture that I will always remember. Admittedly there are times when I fail, but to this day I still make every attempt to treat less experienced conjurers in the same manner. The kindness, generosity, and patience I learned from the Kind Old Magician are still with me. I hope to one day live up to his example.

Taking the above into consideration it should be no surprise that I evangelized what I called the KOM (Kind Old Magician) Law. For years I would shout to anyone who would listen: THE BIG MOVE COVERS THE LITTLE MOVE! The older I became, the more I began to appreciate the intelligence of the Kind Old Magician as well as his compassion. He was the first trickster ever to introduce me to the concept of WHEN. We shall get to that idea in a moment, but as far as I could tell the KOM Law was a bulletproof concept in close-up magic. To illustrate the path that led me to believe this notion, allow me to take a moment to discuss my adventures with that terror-inspiring, knuckle-busting, time-wasting, frustration-inducing move we card magicians know as . . . . .THE CLASSIC PASS.

### The Classic Pass - When Observation Matches Principle

Yes, yes, I too ventured to learn the legendary (legendarily irritating) Classic Pass! As far as any "real card magician" I had spoken with, learning this sleight was not only a test of your commitment to card magic, but mastering it would put you up there with the greats!

Mastering the Classic Pass, however, turned out to be a difficult (legendarily irritating) endeavor. The angles were unfavorable and the move often required

abnormal body positioning. It was made even more challenging by sitting down. Following the angle problem I ran into velocity issues. No matter how fast I executed the maneuver, breaking into the Wally West barrier the books touted seemed to be nigh on impossible. Regardless, I refused to give up!

My road to mastery of the Classic Pass began by consulting the local magic authorities. To their credit, none of these magical authorities claimed to be a master of the maneuver. This had to have been the reason I could spot each of them attempting to accomplish it, I thought. Upon explaining my difficulties they stated the remedy: more practice. One authority informed me that to perfect the maneuver I should plan on practicing for years. I fully believed this assertion to be correct considering the numerous obstacles I had already encountered. Seriously though, years!? In two years I wouldn't have even been in High school anymore! That was clearly too long. I needed an accelerated plan. What I needed was...*"This Guy"*.

My buddies at the magic club were just hobbyists. That's why I could see everything they did. "This Guy" was a master. You know who I'm talking about. There's "This Guy" who can perform the Classic Pass completely surrounded, blindfolded, and with every spectators' eyes focused on his hand. That's right, I said hand, as in singular. Charlier Cut? No. "This Guy" does the Charlier Pass. He also does it when the deck is on the table five feet away from him. He is, after all, "This Guy." Unlike mortal magicians, he doesn't spend countless hours trying to emulate that stupid one handed pass picture in Expert Card Technique. No sir! "This Guy" doesn't need to hopelessly ask himself for days on end how to interpret a dreadfully amateur magic illustration. In fact, he doesn't even need to practice. Genetics grant "This Guy" superhuman hand speed/knowledge. He is most likely a direct descendant of Zingone.

Unfortunately, due to my lack of proper gene sequencing, I knew I would never be up to "This Guy" levels of magical prowess. One day though, I thought maybe, just maybe, I could hit "A Guy" levels. As in, "I know a guy who does the Classic Pass pretty well." It dawned on me that the only way to become "A Guy" was to embark on a quest to find "This Guy." I needed a master. While the road to find one might be perilous, the reward would be worth it.

And so it would come to pass, that in the year of our lord 1995, I would embark

on a journey to find a "This Guy" Classic Pass master. After a long and arduous three phone calls, I discovered where one would be lecturing. I drove my dad's Ford Excel station wagon back then so the journey was almost certain to be fraught with vehicular criticism and devoid of coitus. Still, I knew that my destiny was to be "A Guy." Two hours of driving 60 miles an hour on the highway because it terrifies your young teenage mind later, there he stood. I was in the presence of "THIS GUY".

Joking aside, my excitement to see this person was only paralleled by my first magic convention experience. Finally, I thought, someone who can do this without anyone knowing what is going on. After all, the real goal was to have a "burnable" pass. The definition of burnable, in this instance, was to have someone directly watching your hands and still not know the Classic Pass was occurring. I knew he could do it! He could do anything! In fact, "This Guy" could probably execute a burnable Classic Pass with just his pinky toes!

My excitement, as I'm sure you've already guessed, was crushed in spectacular form. I saw everything. "This Guy" was just another guy. His Classic Pass differed very little from the local magic authorities. It was just a smidge faster. At this point I remember having two impressions. My first thought pertained to the impossibility of executing a Classic Pass without using a bigger move for cover. My second feeling was that the Classic Pass simply wasn't a good move (a thought that demonstrated my lack of sagacity in the magical arts). Still, he was a master and I was not. So when he told me that I should purchase a VHS called *On the Pass* by Richard Kaufman, I listened.

For those of you who haven't seen the movie, don't worry. You're not missing much. For the most part, it's your run of the mill crappy magic video. I'm guessing it's rise to popularity owes itself to being the first exposition of the sleight within the video market. It most assuredly did not become popular because Kaufman was "This Guy". In fact, I don't even think he's "A Guy". Kaufman's proficiency at the sleight left a lot to be desired. Still, I was a teenager. As we all know, teenagers are extremely adept at denying the pooriness of their decisions. To my credit, I did my best to find a main takeaway to negate the fact that I had just lost thirty bucks.

Kaufman espoused the idea of the dip. The dip, for those of you who are

unaware, is a cover action for the Classic Pass. It consists of moving your hands up and down while completing the Classic Pass in the interim. Having no reason to move in such a fashion was clearly irrelevant to Kaufman. (You should keep this in mind when analyzing your own work. Kaufman is far from alone in the magic world when it comes to illogical blocking.) Looking beyond his wonky arms, however, allowed me to see that he was adhering to what I already knew to be true. The big move covered the little move.

After watching 'On the Pass', a tremendously disappointing would-be "This Guy", and numerous magic friends, the truth of The Kind Old Magician had been affirmed. In doing so, I cemented said principle into my brain and was beginning to consider it a downright law of magic. In fact, going back to read some of my notes at the time revealed that I was a full blooded convert of the big move covering the little move. I had even clarified some of the language to make it more scientific sounding.

### The Kind Old Magician (KOM) Laws - A First Introduction to the Concept of When

If you pick up any magic book today (buy an instant download, get a DVD, whatever) you'll realize that most of these items focus on demonstrating technique or explanations of the apparatus involved. The magic market today seems to be overwhelmingly concerned with HOW. While I certainly would not marginalize the value of understanding how to perform sleight of hand maneuvers; I'm often astonished at the complete lack of dialogue within the magic community regarding WHEN to perform these maneuvers. Our main discussion today concerns itself in knowing WHEN to perform a sleight of hand maneuver. The following KOM Laws were an attempt by an older magician to approach the issue of WHEN with me . . . .

KOM Law: The big move covers the little move.

Clarified KOM Law: The human brain makes decisions on where to focus attention. In the case of two moving objects, the brain will decide to focus its attention on the object that makes the larger movement in space. Thus, the

object that makes the smaller movement will go unnoticed. This only applies to secret moves.

You'll notice that at the end of that statement that I wrote that the principle itself only applies to secret moves. Even though current observations have repeatedly shown the above principle is false, I still hold steadfast to my thoughts concerning secret moves. In time, however, I have come to realize that the term "secret moves" is not accurate in describing the concept. A more appropriate terminology would be covert maneuvers. To get a good grasp on when to perform a sleight of hand maneuver a classification system must first be established.

There are three types of sleight of hand maneuvers and their classification is simple when viewed in the context of misdirection (flourishes do not count, they are not magic, you know my feelings on that). Sleight of hand maneuvers are either illusory, covert, or both.

An illusory maneuver is a sleight designed to imitate reality. It is an illusion. An example of such a technique would be false shuffling. The magician gives the impression that he or she shuffled the deck when in fact no such shuffling occurred.

A covert maneuver differs from its illusory counterpart in that it must be executed when the audience's attention is fixated on something other than the maneuver itself. A classic pass is an example of a covert maneuver.

Now that you have a working knowledge concerning covert and illusory maneuvers you may begin to appreciate KOM Laws. If, as stated above, the laws are only applicable to covert maneuvers that should relay that said principles were my (and possibly your) first real instruction in the question of WHEN to do something sneaky. In other words, those constitute the beginnings of my education in misdirection. A subject which, unfortunately, is not discussed nearly enough.

There have been many a dreamer who attempt to label the classic pass as an illusory move ("Oh, I'm just riffing the deck"). All of us at some point or another have fallen victim to the fallacy that covert maneuvers can be labeled illusory. Just make sure you don't stay victim to that mindset forever. If you do,

you'll become a delusionsist. A delusionist is someone has stayed too long in a fantasy world I like to call the Land of Unzipped Zipper. This is a land where all magician's flies are down, but no magicians wants to tell any other magician for fear that they will embarrass one another. The problem with the delusionist mindset is the inevitable realization of said colleague's or one's own zipper status. One way or another everyone is going to find out that their underwear is showing. If we continue giving false courtesy to our brothers they will either find out in an unsafe environment or worse, never leave the nest. The first scenario has them running from hecklers, prop grabbers, or the most malignant environment of all . . . YouTube. The second scenario involves them never performing outside the walls of the magic club. You tell me: which do you think is worse?

When evaluating sleight of hand you must first answer the question of whether the maneuver is covert, illusory, or both (as is the case with the second deal). Once this is decided then you may then determine the mode of misdirection. In the case of illusory maneuvers HOW to execute said maneuver is as equally as important as WHEN to do it. Illusory maneuvers may be executed with or without the audience's attention fixated on their execution. (As we will not be discussing illusory maneuvers any further please feel free to contact me if you wish to understand their positioning within narratives). In regards to a covert maneuver, however, WHEN is the ONLY pertinent question to ask in regards to their execution.

At the age of 17 I had figured it all out (and not just magic . . . scary). Execution of the Classic Pass was easy-peasy because I knew how to cover it. I knew what made a maneuver "secret", what made it illusory, and the circumstances in which to do either. Everything was going just fine until . . . .

### Busking and The Honest Guy in the Back of the Room

It wouldn't be until later in my teenage years that I would come to realize how incorrect both myself and the Kind Old Magician had been. Before I tell you why and how we were wrong (and what to do about it), I must first tell you how I arrived at that conclusion.

In order to celebrate the completion of Moby Dick (still a favorite novel), my 11th grade English class decided to have a party. You know the kind, right? Everyone brings in a cupcake or something to eat and the whole class just hangs out and talks. Those times were the best, weren't they!? The older I get the more I realize what a valuable use of taxpayer money these sorts of days are in our public education system. That complaint, however, is for another time.

I would call this episode my first real experiment in busking. Truth be told, at the time, I did not like performing for large crowds. I generally kept my magic to groups of one or two people at a time. So, that's how I began. I showed a card trick to the blond skinny guy that sat in front of me (who's name I still cannot remember because he maybe said 3 words of audible speech his entire four years in high school). Well, like any successful busking experience, one audience member became two, two became four, and four became the entire class.

Now, A year or two prior to my first venture at gathering crowds I had become fascinated (as previously mentioned) with card magic. Card magic appealed to me because even at this age because I had come to realize that the more difficult a trick was to reconstruct, the greater the effect. (This is one of the reasons why I am still not overly fond of coin tricks. They are terribly easy to reconstruct and their direct challenging of cause and effect relationships tends to make their methods obvious.)

So there I was performing a series of card effects. Finding the aces, losing the aces, finding cards, losing cards, making them rise to the top, and then go to the bottom were all on the menu. For the most part, everything went off without a hitch and I got a series of fairly impressive rounds of applause. All in all, my first effort at pseudo-busking was a success. That was until a keen observer at the back of the room came up to me after the performance and said, "I know how you did the one where the card goes to the top."

Now, even at 17 years old, I'd heard this several times from several people. While it's true that most guesses are wrong, I hadn't quite yet learned how to deal with people who accosted me in such a fashion. So, I replied, "Yeah? How'd I do it?"

Wouldn't you know . . . I'll be damned if he didn't explain the EXACT mechanics of the pass. Was I doing it wrong? Had I not spent enough hours (more like months) practicing? Was he a magician? No, that wasn't it. It seemed to impress the people closer to me judging by the looks of astonishment on their faces. How could he have seen the pass!? I covered it using the dip (I had no other option)! The big move always covers the little move, right? This would be the start of my critical analysis concerning a foundational cornerstone of my then current understanding of misdirection.

In the years to follow I would come to understand that the big move covers the little move only sometimes and only in some situations. Even when it does, if your physical actions don't fit your narrative (mentioned previously as "blocking") their size is irrelevant. They will evoke suspicion regardless and when that happens illusions are effectively destroyed.

### Did You Know?

Dressing up for Halloween is originally a Celtic practice. The Celts believed that during the Gaelic festival of Samhain, spirits could worm their way into the real world. The Celts believed that the costumes and masks would ward off and confuse the evil spirits.





# *Three (Self-Working) Card Tricks*

*By Werner Miller*

## Ladies on a Visit

In his book, "The Magic of Frederica" (Supreme, 1981), Lewis Ganson described Tommy Frederick's method for producing four of a kind ("Quad-Cut", pp. 32-33).

In the following routine the effect is extended: First the four Queens pay a visit, then each Queen locates her suitable attendants (Jacks and Kings of the same suit), and finally the four Aces are produced.

### Preparation

Sort out the twelve court cards and the four Aces.

Arrange these cards and the rest of the deck as follows:

Any 3 cards - Jack of Clubs - any 12 cards - Ace of Hearts - any 12 cards - Ace of Diamonds - any 9 cards - Jack of Spades - Queen of Hearts - Queen of Spades - Queen of Diamonds - Queen of Clubs - King of Spades - King of Clubs - Ace of Clubs - Ace of Spades - King of Hearts - Jack of Diamonds - King of Diamonds - Jack of Hearts.

The Jack of Hearts is the bottom (face) card of the deck.

### Presentation

False cut the deck.

Divide the deck into four equal packets by thumbing off three times thirteen cards without disturbing their order; the remaining cards are the last packet.

Arrange the packets into a neat row from left (original top of the deck) to right (original bottom of the deck).

Point to each packet in turn and state, "We will call this heap number 1, this one number 2, this one number 3, and this one number 4."

Return to the first pile. "Since this is heap number one, I take one card from the top and place it to the bottom of the heap." Act accordingly.

"Now I deal one card from this heap onto each of the other three." Do so.

Point to the next pile. "Since this is heap number two, I take two cards from the top and place them on the bottom." Shift the two top cards singly to the bottom.

Continue, "Now I again deal one card onto the three other heaps."

This done, the analogous procedure is repeated with the next pile. "This is heap number three. Hence, three cards are (singly!) shifted from the top to the bottom. Then, as before, one card is dealt onto each of the remaining heaps."

And finally the last pile. "And this is heap number four. You know what I'm going to do, don't you? Yes, I'm going to transfer four cards (singly!) from the top to the bottom. Then I deal one card onto each of the other heaps."

"Probably you wonder why I'm acting so ceremoniously. The answer is simple: I'm looking forward to being visited by ladies!"

Turn the top card of each pile over, leaving it face up on top. On top of the first heap the Queen of Hearts is shown, on top of the second heap the Queen of Spades, on top of the third heap the Queen of Diamonds, and on top of the last pile the Queen of Clubs.

Take the last heap, square it and move it toward a spectator. Ask the spectator to cut the packet and to complete the cut.

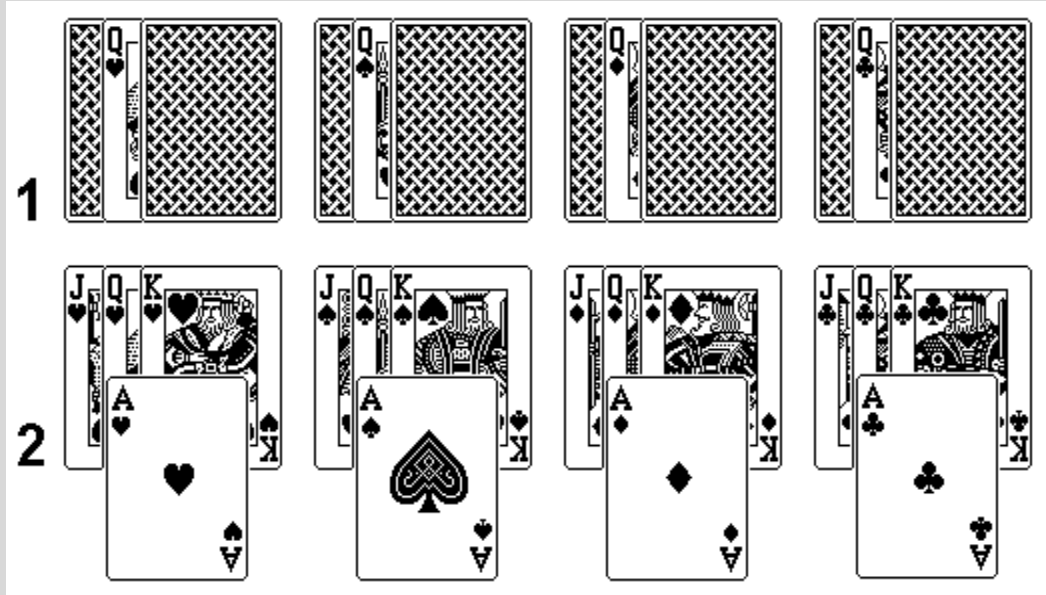
Take the cards back and mix them Reverse Forward Faro (see postscript), then spread the cards looking for the face-up Queen of Clubs. Remove the Queen and her neighbors (the preceding face down card and the succeeding face down card) as well from the spread, and place these three cards in their original order on the table, still overlapping.

Cut the spread at that point, that is, shift the cards above the gap to the bottom, and square the packet. Keep it in your hand.

Remove the Queen of Diamonds from the third pile, and place it face up on top of the cards in your hand (the remainder of the third heap is laid aside).

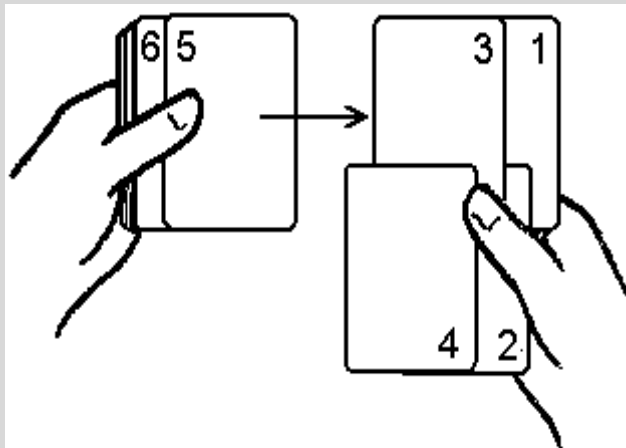
Have the packet in your hand cut by a spectator, then mix them again Reverse Forward Faro. As before, the cards are finally spread, the queen plus its neighbors removed and set down, the remaining cards cut and squared.

The same procedure is repeated with the second and the first heap. You will get the layout shown in Figure 1, and you will be left with four cards in your hand.



In each group of three turn the face down cards over to show the escort the ladies have chosen: a Jack on the left, a King on the right, both of the correct suit.

Deal the remaining four cards singly to the groups, from left to right - "It is served!" (Figure 2)



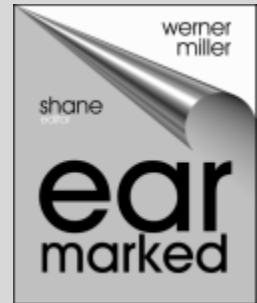
### Postscript

The Reverse Forward Faro technique was developed by Stewart James (1908 - 1996).

The cards are passed across to the right hand reversing their order, and every other card is injogged. Finally, all the injogged cards are stripped away as a block and placed on top. (Or you

may strip away all the outjogged card as a block and place them beneath.)

The Reverse Forward Faro produces the same result as dealing the cards alternately into two piles and finally dropping the right pile onto the left one. (See "Stewart James In Print: The First Fifty Years", Toronto 1989, p. 814, p. 840, p. 876)



(From my e-book "Ear-Marked", found here at: [Lybrary.com](http://Lybrary.com))

\* \* \*

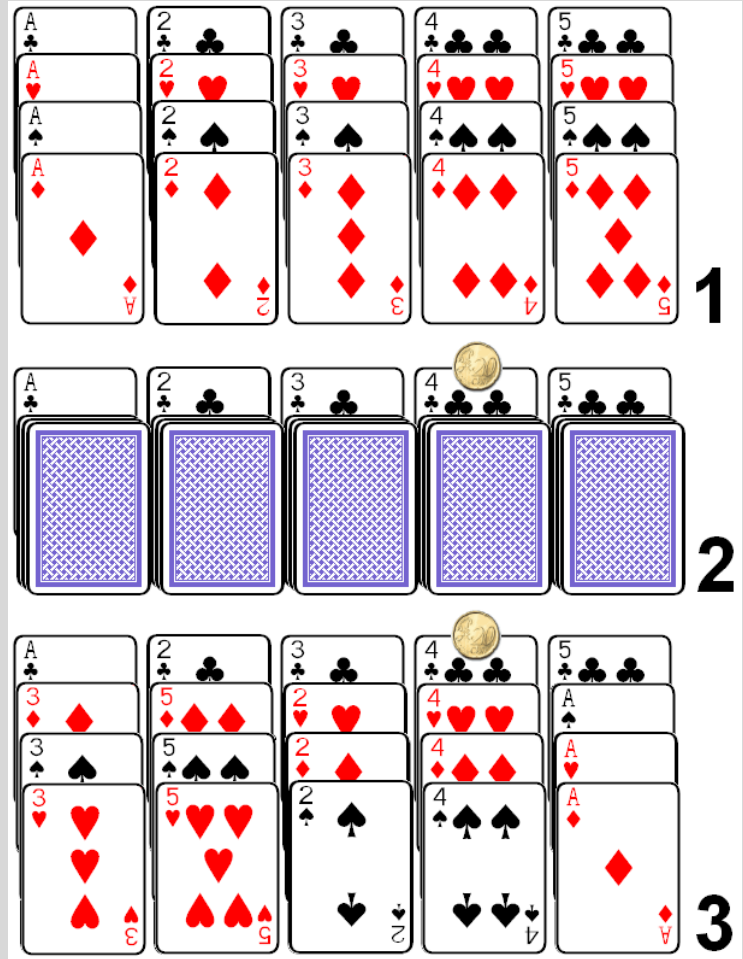
## Lure

1. Sort out the four A's, the four 2's, the four 3's, the four 4's and the four 5's. Arrange these 20 cards face up as shown in Fig. 1.
2. Square the three top cards of each column, turn them as a block face down, and place them back leaving the index of the face-up bottom card visible. Let the spectator designate one value, and have this value marked by placing a coin on the bottom card. (Fig. 2)
3. Assemble the 15 face-down cards into one packet by picking rotationally the top card of each pile. You will end up with the 5D on top and the AH at the face.
4. Call attention to the marked value, and shift singly that many cards from top to bottom. (In the depicted example four cards are shifted.)
5. Mix the packet by doing a Reverse Forward Faro.

6. Deal the cards still face down singly and rotationally onto the five visible values: the first one onto the A, the next onto the 2, the next one onto the 3 and so on. The arrangement is similar to that of step 2 (Fig. 2).

7. Turn the cards just dealt face up, column by column: Only the column with the marked card consists of four equal values. (Fig. 3)

(From my e-book "Enigmaths 1", found here at: [Lybrary.com](http://Lybrary.com))



\* \* \*

## Thingumbob of Diamonds

### Effect

The name of a random card is used to locate two freely selected cards.

### **Preparation**

Sort out all the Diamond cards and arrange them in numerical order. (That looks good and makes it easy to see that the suit is complete.)

### **Presentation**

Show the thirteen Diamond cards.

Someone shuffles them and selects one without looking on its face.

The remaining twelve cards are dealt into four equal piles.

Spectator A takes any two piles, spectator B gets the other ones.

Each spectator decides on either pile, shuffles it, notes the bottom (face) card, and drops that pile on top of the other one.

Put the combined pile of spectator A on top of the combined pile of spectator B. The result is a 12-card packet with A's card at position 3 and B's card at position 9.

Give the packet two Klondyke (Milk) Shuffles (see postscript) – “one shuffle for each selected card”. You end up with B's card on top, followed by A's card.

Call attention to the unknown card set aside at the beginning, and have it turned face up. Let's assume it is the 7D.

Spell aloud its value (“S-E-V-E-N”), with each letter dealing a single card off the top into a new packet, then drop the remaining cards as a block on top. In a similar fashion spell “O-F” (dealing two cards, rest on top), finally “D-I-A-M-O-N-D-S” (dealing eight cards, rest on top).

Turn the top card face up: it is A's card. Have it confirmed, then set it aside.

Repeat the spelling and dealing ending up with B's card on top.

### A "Circular" Variation

After revealing and removing A's card, place the 7D (or whatever card has been selected at the beginning) face down on top. Spell the name of A's card, thus locating B's card which you place aside. Spell the name of B's card, and you get the 7D back again.

### Postscript

*Klondyke (Milk) Shuffle*: Simultaneously draw off the top and bottom cards until there are no more cards left, dropping each pair on top of the foregoing one.

(From my e-book "Enigmaths 2", found here at: [Lybrary.com](http://Lybrary.com))

### Did You Know?

Even more rare than a blue moon is the full moon on Halloween. The last time there was a full moon on Halloween was in 2001 and before that it happened in 1955. We won't see another full moon on Halloween until 2020.



# *Thematization*

*By Michael Jay*



Halloween  
Special

Now there's a word for you - thematization. While it generally applies to linguistics (the mental act or process of selecting particular topics as themes in discourse or words as themes in sentences), thematization can translate for us in magic. In this article I'm going to use Werner Miller's previous column to thematize two of his tricks for Halloween. Hopefully you'll be able to apply these techniques to thematize other tricks to suit any occasion when you perform.

Our first trick for thematization will be "Thingumbob of Diamonds." In this trick we use only the diamond cards from the deck. How, precisely, do we take Werner's premise (a random card locates two freely chosen cards) and turn it into a Halloween themed trick? This requires some free thinking, some creativity and being middle aged. Let me explain.

Diamonds are stones or, quite literally, rocks. If you're my age then you remember watching the Charlie Brown specials when you were growing up. All the kids in the Peanuts Gang would go trick-or-treating and then compare what they got. Peppermint Patty would get a Mars Bar, Lucy would get a Snickers Bar, and, inevitably Charlie Brown would get a rock. Charlie Brown always got a rock.

And there you have your in-road.

Imagine that you're at a Halloween party and someone thrusts a deck of cards in your hand and asks you to do a trick. (Of course it doesn't have to happen like that; you might have your own deck on you or you might be in your own home where you can easily access a deck or any one of a hundred other scenarios where you are asked to do a trick and a deck of cards is handy.)

So, you start, "Remember when you were a kid and Halloween was only a few weeks away? Were you like me? I would look forward to it and all the candy that I'd have for months afterward - all that candy would carry me through to the end of the year! And there were never enough Halloween shows on



television. Still, I'd get to see a lot of the old horror movies and I really enjoyed that. Every year, though, what I most looked forward to was the Peanuts special. Do you remember the Peanuts specials? Everyone got candy except Charlie Brown. He always got a rock. I think it's because his ghost costume had 12 eye holes cut in it...But, he always got a rock."

Keep in mind, with this script, you should be taking time out to let your audience respond to what you're saying. You're not trying to perform a cold scripted piece. Rather, you want to start a conversation and get everyone involved. If these folks are middle aged, they will remember these Peanuts Halloween specials and they will get involved with the narrative. This will make it much more entertaining for them because they are becoming part of the trick, rather than bearing silent witness to your skills and presentation. As Doc Eason says, "Magic shouldn't be down and in, it should be up and out."

So let your spectators be a part of your presentation. This is particularly important because there's very little else in this trick's presentation that has anything to do with the Charlie Brown specials. Really, it's just the preface to your card trick.

You continue, "So, as a tribute to Charlie Brown and all the rocks that he got, let's just use the diamonds for this trick because, as you all know, diamonds are nothing more than rocks. We'll use each and every one of these rocks, thirteen in all...And there's a great Halloween number - 13."

You may now perform "Thingumbob of Diamonds" as a Halloween themed presentation, even though there is no further discussion as to how or why this has anything to do with Charlie Brown and his ghost costume. As pointed out, it is nothing more than a preface to lead you into the trick (and that is enough to give that trick/presentation the feel of Halloween magic).

Thematization.

You are certainly within your rights to end there. The presentation of "Thingumbob of Diamonds" has enough steps to stop any reverse engineering from the theorists in your audience and the trick itself has the bonus that you only have to put in, about, an hour of your time practicing it to make it your own (and please do practice it - if you go through all the steps smoothly, it really does look like magic at the end). You don't have to stop there, though,

because you can now follow it with another trick from Magi Miller's article, above.

This time around we are not going to use too much free thinking or creativity, mostly we are going to rely on being middle aged. If you've followed my script loosely and you got your spectators involved, then this next question/script will be met with enthusiasm (on the other hand, if you have the personality of a cardboard box and you're just trying to prove how clever you are, then nobody's going to want to see your next trick regardless of how powerful your first one was).

"Would you like to see another?" This is one of the most innocuous of questions and yet it is still a query that puts an emotional gun to your head. Magic is an intimate art and with that single question you have opened up your soul to be destroyed if you have failed to engage your audience...That question, and that question alone, bares your soul to every onlooker in your presentation. If they say 'no' it is tantamount to rejecting you and everything about you.

You want scary for Halloween? The possibility of being rejected by a dozen people, all at the same time, is damned scary stuff.

Assuming that you've done your job and you have properly engaged your audience and drawn them into your strange world of magic, then they are not only going to want to see another trick, they are going to require it. This desire that they have to see another trick gives you some leeway. You now are in a position to get more in depth with your presentation. You can slow down and really make every word count. You are in the 'sweet spot'.

We will accept the fact that your audience wants to see another trick and this is how you start:

"Halloween is a special day for magicians, particularly. Did you know that Houdini died on Halloween? He died in a hospital bed in Detroit on October 31st, 1926 - 89 years ago this very day. They called Houdini 'The King of Cards' and the card trick I'm about to show you is very special to me. My great-uncle was a newspaper man in the early 1900s and he actually knew Harry Houdini. Houdini taught my uncle a card trick and when I was 8 years old my uncle taught it to me. It was the first magic trick I ever learned and I can trace it back to Houdini. I'd like to show it to you...Would you like that?"

If you are my age, you can get away with this patter line. If you are younger, then you can explain that your uncle taught it to his son (your cousin) and your cousin then taught it to you because you were getting into magic. Regardless of how you explain it, you should be able to tell your audience how Houdini's card trick ultimately ended up as being a trick that you now perform. While making it a personally important trick for you by tracing it back to Houdini teaching it to one of your relatives, you don't necessarily have to do that. You can explain that someone gave you a book penned by Houdini and it's the very first trick you ever learned - the important thing here is that the trick has been thematized by using Houdini as the hook (and Houdini is a very strong hook for Halloween magic).

It is here that we'll begin separating all the aces, twos, threes, fours, and fives in order to perform "Lure" from Werner's article, above. While you separate those cards and set them up, you continue:

"We don't need the entire deck, only the ace through five. Let me put them down so that all the cards are with the like cards (step 1 from Werner's article)."

Complete step 2 and begin step 3: "Now as I pick these cards up, you are free to change your mind. Would you rather have the 3? Or maybe the ace? What about the 5?"

Changing their card at this point in the trick won't make a difference. Whether they change their mind or not, continue on as Werner explains in his trick (counting the number of cards to the bottom depending on their choice and so forth). From here, any patter will do because you've introduced the trick with the Halloween theme and taking it much further will probably lead to cheesy lines and scripting (cheesy lines and scripting are to be avoided unless your performance character is cheesy to begin with).

Hopefully you can see that nearly any magic trick can be thematized using free thinking and creativity. Age is also an important factor and you should also take into account the age of your audience - what plays for a middle aged crowd won't necessarily play for a younger or older audience (and, as the saying goes, "Know your audience.").

# *Fee Fi Fo Fum*

*By Dave Wyton*



When it comes to fees, those who know have been saying for years that if you charge more than the common herd, people will happily shell out. The thinking is that if it's expensive, it must be good; the smart folk immediately recognise quality.

Are they right?

I don't think so. I also think it's a dubious policy. After all, if you (groan) "know your market" then you'll certainly know that while people may avoid rock-bottom pricing on the grounds that if it's so cheap it really can't be any good, they won't pay a high price simply because it's a high price. They'll choose the middle ground, something they think is reasonable. The problem is recognising what they think is and isn't the middle ground; reasonable. Even "knowing your market" doesn't help, simply because everybody is different.

I try to work economically—magic at affordable prices. But what is affordable? There's the rub. A couple of years ago I had a call from Ms Brown; she was currently working in and was calling from Japan. She and her partner lived in Derby and were getting married in August. The ceremony and reception were scheduled to take place at Eyam Hall, Eyam, the well-known Plague Village. She'd asked the people at Eyam Hall if they could suggest/locate a "suitable contender" for the role of strolling magician. Somehow my name and number came into the frame. The "somehow" still prevails. I have no idea how that happened.

Anyway, Ms Brown, in Japan, listened to what I had to say, thought it sounded okay and said she'd call me when she and partner returned. She did and the gig went ahead.

A month or so after this, I had a call from a local radio disc jockey. Such persons nowadays tend to call themselves presenters, or some such, but he referred to himself as deejay. I'd never heard of him, but then I don't listen to the radio station in question; more to the point, I can't remember his name even now. For convenience, let's call him Joe Soap. It went something like this:

Phone rings. I pick it up, Joe speaks straight away.

“Hi, it’s Joe Soap here.”

Pause for reaction. With none forthcoming he repeated his greeting, adding . . .  
“from Radio Fathead.” Still no recognition or response.

I’d heard of the radio station, a local, commercial outfit and acknowledged the fact. There was a slight air of anti-climax to the rest of Joe’s spiel, but he rallied a bit. Seemingly the station had been doing very well just lately and Joe’s boss was throwing a lavish barbecue party for “his team”. There’d be loads of food and drink—lots of champagne particularly—all laid on by the Acme\* Catering Company, and fireworks and a live disco and, . . . well I can’t recall the whole menu, but it certainly seemed like a few pence had been committed to the event.

“Sounds good,” I said.

“Yes, the Boss knows how to look after his team. Can you pop along for an hour or two and do some of that close-to magic?”

“Yes.”

“He saw you when you did the opening promotion for Shouty FM.”

“Do you mean Cameron?”

Pause, then: “Yes, Mister Thingie.”

“Did you get my number from Cameron?”

“No, I rang admin.”

“Okay then.”

“We’ll let you have some food and stuff.”

“Very civil.”

“Right then, how much?”

I told him. Very affordable, I thought. Probably about the same price as a case and a half of decent grade meths. And the same fee I'd charged Shouty FM—twice.

“You haven't put the price up have you? Just because we're famous?”

Famous? Wow.

Resisting the urge to laugh in his face, put the phone down and—momentarily at least—the urge to remind him that I'd never heard of him before he called, and still didn't know who he was or he thought he was, I simply said, “No. Talk to Cameron. Or check with admin.”

(Laughing in his face over the phone would be a neat trick. Well, back then, anyway.)

“Can you do it for less? I don't think we can run to that much.”

I reminded him of the boss and his generosity, recounted as much of the bill of fare as I could recall, and brought in the champagne comparison. I also regurgitated the forgotten (by him) fact that *twice* I'd worked for their sister station for the same amount. And it was on their recommendation that he was calling me.

“Can I get back to you?”

“Of course you can, if you feel like it.” He never did.

So, what is affordable? I charged slightly more for the Eyam Wedding, because it was quite a trek to Eyam. But the fees were the same. The wedding party weren't famous, nor did they appear to have unlimited financial resources. They wanted a decent day for their celebration and didn't mind paying what, at least to them, seemed reasonable and also something resembling the going rate. They had a disco, a live band, loads of champagne and stacks of grub. I suspect overall the wedding cost far more than Radio Fathead's lavish-boss-funded barbecue.

What Goes Round . . .

In December of the same year I was working a lunchtime session—a Christmas bash for the red braces. Who should be there but Cameron Thingie. Apparently

the company advertised on Radio Fathead, though how would I know, I don't listen.

Anyway, there he was there cementing relations, building contacts, forging new openings, looking for gaps in the market: just the familiar corporate lunchtime junket. I made a point of having a brief natter with dear old Cam and asked how the barbecue had worked out. It went fine, apparently; good job they hired a marquee, though. It absolutely hissed it down. "But how do you know about that?" I told him. "That's a shame, I didn't even know we'd tried to book a magician. If I'd thought about it, then I'd have been in touch myself."

A likely story, but he's an amiable sort and sounded sincere. And as far as I could tell, he didn't consider himself famous at all. Thing is they didn't have a magician at all at the barbecue. Presumably they couldn't afford it, what with the champers, the after-eights, the disco, the grub, the marquee and presumably a six-pack or two of ale. Interestingly, no mention of fireworks. So it wasn't a case of booking somebody cheaper. What it actually was a case of, I don't know.

### Did You Know?

Hollywood, California has a law that makes owning 'Silly String' (or aerosol string) on Halloween day, and only Halloween day, illegal. If you are caught with Silly String in Hollywood on that day, you can be fined up to \$1,000.00 and spend up to 6 months in jail.



# *Abracadabra; Hocus Pocus; Alakazam*

*By Mark Williams*



It is well known that spells and incantations are either a written or spoken series of words believed to be capable of having magical effects. Lesser known, is the fact that the word "spell" derives from the Anglo-Saxon *spel*, which translates as a saying or a story.

One of the earliest records of "Abracadabra" being used is contained within the *Liber Medicinalis*, from a Roman sage named Serenus Sammonicus in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. He penned this: *On a piece of parchment, write the so-called 'abracadabra' several times, repeating it on the line below; but take off the end so that gradually, individual letters, which you will take away each time, are missing from the word. Continue until the (last) letter makes the apex of a cone. Remember to wind this with linen and hang it around the neck. Many people say that the lard of a lion is effective . . .*

The use of spells appears to have been conceived by the idea that there is a natural and intimate connection between words and the things signified by them. The power that spoken words have was believed by many of the ancient societies and continues into the present. Practitioners of Magic developed their own special language, known only to them. These secrets became an object of mystery and a catalyst of their power, within society. Magicians of ancient Egypt used words in their incantations, such as *tharthar, thamara, thatha, mommon, thanabotha, opranu, brokhrex*, and *abranazukhel*. These words were usually spoken at the end of each spell with the purpose of harnessing dreams. The word "Abracadabra" is thought to have been a direct descendant of "Abranazukhel." The development of this early magic was thought to be an integral part of gaining knowledge, learning foreign languages and becoming skillful in the very use of spells.

The magicians and sorcerers of the Middle Ages also used spells containing words which were relatively unknown to most people. Hocus Pocus is another common phrase used by magicians, yet it didn't come about until the 17<sup>th</sup>



century when an unidentified conjurer used this phrase in part of his act: "*Hocus pocus, tontus talontus, vade celeriter jubeo.*" Many believe that this was derived from a passage read aloud at Catholic Mass: "*hoc est enim corpus meum,*" which translates to: "*for this is my body.*" Another theory is that Hocus Pocus derived from the Norse demon Ochus Bochus, and calling out his name would make him help with whatever magic was meant to be done.

Spells are used by modern day occult magicians for low magic, where attempts are made to affect the mundane world. Spells for high magic, attempt to change the level of consciousness and bring the magician into contact with a transcendent realm. Common spells or enchantments are normally divided into these classes: (1) Protective spells; (2) The curse or taboo; (3) Spells by which a person, animal or object is to be injured or transformed; (4) Spells to procure some minor end, love-spells or the curing of persons and animals.

The protective spell usually appeared as an incantation, it implored the protection of certain gods, saints, or other spiritual beings who in waking or sleeping hours would guard the speaker from evil powers.

A Taboo or curse, as it is better known, usually contained damaging words or words of prohibition and restriction. Curses and taboos were specifically used to hinder or harm individuals. Transformation spells were meant to target particular persons, animals or objects. In ancient Egypt, these types of spells were devoted to providing the deceased with words of power, so that they could transform within the ethereal world.

The specific origins of the word "Alakazam," is much harder to trace. However, there is a theory which suggests that it was a word created to sound like one used in an unspecified foreign language. It was meant to create an air of exoticism and mystery. The earliest example of "Alakazam" being used as an exclamation for imparting supposed magical powers, as when performing a trick is from 1902. It was a wishing-spell, and whoever repeated it could be anywhere or do anything they desired. It read like this: '*Alakazam Bazazza Ki! Hickory Dickory Dock. Omega Om Opeeka Pi? O Donnerwetter Hoch!*'

The history of these three magical words, are an insightful reminder that our magic today definitely has roots in the past. Some of the specifics are shrouded in mystery and give us a reason to keep the veil tightly closed. Abracadabra, Hocus Pocus and Alakazam are spells and incantations still used today by modern conjurers. Their usage has definitely changed throughout the decades. Honor their past and harness their energy, as you might just perform miracles. How will you make the rabbit disappear?



# *The Best Haunted House I Ever Visited*

*By Tony Spallino*



Halloween  
Special

For as long as I can remember, I have loved going to haunted houses at Halloween. The thrill and the excitement of being scared and seeing the ghosts and goblins that I loved during the holiday was impossible to resist. Unfortunately, where I lived, these were hard to find. Not many of them were close by my area.

About 15 years ago, I heard about a place called Castle Blood<sup>2</sup>. It was advertised as a walk-through haunted house. The interesting thing to me was that it wasn't the "hockey masked killer" sort of haunt, populated with high school kids who threw red paint on themselves and just jumped out at you through the whole experience. It was advertised as having 'a quest to complete in a gothic-style atmosphere'. Perfect! I gathered a few friends and we went to see it. It was a wonderful experience, both spooky and puzzling, with just a touch of macabre humor thrown in for fun. We met various denizens of the house along our mission, and everyone had a great time.



But, being a magician, it also held a fascination for me from a performance viewpoint. What makes this place so interesting to me as a performer? Was there anything I could learn from it to carry into my own routines? I found lots of similarities between Castle Blood and a magic act.

First, were the characters and performers. Each performer has a unique, defined character. They stay in character through the entire night. It didn't matter if they were a main character, a supporting role, or even someone entertaining the line while people were waiting, they were always in character. As we were waiting in line, I watched a scary-looking guard look down on a young girl, about 10 years old, and ask her, "Are you scared?" She looked up at him and

---

<sup>2</sup> Castle Blood can be found on the internet [here](#).



quietly nodded her head. "Good..." and he slowly walked away. The look on her face was priceless!

As a performer, even if you don't have an "alter ego", your performing self is a kind of character. It might be an exaggeration of yourself, but it's still a kind of character. Someone that you become for the sake of the performance. For your performance to seem authentic, you need to stay in that character throughout your act. The audience will not respond well if you develop a performing split personality and switch characters.

Castle Blood always has a story with a definite plot for the visitors to participate in. It's not a passive walk-through. There is a quest to solve, decisions must be made that affect the outcome of the story. The customers are the decision makers of the story. You have a main character escorting you as a guide and narrator, but the decisions



come down to the will of the group. Each move through the house and grounds of the Castle takes you through each chapter of your story.

When you are performing, you need to lead your audience through your story. What is your plot? What is the story you are trying to tell? You also need to include your audience. Don't let them be passive. The best stories are the ones where the spectators are directly involved in the storytelling. You can still control the story and the ending, but let your spectators feel like they are directly involved.

The Castle was beautifully decorated, with plenty of gothic-style props and items. It wasn't just the things they had laying around, it was also sound, and even smell. They attempt to create an entire environment for the visitors. Even seemingly meaningless objects are designed to look like they belong in this netherworld environment.

Your performing style also needs to reflect your use of props. Not only is it important to use props that fit your style of magic but they also need to look like they belong. Using a big red box with Chinese characters on it is going to look out of place if your performance has nothing to do with China or you are more of a close up artist. Take the time to make your props fit your performing style and the story you are trying to tell. You may have to modify the props you have or do some searching to find exactly what you need, but the payoff is definitely worth it.

This wonderful haunted house keeps as its base philosophy the idea that "less is more". As I said before, there are no hockey mask wearing people jumping out at you from behind a piece of badly painted plywood. There is very little in the way of people jumping out at you. You will get the occasional wall panel dropping, with a disembodied head yelling at you to "Get away!" You might find a mummy or zombie walking your way to encourage you to keep moving through the house, but the idea is not to just scare you but to make it SCARY!! Dialog, storytelling, and interaction provides the fear for the visitors. There's a big difference there. Anyone can scare you, but to make something truly scary takes skill. The overall atmosphere of the house helps this. By sticking to a firm storyline, and letting the environment speak for itself, the performers can focus on doing the best job they can. While watching a scene that involved three witches, one of them came to stand right next to me, and just stared at me during the other performer's dialog. This uncomfortable use of my personal space helped increase the uneasiness of the scene in a very simple, and effective way. Her whisper of "Yes, we could use you..." didn't help the situation any.

This is probably one of the most important lessons a magician can follow. You don't necessarily have to have giant, mega, multimedia performance to entertain your audiences. If you have a solid routine, one that has a great story, includes your spectators, and has the technical parts of the magical performance perfected, you will be able to truly entertain your audience. Having a good grasp of personal interactions with your spectators will pay off in a memorable experience. Focus on having a solid performance, and the entertainment will follow.

What made the whole experience even more fun for me personally, were the little bits of magic thrown in for effect. (Again, less is more). In my several visits

there, I've seen people encouraged to put their hands in a box that would possibly "chop" it off, a well done change bag routine to get our quest started, combined with a magician's force, the use of a haunted key while we were waiting in line, and witnessed one of our party disappear in a mummy's sarcophagus, only to reappear after our mission was over.

I would like to give you a friendly challenge. The next time you think about Halloween, and visit a really good haunted attraction, think about how these same principles can be applied to your own act. Think about how character, plot, props, and atmosphere can come together to help you produce a complete magical experience for our audiences.



# Halloween Kids' Show, Part 1

By Jon A. Hand



Halloween  
Special

## Making and Using a Small Jack-o-Lantern Square Circle

Theming a kid show for Halloween will lead you to the nearest discount store to find the fresh Halloween items just waiting to be adapted. Here is one of my favorites from years ago.

Make a Square Circle from a plastic jack-o-lantern.

### 1. Materials needed:

- Orange plastic jack-o-lantern pail with a removable handle (orange is the most effective color, although green, purple, and even pink are found in the stores). You can choose from a wide variety of different sizes to make your production as elaborate as you wish, but I like a rather standard size "treat pail" that a child might carry to collect Halloween goodies.
- Tubular instant oatmeal box and a tubular iodized salt box. If you choose carefully, the salt box will be only slightly smaller in diameter than the oatmeal box, which is desirable. Alternatively, you can choose from all manner and sizes of steel cans that hold orange juice, vegetables, etc., but getting exact sizes for the specifications to follow will be more difficult. Mailing tubes may work, too.
- Small piece of  $\frac{3}{4}$ " plywood that will become the base, and optional thin wood trim.



- Three cans of spray paints: primer, flat black, and glossy bright yellow, with copious amounts of newspaper to use as overspray shields.
- Tools: X-acto™ knife, circular saw, band saw (really helpful, so find a friend who has a band saw and get him to use it for 60 seconds).
- Sandpaper, masking tape, construction adhesive or carpenter's glue, optional wood filler (see above)

2. Prepare the base:

- Measure your jack-o-lantern pail's diameter at its widest point (girth). Add 4" to that dimension, and cut a square base to that size. Example: if your pail is 12", cut a 16" square base.
- From the scrap wood left after the cut, fashion four feet to elevate the base. The feet could be square, or rectangular, or you could even use four wooden drawer pulls as feet. Affix feet to underside corners with construction adhesive or carpenter's glue.
- Use wood filler to fill voids in the plywood, and sand smooth. Take the sharp edges off all four sides of the top with some light sanding.
- If you are a true woodworker, use the thin wood trim to cover the ply exposure, gluing it on the sides. If you have the skills and the equipment, you can even use a router to make grooves in the base for the three tubes that will comprise the JoL square circle (see sections 3. and 4.)
- Prime all with spray primer: top, bottom, feet, and trim. Allow to dry thoroughly. Lightly sand to prepare for finish top coat.
- Paint with flat black spray paint. Allow to dry thoroughly, and apply a second coat for better depth and scar resistance.





3. Prepare the plastic jack-o-lantern (JoL):

- Remove the handle and discard.
- Take the X-acto™ knife and carefully cut away the black areas where the eyes, nose, and mouth were painted. This leaves you with openings resembling the real pumpkin JoL that your parents carved for you when you were a child. Make sure that your finished cuts are smooth.
- Take the X-acto™ knife and carefully cut away the entire flat bottom of the JoL, making it into a bulbous tube (the “square” of the SC). Take care to remove completely any rough plastic flanges resulting from your cuts to prevent accidents when working with the JoL SC.
- Ball up a large sheet or two of newspaper, and cram it into the interior of the face of the JoL. Contrive to make the entire interior front half (face section) completely covered with the balled paper, but smash it well into the front of the curve to give yourself working room inside the tube. Secure the newspaper with a few pieces of masking tape.



- Use flat black spray paint to coat the entire interior back half of the JoL. Make sure that the black extends fully to the middle pumpkin groove of each side, but no further forward. I did not find it necessary to prime the plastic first, but “your mileage may vary.” Allow to dry thoroughly and add a second coat for better depth and durability.
- Remove masking tape and balled newspaper. Your “square” of the SC is now complete. Due to the relatively small openings in the JoL’s eyes/nose/mouth, the flat black paint is sufficient for the black art effect.

4. Prepare the tubes:

- Open the chosen tubes and remove foodstuffs.

- Measure the total height of the JoL “square.” Take your larger cardboard tube (oatmeal box) to the band saw and cut off the base so that the tube is *very slightly shorter than the height of the JoL “square.”*
- Take your smaller cardboard tube (salt box) to the band saw and cut off both the base and the top to convert it to an open tube. Make the smaller tube *slightly shorter than the larger tube but taller than the top of the eye openings on the JoL “square.”*
- Clean up any rough areas from the band saw cut with the X-acto™ knife.
- Prime both cardboard tubes inside and out with spray primer. Allow to dry thoroughly. Second coat edges and any thin primer spots.
- Spray paint the larger tube with the bright gloss yellow, inside and out. Allow to dry thoroughly, and second coat for durability.
- Spray paint the smaller tube with the flat black, inside and out. Allow to dry thoroughly, and second coat for durability.

5. Assemble the finished unit.



- Place the JoL “square” on the black base. Nest the tubes and place them inside the JoL. When viewed from the front, the JoL looks lit because of the bright yellow peeking through the cut-out eyes, nose, and mouth.

- Load with production articles as desired. Here is my list, in loading order (which would be reversed in production order):
  - Live goldfish in a short, bulbous vase of water, approximately half the height of the inner tube (buy fish only an hour or so before show time, and load it into the vase with the water supplied by the store). Stop filling the water at the top inch or two of the vase, and wipe dry any spillage on the vase itself.
  - A 12' length of continuous pennants, either multi-colors or Halloween themed (but the basic multi-colors version shows further and has more impact, as each pennant is a different color). These are available for at dollar/pound stores for next-to-nothing. Tuck around the goldfish vase and leave one end sticking up on your right to make it easy to grasp.
  - A multi-colored 24" silk (or nylon taffeta). Pleat to 24" x 1" and insert around the base of the goldfish vase, with one end sticking up on your left to make it easy to grasp. Separate the front and back layers of the upward end to facilitate opening the silk in production. Optional: get confetti, or better still (and easier to clean up) decorative paper shred (available in many colors) and tuck some strips into the folds during pleating.
  - Cheap playing cards, unboxed, and treated with fanning powder (zinc stearate), or, as Gary Ouellet suggested in *Closeup Illusions*, a large X across the back (only) of each playing card from *Cashmere Bouquet* bar soap (the only soap still made from animal fat, tallow, and glycerin). Break the deck into two halves, and put each half standing on the narrow end on top of the pennants and the silk.
  - Purchase 1" wide cloth ribbons: Have the store cut off 6'-8' each of red, orange, yellow, blue, green, purple, and white. These will be sewn together end-to-end with ¼" overlaps into a continuous streamer. For maximum contrast, consult a color wheel and sew together in an order which will alternate between opposite sides of the color wheel. Starting at one end, roll the finished streamer into

a tight, flat disk and place atop the goldfish vase, lying on its flat side.

6. To produce:

- Start slow, mysterious orchestral music from CD or digital media player (Tchaikovsky's *Arabian Dance* from The Nutcracker, or Gounod's *Funeral March for a Marionette* would be good examples). Bring forth the assembled unit from a back table, where it has been on display to set the mood for the whole show direction (often gets "ahs" and "oohs" from younger children, especially with the opening glowing yellow). Lift off the JoL "square," holding it by its sides face front, which exposes the black back through the cut-outs of eyes/nose/mouth. Show around in each direction. Lift the open bottom toward the audience to show the empty inside, and again show around in each direction. Replace the JoL on its base.
- Lift the yellow tube from the inside, turn its open end to the audience, and show all around. Replace inside the JoL.
- Change the CD or media player to fast, flashy orchestral music ("The Lone Ranger" conclusion to *William Tell Overture*, or the opening to *Toreador Song* from Carmen would be good examples). Such an underscore during the production makes the articles seem more endless and more surprising because of the music's energy.
- Make your magical gesture, or use the wand. Grasp the end of the ribbon streamer and pull upward, faster and faster as it comes out, allowing it to fall in a heap on the floor.
- Grab 1/2 of the deck with your non-dominant hand, fan one-handed to produce, and use the dominant hand to begin scaling out cards individually over the audience's heads (NOT toward them, which can badly cut a spectator's face). To scale a card, grasp it lightly between the second and third fingers, cock the wrist back toward the chest, and fling outward and upward, leading with the wrist and following with a snap of the hand. Scale fast and furiously; when out of cards, produce and fan the remainder of the cards to scale them, or walk away from your table toward the kids and bend the remainder of the deck

concavely to let it spring away in a stream from your hand. Kids will go nuts trying to grab the cards, so you might consider whether or not you want that kind of chaos!

- Grab the 24" silk by its upward ends, stream from the tube, and shake to show it fully, the colored paper shred leaping into the air.
- Grab the pennant streamer by its upward end, and stream from the tube, gathering it in the hands to make it look even bigger than it is.
- Finally, hesitate, look into the tube, look at the audience, wave a wand if you wish, and pull out the goldfish in the vase to close your production.

I hope you have fun making and using this Jack-o-lantern Square Circle. It was a first used as a finale to a series of 6 shows in 3 hours for a school Harvest Festival, and it has continued to serve me well over the years.

## *Halloween Kids' Show, Part 2*



### Using Halloween Props Imaginatively

Warning: The truly scary magic show is NOT for children! If you must have a weird and spooky Halloween show (guillotine, arm twisting, fake blood, etc.), don't do it for kids! Such a show is for upper teens and adults, who enjoy getting the shivers a bit and won't emulate you with disastrous results, as kids might. For good advice in setting up such a show, check out these books:

- Marvin Kaye's HANDBOOK OF MENTAL MAGIC has a layout for an entire spook show that builds to a smashing conclusion. Recommended if you want an eerie evening!

- Janel's STARTLING EFFECTS is the standard book of stage weirdness, still available at Magic Inc. in Chicago.

If you want a more general magic show for kids with a Halloween theme, however, this article is for you. This is a compilation of ideas I have come across in *old* books over a 55 year hobby in magic, augmented by some of my original ideas. In no particular order, then . . .

Discount stores such as Walmart, Kmart, Target, Dollar Tree, Dollar General, Big Lots (aka Odd Lots), and others stock hundreds of Halloween items in September and October, most of them very inexpensive. Also, after Halloween is past, you will be able to find these remaining items at 50 - 75% off retail, if you want to plan ahead for next year. Cruise through the stores looking for appropriate items and think creatively. What might you do with plastic spiders, witches' cauldrons, jack-o-lanterns of myriad sizes, skulls, skeletons, and more?

Look for black plastic cauldrons in three different sizes. Either of the largest two could be great visual atmosphere until being used in the show, and then could be shown empty and used as a production device.

- A simple way is to produce collapsibles (silks, paper coils, play money, etc) is to hide them under a black cloth secured by a few bits of black Velcro™ glued to the inside of the cauldron. Give the audience a quick look into the cauldron to see the empty blackness, and then begin the production.
- Another way is to show the real interior empty, then flip over the cauldron to show the feet as you dump in a silk or two from under your coat by pulling the load on a thread loop from under the jacket with your thumb(s). Wave your wand, and produce the small load items singly. Then step back to drape them over the back of a chair for display, which gives you ample opportunity to lift a larger bag load from the back of the chair by scooping it off a hook or headless nail with the cauldron.
- In the larger load, you could produce individual wrapped candies to hand out at the end of the show, or even a rabbit in the largest cauldron (assuming you routinely use a pet rabbit in your shows). How about vanishing an item early in the show, trying unsuccessfully to make it

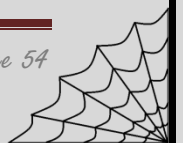
reappear throughout the performance, and then finally finding it strung on a ribbon around the rabbit's neck?

- To make an easy bag load, get some black cotton cloth and have a seamstress hem the edges (use either a square shape or a circular shape). Then have buttonholes sewn diagonally into each corner (square) or evenly spaced (circle) around the perimeter. Run a black string through the buttonholes, lay your load in the center neatly, and pull the drawstring tight. Hang the load on the back of a table or chair, and drop it into the cauldron as described earlier. If the load is heavy enough to thump on the plastic cauldron when it swings in, pad the bottom of the bag with additional material sewn into the center to deaden the noise.
- The smallest size cauldrons, about six inches, could be used with dry ice and water to make a foggy mist throughout the show. Set one on each of two side tables with some other mood-appropriate Halloween object(s), and watch the mist flow down the sides and across the floor. Important: keep the kids away from the dry ice, as it could injure them if handled.

There are easy-to-build tricks in a budget book called *SPOOKY MAGIC TRICKS* (also reprinted as *SPINE TINGLING MAGIC TRICKS*) by David Knowles, which you can usually find for under \$5 at Barnes & Noble, Books-a-million, or Amazon. These are fun when delivered in the silly kid style of show, and they keep the mood going.

Look at your existing tricks to see what you can adapt. Many standards can be adapted to a Halloween theme if you push your thinking a bit. The joy is that you soon become adept at this type of re-invention.

- Use black or orange construction paper and rubber cement to add a cutout of a spider or a bat to the side of each cup in your inexpensive aluminum cups & balls set. Since the bat and/or the spider can look fine facing up or down, it does not matter to the design whether a cup is mouth up or down during the routine. Think creatively about what you use as the balls and as the final loads. The rubber cement will come off easily after the show.
- Alternatively, get some plastic skull goblets, and use candy corn or candy



mini-pumpkins to do your favorite cups & balls routine. Don't forget to eat some of the candy props, making them reappear under the cups! Or use one such goblet, and do a one-cup routine, even converting the goblet into a chop-goblet if you wish. Final loads can be any Halloween thing you can imagine, such as small plastic jack-o-lanterns (about the size of a small lemon or lime), small stuffed animals (dragons, cloth JoLs, etc), or even plastic insects! Three easy ways to load plastic insect toys:

1. Have a spare matching goblet half-full of the insects, and take a regular goblet out of play during the course of the routine. Substitute the loaded goblet as you bring it back later, drawing attention away from it by producing a load from another goblet at the moment you swing the insect goblet into position as you would a hidden opening load. Produce as the final climax by lifting the cup, causing the insects to tumble everywhere.
  2. Wrap the insects in thin orange, yellow, or black tissue paper, or just in Kleenex™, and load as you would a final load. Allow time misdirection (use another cup to make an effect in the routine), then lift the cup, producing the tissue paper, and grab the load to rupture and shake the insects free.
  3. Make a paper cone/cup that fits into the goblet. Lay the inverted goblet on a Kleenex™, trace the outline of the goblet mouth, and trim off the excess. Fill the goblet with insects, and seal by gluing the Kleenex cover on the top. Load as usual, and come back to the cup after time misdirection. Pick up the cup by using the little finger to hold the load chamber in place, and look disappointed that nothing appeared. Rupture the cover with the little finger, and shake the cup to have the toy insects flying everywhere. In the pandemonium, ditch the cone into your lap or the servante.
- Use twin wide orange ribbons instead of rope, and use an older child (who won't be frightened) in a "Houdini Escape Trick" that is really just the old *two ropes/loop of thread penetration*, and use two younger kids to hold the ribbons. You can extend the playing time with hats for the younger children and a cape for the star (which, of course, hides the gimmick).



Tie the knot into the center over the star's chest and lowered arms to set up the escape, then play up the courage of the child to make the famous Houdini Escape, and drag out the count a few times by interrupting yourself. Finally, tell the young children to pull hard on the ribbons on the count of three to complete the escape. Call for applause for your star and the helpers.

- The old standard Afghan Bands can be made up in cloth or paper: orange for one boy, yellow for one girl, and an ungimmicked black one for yourself. Tear (cloth) or cut (paper) your ungimmicked one into two separate bands to show what you want the kids to do. Explain that this is a race! Show a dollar bill, and put it into an opaque security business envelope as a prize for the winner. Then set up a race between orange and yellow, with audience kids cheering for the color of their gender. Of course, the envelope has the flap already cut off, and is atop a stack which has all other flaps intact. In envelope two of the stack, there are two half dollars (or four quarters, since halves are getting harder to find), divided into opposite ends of the envelope. Insert the dollar into the flapless envelope, and pull envelope two from the stack by its flap, leaving the dollar hidden in the flapless envelope atop the stack. Seal the envelope and place in full view, standing upright on the table. When each kid's band comes out "strange" (linked in pair or double-sized single), make a big deal out of it, and take scissors to cut the "dollar" in half through the envelope to award a prize to each kid. When the kids protest, dump the half (or two quarters) into the hand of each from each  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the envelope. Call for applause for your helpers and send them to their seats.
- Replace your Zombie ball with a plastic skull, using modeling clay to add weight to the bottom so that the skull will stay upright. If you replace your Zombie cloth with a Séance gimmick, you can hold onto the visible hand gimmick with the unused hand during the Zombie routine, and then still have a hand free to have the skull make noises with objects on the table. Finally, you can drop the skull into a black art well or servante to make it vanish at the close of the routine.
- For a bigger production number than the cauldron idea, make a large Jack-o-lantern Square Circle (see Part 1 of this article). Although that



article details a small unit to take advantage of the “treat pail = commonplace” association, you could make one from as large a plastic JoL as you can find. If you are going large, then go to a home improvement store and get the 8 inch and 6 inch cardboard tubes used as forms to pour cement posts. Cut to just below the height of your JoL and prepare as detailed in Part 1. Your production can be massive if using the usual silks, banners, ribbons, etc.

### **About production items:**

- Discount stores have little Jack-o-lanterns (1-2 inches) that you could produce singly, or space evenly on a line to produce as a string. Some even have battery powered JoL light strings that you could switch on and produce.
- Want profusion without huge expense? Get some inexpensive polyester or nylon taffeta, 1 linear yard each of several bright colors. The material is 52 inches to 62 inches wide, and so your seamstress can make “silks” to your needs. Cut to desired sizes and hem the edges (difficult on this slippery material, which is why you have a seamstress). Do the math: from 36 inch by 52 inch material, you can have copious amounts of production silks (e.g., two 24’s and four 12’s, or a 36 and two 16s, or numerous 18’s). If you want to maximize load space, cut each 18” “silk” into two triangular silks, hemming the long diagonal side on each. After producing several whole silks, start producing these half silks by holding them from one of the long diagonal corners, which makes them curl and look whole!
- For Halloween specialty “silks”, you can stretch out 24 inch or 36” squares with push pins on a backing board and have an artist draw appropriate art with permanent markers: bats, ghosts, black cats, spiders, etc.
- Just go to a craft store or discount store and buy cotton Halloween motif bandanas to produce.
- Walmart (and others) carry small flattish candy dishes which stack, looking exactly like tiny terrariums! They are only 3.5 inches to 4 inches

in diameter, and only 2 inches tall, so they will fit into even a small square circle. Stack three or four with some water and a goldfish in each one (details for handling and loading goldfish are in Part 1). Tuck your silks around them. Produce a bowl of fish, then some silks, then another bowl, etc.

- Playing cards to produce and scale over the audience heads are detailed in Part 1.
- Self-inflating balloons are easy to make, and look impressive coming from the production device. You will only need three or four of different colors in the production, and the round balloons inflate faster and better than others. Go to the florist and get the dram size flower holders and some floral silk thread. Fill the dram containers with vinegar (a mild acid). Put a teaspoon of baking soda in each balloon using a dry ingredient kitchen funnel. Cork the dram containers, and force the mouth of one container into each balloon, wrapping the neck of the balloon tightly with the silk thread and tying it off. To produce the balloons, pop the cork on one while it is inside the production device, and produce some other item while the balloon inflates. The acid reacts with the baking soda to make CO<sub>2</sub>, which inflates the balloon over several seconds. Produce the inflated balloon, which should stand decently on your table due to the extra weight of the dram container, the cork, and the ingredients. Experiment with sizes of balloons for your production device, and with the amounts of dry and wet ingredients to see how much you want the balloon to inflate.
- Colored ribbons were mentioned in Part 1, but if you are going large in your production device, then they can be correspondingly longer. Get 1" ribbon in 10 foot lengths, in various colors. Stitch together in ¼ inch overlaps, alternating colors from opposite sides of the color wheel for maximum contrast. Roll up into a flat disk and produce by pulling the streamer from your production device fast and furiously.
- Cardboard or plastic Halloween theme cups, or even colored Solo™ cups, nest together into a tiny space and can hold other production pieces in the topmost one. Produce the cups singly and build a huge cup pyramid on the floor or side table.

- Japanese or Chinese lanterns are very colorful and can be decorated with markers for thematic elements if desired. They fold flat for loading, but they will unfold automatically upon production is you put a couple of small, flat curtain weights on the bottom of each one. Lift out by the top handle, and the lantern will open itself.
- A miniature plastic skeleton with extremities dangling on string, about 1 foot high, will fold up well and make an interesting surprise between silks or other items. Play it up as distasteful to you when produced to give the kids a laugh.
- Cheap dolls in the size of Barbie™ can be purchased at dollar stores. Leaving the front and sides of the hair intact, cut the back off the doll and the back 1/3 of the clothing, making a nesting shell of each doll. Two or three such dolls dressed in different clothing will be an unusual addition to the production when produced singly.
- Find CDs of eerie Halloween sounds and strange music to set moods, or to find such kid standards as *The Monster Mash*. The soundtrack to the old film, 2001 - A Space Odyssey has some eerie music that is perfect for the Zombie skull routine, for example. Orchestral standards such as *Night on Bald Mountain* and *In the Hall of the Mountain King* will work well when matched with appropriate routines. Fast, flashy music enhances any production routine (see Part 1 for more suggestions). Use your computer to convert your tracks to a digital media player and program your background music as you wish.

Happy Halloween, and may your Halloween Kid Show be a big hit!

# Zombie Card

By Brian Tabor



Halloween  
Special

The ambitious card is a classic in magic, and one of my favorite effects. For this Halloween themed ambitious card effect, we're going to take inspiration from David Regal and Eugene Burger, two magicians who are well known for their emphasis on presentations. You'll need a deck of card, a Glorpy handkerchief, a black sharpie, a green and red sharpie (optional) and a double backed card. The double backed card plays a dormant role in this effect, and will not come under scrutiny, so if you don't have one you can simply glue two jokers together to make one if you'd like. I'm also going to give you three different ways to end the effect based on your preference and performance style. Keep in mind this presentation is meant to be fun and engaging, so don't take yourself too serious. You can also adapt this presentation to other effects if the ambitious card isn't your style. So let's get into *Zombie Card* (named not only for the zombie, but because the Glorpy animation reminds me of the zombie ball effect). First, let's look at the inspirations for this presentation.

David Regal has a wonderfully fun ambitious card routine that involves the spectator not only signing their name, but drawing a puppy on the card as well. The presentation is that this puppy comes to its owner when called, and serves as an excellent emotional hook to keep the audience engaged. This effect can be found in his book *Approaching Magic*, pg. 432, or in his video *Premise, Power & Participation Vol 1*. This idea of giving the spectators a reason to care about what's happening is a great lesson in making your magic more meaningful and entertaining, but I'll save that spiel for another day.

Eugene Burger has an effect called *Double Reverse*, which is a Walter Gibson effect with a Glorpy handkerchief twist. In the effect, two cards, one chosen by the performer and one chosen by the spectator reverse themselves in the pack. Eugene Burger has added to the presentation by placing the deck into a Glorpy handkerchief, and commanding the spirits to find and turn over the cards, using the Glorpy handkerchief as a visual effect. This effect can be found in his video *Magical Voyages Vol 2*.

Now let's look at the effect and presentation of *Zombie Card*. Start with the double backed card on the top of the deck, and your Glorpy handkerchief in your right pocket. Position the wire gimmick on top of the bundled cloth, so you can grab it when you pull out the hank one-handed and keep the gimmick hidden. Have your spectator select a card from the deck. I usually spread the deck face up, (keeping the DB card hidden), and let them pick the card of their choice. This has the advantage of showing the deck normal without stating it, as well as letting the spectator know it's ok for you to see the card. Once they've picked a card, shuffle or double undercut the DB card to the bottom of the deck. Have the spectator sign the card, and now for the fun part: ask them to draw a *zombie* on the card too. Emphasize that it doesn't have to be a good depiction of a zombie, a simple stick zombie will suffice. If you want to have a little extra fun, give them green and red sharpies so they can add embellishments. This zombie is inspired David Regal's idea of hooking the spectator. Remember, the more fun they have with their zombie, the stronger their emotional hook will be. If they take a few seconds to draw the zombie, you can add some fun or cheesy zombie jokes to cover the silence. This effect is about having fun so don't be afraid to be a little cheesy.



Now you're going to do an ambitious card, with some zombie themed fun. Take the card back from the spectator, and admire their masterful artwork. Put your finger to the zombie's face and pull your hand back quickly, complaining that it bit you. Explain that their zombie must be hungry for brains, so for safety reasons you'll have to bury him back in his grave. *Try to avoid placing the zombie card to the spectator's forehead and announcing that the zombie is starving.* Perform the Depth Illusion / Marlo Tilt to "bury" the zombie. When you're ready, use a double lift to show the zombie has come back. "Perhaps we didn't bury him deep enough". Turn the double card face down and pick up the single indifferent card, and place the card lower into the deck. "There's no way he's coming back now!" Do another double lift, showing an indifferent card. Perform the Erdnase color change, acting surprised when the zombie returns. You're now in perfect position to do the famous Braue Pop-up move. Put the bend in the double card, in an attempt to "weaken the zombie". Lift off half the

deck with the right hand, sliding the indifferent bent card onto the left hand packet, and place the right hand cards back on top, remembering to keep the zombie card on top flat. Allow the card to pop up visually, as if the zombie has broken free yet again.

Now it's time for the finish, and the world's easiest deck turnover. Hand the spectator the zombie card, keeping the deck in left hand mechanic's grip. "We'll have to get rid of this zombie once and for all, before he gets us. I have just the thing we need." With your right hand, pull out the Glorpy handkerchief, keeping control of the wire gimmick in your hand so it doesn't show. (The old chestnut *Look, there's a wire in my handkerchief* trick isn't a very good trick.) Explain that the hanky was a gift to you from your great aunt, a world renowned psychic. "This old hanky is haunted, and the ghost inside likes to beat up zombies." You can of course use any explanation you want here. I just like that the old style Glorpy hanks look like something an older lady would have, and it's a bit of fun.

It's time for the world's easiest deck turnover. As you casually show the handkerchief on both sides with the right hand, move your right hand forward and center just a bit, allowing your left hand to briefly go behind the cloth. Turn your left hand palm down. Because of the double backed card on the face of the deck, the deck will appear to still be face down. Congratulations, you've just executed the easiest sleight in the world. If you're feeling extra gutsy, you can perform this maneuver in the open, as the handkerchief is coming out of the pocket, since that's where the audience's attention is anyway. This discrepancy goes unnoticed as long as it is performed in a casual manner.

Place the handkerchief on a flat surface, with the gimmick in the top right corner, so that the long end of the wire rides the top seam, and the short end rides the right seam. In other words, the gimmick is upside down so it will be oriented the correct way after folding. A piece of advice, do not lay the cloth completely flat, instead allowing wrinkles and kinks, so that the bend in the gimmicked corner is camouflaged as just another kink in the cloth. You should still be holding the



deck in the palm down mechanics grip. The right hand grabs the cards by the short end, with the forefinger on top. A little pressure with the forefinger ensures the true face-up nature of the deck will not flash as the spectator replaces their card. Move the deck toward the spectator and ask them to place their card into the deck, and since the deck is reversed, they'll be doing the "work" for you. The right hand places the deck back into the left hand in a mechanics grip and squares the cards. (This sequence is an easy, subtle way to re-grip the cards, justified by the need to move the deck closer to the spectator.) This will leave the deck face up in left hand mechanics grip with the zombie card reversed in the middle and the DB card on the face. All that's left is to reverse the deck again. This will be the world's second easiest deck reversal.

As you place the deck in the center of the cloth, grab the gimmicked top right corner with your right hand. Raise the corner up to begin the fold, while the left hand with the deck moves behind the fold. Using the cloth as cover, turn the left hand palm down and set the deck on the cloth. This reverses the pack and when done



casually goes completely unnoticed. The right hand finishes folding the gimmicked corner over the deck, resting the tip of the long end of the gimmick on the center of the deck, and the bent end pointing slightly to your right. Fold the top left corner next, extending the corner slightly over the first corner, hiding the gimmick. Fold the bottom



left corner up next, and finally fold the bottom right corner up, leaving about an inch of cloth before the gimmick begins. Place your right hand palm down in front of the cloth, so that the right index finger rests on the gimmick. Place your left hand on the left side in a similar fashion. This hand and finger



placement is an idea from Eugene Burger. Using your thumb to operate the gimmick forces you to cover the hank too much with your hands. Using just



your index finger keeps the entire hank in view, and shows much less finger movement when you animate the hanky.

All that's left at this point is some acting. Gently animate the cloth to show the zombie and the ghost duking it out. After a few seconds of this, give the hank a bigger animated jerk, and let the hank lie still. (This simulates the card turning

over.) "I think the ghost has done its job." Open the handkerchief and spread the face down cards, showing the zombie has turned face up. "Look . . . he turned face up! That ghost must have taught him a lesson." Give the spectator the zombie card as a souvenir and assure them the zombie will behave from now on. All you need to reset the deck is to double undercut the double backed card to the top.

If you do not own a Glorpy, or just want a different ending, here's two variations I have used. You do not need the double backed card for these since the reversal is eliminated. The first is a card to wallet ending. The card to wallet I perform is a card to sealed envelope, so I preload business cards in the envelopes first. Draw a few odd symbols on the back of the business card, and when you pull out your wallet, explain that you keep a device in your wallet for emergencies like this, that will trap a zombie/ghost if they get out of hand. Reveal the card in the envelope and let them keep the whole package, including your business card with the symbols on it to "make sure the creature behaves". This is a fun way to give out your business card! Second, you can use the standard ring box ending for your ambitious card instead of Glorpy. Bring out the box at the start, and explain it is a safety plan in case the effect goes wrong. Just make sure to decorate the box with a spooky theme, and a few symbols on the inside lid, and use the same presentation as the card to wallet.

With zombie culture's popularity in society, there's no reason to limit this routine to Halloween, and I don't. You can also use a ghost or werewolf instead of a zombie, if you prefer. Just change the patter to suit your needs.

# *The Magician*

*By Michael Jay*



## Chapter 3

Sergeant Davis observed an archway to his right. On the wall, to either side of that opening, hung a set of shackles that looked every bit as old as the guillotine that greeted him. Beyond the archway was what Davis considered to be the living room, its white pile carpet, the couch and love seat, standing in stark contrast to this depressing foyer of horror.

As he stepped into the foyer, Davis pushed the door fully open which offered him the view of the wall to his left. Another archway led into the room where the real horror lie. He could now see Danny's blood-soaked pant legs splayed out on the floor and back end of a red dog protruding from the other side of the archway wall, the dog half resting on Danny's legs. His hand went immediately to his gun and he moved into that room quickly.

Danny was rested against the wall, embracing the dog, his eyes swollen and red, the handset of the phone laying next to his leg with the voice of the 9-1-1 operator still trying to make contact (Davis could hear her voice coming through the receiver). Off to the sergeant's right, across the room and slightly hidden by a dining room table, was the woman that was to become the center of a murder investigation. Danny looked up at Davis while Davis was unholstering his weapon.

"You need to keep your dog under control," the sergeant said with trepidation.

"Tanni wouldn't hurt anyone," Danny reassured him. "She couldn't even stop this."

His voice cracked and the tears began to well up again.

"Okay, sir, okay. What's your name?" Davis was not pointing his weapon, in fact he was keeping it muzzle down, he was just preparing for a situation that he

hoped wouldn't come to fruition. In his experience, dogs were unpredictable and Davis was not going to take any chances.

Guterez had already come around from behind her sergeant and was at the body of the woman. She was careful not to step into the blood pool, although that was no easy task. She was taken aback by the amount of blood. Did a human body actually have that much blood? This was the first murder scene she'd ever dealt with and the pictures that she had seen at the police academy simply didn't prepare her for this. Those pictures also didn't prepare her for the smell of such a large puddle of blood. Guterez was glad that they had not yet stopped for lunch.

"Danny Styles...er...Steadman," Danny answered.

"You don't know your last name?"

"Styles is my stage name. I'm used to giving that when asked and my mind isn't working right. I think you can understand that." Danny had gone back to comforting Tanni, she still wasn't right, but neither was he. He was annoyed at the sergeant's question and everything seemed like it was miles away; his wife on the floor, the cop hovering over her body, the sergeant with his gun and Tanni on his lap and the sound of the cop's voice and the sound of his own - miles away.

"Mr. Steadman, I need you to pick up your phone and answer the operator. You need to tell her that the police have arrived and hang up."

Danny complied with the sergeant's order. He told the operator the police were there now, but he didn't hang up, he absentmindedly held out the phone to the sergeant whose gun was still in his hand.

"She's dead, sarge," Guterez stated, matter-of-factly. The gash on Sherri's throat ran nearly ear to ear, no need to check for pulse, really. She had bled out. Officer Guterez noted that the only foot prints were those of the dog and Steadman's, which led directly to where he was sitting in the corner, now with outstretched hand to give the phone over to her sergeant.

"Get up and hang up the phone, sir." Davis was still on high alert in this situation.

Danny put a hand on Tanni's shoulder to hold her in place as he rose to his feet. He put the phone's receiver back into its cradle and Tanni never moved, she just laid there panting heavily.

"Call it in, Rook," Davis said, but never took his eyes off of Danny. His gun was still drawn even though he was comfortable with the fact that the dog wasn't going to be a problem. Mainly Davis was now concerned with how this cold hearted murderer was going to react to the situation as it unfolded.

"Copy that, Sarge," Guterez came back and began relaying information to the police base from her radio. She requested an ambulance, the coroner, several units for securing the perimeter of the crime scene, and the homicide detectives squad.

"Mr. Steadman, for your protection and ours, I'm going to cuff you," Davis told Danny. Danny looked at the cop incredulously. He could see that the pistol was now drawn up and pointed towards him while the cop's other hand was bringing out a set of handcuffs. "You're not under arrest, sir, this is just an issue of your safety and ours. Please turn around and place your hands behind your head and interlace your fingers."

Danny knew very little about firearms and paid no attention to the gun pointed at his chest. Instead, he was benumbed by the fact that even in the heat of this moment (staring down the barrel of a pistol, his wife dead in a pool of her own blood, the sirens in the distance, the feeling of being in a waking dream) what came to him with crystal clarity was that the handcuffs were a Peerless Model 700, chain link, standard issue, and easily overcome by even the most rank of amateur escapologists. His stomach wrenched tightly when the thought that even his dead wife could escape from those unsophisticated bonds occurred to him - he wanted to laugh at the thought and vomit at the same time.

"Depraved," Danny thought to himself. "I am depraved. Sheri dead on the floor and I'm considering the ease at which I can overcome this cop's handcuffs. What the hell is wrong with me?"

Davis was looking into Danny's eyes and his 40 years on the force betrayed him. What Davis saw in those eyes was what he interpreted to be a preparation to make a run or to lash out against the arresting officers. Before Danny could

comply with Davis's order, Davis rushed forward and slammed Danny against the wall. Guterez reacted in kind by taking out her telescopic nightstick and striking Danny on the kneecap; the same knee cap that was already throbbing with pain from its earlier collision with the floor. Danny dropped to the floor without any kind of fight or resistance at all and the two officers fell onto Danny's limp body with far too much enthusiasm. Still, they got the job done and Danny was cuffed. Tanni lay there, whining even louder than before.

Davis, his knee on Danny's neck, was impressed by how docile the dog was. Even while Davis took pleasure at the sounds of pain gurgling out of Danny's mouth, he was somewhat disappointed in the fact that he wouldn't get to put the dog down. It wasn't that he liked killing an animal, rather it was more to the fact that he took pleasure in robbing a perp of a beloved pet - it was all part of breaking down the perp's psyche in order to get a confession quickly and easily (and Davis took great pleasure in his job).

Danny's knee was screaming in pain. The dull ache from his neck, which was now bearing the full weight of the sergeant, seemed minor in comparison. Danny knew that any kind of movement on his part would be interpreted as an attempt to resist and that would lead to further punishment. Danny remained limp, it was a matter of survival. He was positive that this sergeant was a bit of a sadist, although Danny didn't hold that against him...What he held against him was the Peerless Model 700, chain link cuffs - what a joke.

Maybe it was the idea that his wife lay dead on the floor not 10 feet away from him, maybe it was the unreality of the situation, or maybe it was the palpability that Danny's dead wife could easily pick the simple handcuffs that he found himself being fettered with and the notion that a dead woman could escape from those cuffs with ease that brought it on, but from deep down inside of Danny came a laugh - a laugh that slowly built up to hysterical cackling.

Davis looked at Guterez, both of them shocked by this turn of events, and Guterez said, "I think I broke his knee, Sarge."

"He was about to run, Rookie, you did what you had to do."

"He snapped, you know." She was already feeling a pang of regret for her over-the-top method of putting Danny down.

"And that's what we'll put in our reports," Davis reassured his rookie partner, "He snapped and we had to subdue him."

Danny's outburst continued, uncontrollably. The distant sirens were very close, now, nearly drowning out Tanni's whines and Danny's hysterics.

*Chapter 4 of The Magician will be available on December 1st, included with issue #13 of Top Hat Magazine. Please watch our FaceBook page for details.*





# Bizarre Bursary

You've come a long way in your journey, Kiddies,  
and you've learned a lot. But now I turn you  
over to our story tellers, Tabitha Truhart, a first  
time contributor, and Weepin' Willie, a veteran  
of the psychic wars.

Prepare yourselves for two of the deepest,  
darkest, presentations of your life.



# Strange Coincidences

by Tabitha Truhart



I'm going to tell you a story, a **TRUE** story, a story as old as the human race, a story that repeats over and over, a story of men and rape and murder and Whit Monday. Whit Monday. A religious day for some, and for two women, Mary Ashford and Barbara Forrest, a day of death. Two women separated by time. Exactly 157 years. And two men, Abraham Thornton and Michael Thornton, unrelated by flesh but related by a demonic influence, and also separated by time. Exactly 157 years.

*While you tell this story you have a deck of cards. On top of the deck is the queen of hearts and on the bottom is the queen of diamonds. Use false shuffles to keep them in position. Shuffle lackadaisically while you tell the story and make eye contact, in particular with the men in the audience, looking at them accusatorily.*

Erdington, England, May 27<sup>th</sup>, 1817, 20 year old Mary Ashford changes into her new dress at a friend's home. She's going to the Whit Monday dance. She is seen with her suitor, Abraham Thornton.

*As you tell this part of the story, thumb through the cards and pull out the jack of clubs. Place the card on the table, face up (red queens still on top and bottom of deck). Do not correlate the jack of clubs to Abraham Thornton, let your audience do that for themselves.*

Erdington, England, May 27<sup>th</sup>, 1975, 20 year old Barbara Forrest changes into her new dress at a friend's home. She's going to a Whit Monday service. She is seen with her suitor, Michael Thornton.

*As above, thumb through the cards, this time pulling out the jack of spades and place it face up, on the table, next to the jack of clubs. Again, the audience will make the connection of the black jack with the villain, no need to explain this. While you are doing these things you should continue to shuffle the deck (maintaining the queens), all the while casting evil glances at the men in the audience.*

*At this point, square up the deck, holding it in dealer's grip, and hand a female audience member the jack of clubs.*

On Tuesday, May 28<sup>th</sup>, 1817, Mary Ashford's body was found at the edge of a flooded sand pit. She was raped, brutalized, and finally strangled to death.



*As you begin this part of the story, start dealing down the cards, one at a time, onto the table, one on top of the next (forming a tabled packet). Tell your helper to place the black jack onto the top of the pile, face up, at any time that they please. Try to get them to do this before you go past 15 cards being placed onto the table. Once your helper has placed the card onto the pile, stop here and continue your story.*

Abraham Thornton was accused of raping and murdering Mary Ashford on that horrific Whit Monday. He was tried and acquitted of this heinous crime.

*Drop the rest of the deck on top of the pile which will put queen of diamonds (bottom of the deck) directly on top of the jack of clubs. Pick up the deck and place it back into dealer's position, which naturally places the queen of hearts on the bottom of the deck at this point.*

*Hand the jack of spades to a different female onlooker and continue.*

On Tuesday, May 28th, 1975 Barbara Forrest's body was found in tall grass, not 300 yards from where Mary's body was found 157 years earlier. Just like Mary, Barbara was raped, brutalized, and finally strangled to death.

*Same as above - you deal the cards down, one at a time, onto the table, one on top of the next. Do your best to get this new helper to place the card face up onto the cards before you get to 15, same as above. Again, stop here and continue your story.*

Michael Thornton was accused of raping and murdering Barbara Forrest on that horrific Whit Monday. Like his predecessor Abraham, Michael was tried and acquitted of this heinous crime.

*Drop the rest of the deck on top of the pile which will put the queen of hearts (bottom of the deck) directly on top of the jack of spades. Square up the tabled cards and continue your story.*

Two horrific murders separated by 157 years. Both murders in Erdington, both committed by men with the same last name, both within 300 yards of each other and both committed on Whit Monday. Too many coincidences to be overlooked. There must be demonic influences involved.

*Ribbon spread the cards on the table, showing the jacks face up in the spread. Remove the jacks while simultaneously pulling out the card immediately over the top of them, keeping this couple face up/face down as you do so. As you pull out the jack of clubs with the (face down) queen of diamonds, say:*

Abraham Thornton.

*As you pull out the jack of spades with the (face down) queen of hearts, say:*

Michael Thornton.

*You now have two pairs of cards sitting in display on the table. A face up jack of clubs with a face down card on top of it and a face up jack of spades with a face down card on top of it. As you finish your script, you flip each of the queens face up for your audience. The following explanation should guide you as to how and when to flip the queens:*

Two men, Abraham Thornton and Michael Thornton, tried and acquitted of murder, 157 years apart, on Whit Monday. Did they do it? Or was something evil to blame? We will never know, but there are far too many coincidences to turn a blind eye. For Mary Ashford and Barbara Forrest, I don't think it matters.

*As you say 'Mary Ashford' flip the queen of diamonds on top of the jack of clubs. As you say 'Barbara Forrest' flip the queen of hearts. Allow that to sink into your audience's minds and take your bows.*

### Notes

Most readers will immediately recognize the method to this presentation, but for completeness this is a retelling of 'Gemini Twins' by Karl Fulves, published in "More Self-Working Card Tricks" (Fulves, 1984). It was originally published in "Impromptu Opener" (Fulves, 1979) under the title, 'Stopped Twice'. Fulves credits Herb Rungie's 'Hidden Mystery' (The Jinx, No. 83, 1940) as his inspiration.

The above presentation assumes that you, like me, are a female. Chances are that you are not. I recommend that you change the wording if you are a male of the species and, under that circumstance that you also skip the accusatory glances which work so well for me. It *won't* work for you.

While I have taken some liberties with the story line, the names, dates and places are all true and can be researched online. Fact is stranger than fiction.

*I Am Forever Yours,*

*Tabitha*

# *I'll Keep An Eye Out for You* *by Weepin' Willie*



Hello, my dear friend. As always, I am glad to see you; however, your timing is a bit embarrassing. I was just headed out the door to visit Sister Mary Louise, the local fortune teller. It puzzles me why some people are in denial over death to the point they wait until the person starts stinking and the Glade Plug-ins no longer work to call me. However, even odor is not an indicator of actual death in modern days. Some people wear perfumes and colognes that smell like crap and are still up and walking. Seems that last night, during the storm, a tree limb fell across the end of her trailer and I need to check to see if there is anything dead that needs taken care of. These are hard times for the funeral business with all the health nuts around, thinking they can live forever by exercise and organic eating. They do not stop to think that prehistoric man ate organic foods, drank clean water, breathed fresh air and walked miles each day but only lived to be 30 years of age. The funeral business could really flourish under those mortality statistics.

“You would have thought that she would have seen that coming,” you say? No? Well I bet you thought it. Obviously, like most people, you do not understand the difference between fortune telling and future telling and Sister Mary Louise is a fortune teller, not a future teller. Come, ride with me and I will introduce you to her and tell you a story along the way. Who knows, if she likes you, she may give you a free reading, as a favor to me of course. We will take the '38 LaSalle hearse so be careful and hold the door closed because the latch is a bit sprung. Back in the olden days, few people went to the hospital or doctor, and when they did they usually paid the bill in chickens and eggs, so most hospitals were too poor to afford an ambulance. On the other hand, the funeral industry was thriving because of the reluctance of people to seek medical attention, the ignorance of the medical professionals, and the fact we kept the rings, necklaces, and shoes from the dead before burying them, so the local funeral establishment provided transport for both the living and the dead. We would answer the call and if the person were dead we would deliver them to the morgue and if living, to the hospital. I imagine more than a few intended for the hospital ended up in the morgue when times were hard.

In one such transport I had a new assistant with me and the cargo was pronounced dead at the scene; but, since actual death is sometimes illusive and difficult to determine, it turned out the person was only in a deep coma. About halfway to the morgue, we hit a pot hole in the road and it jarred the man awake from his coma. You can imagine his surprise when he came to his senses to discover he was lying in the back of a hearse instead of his favorite recliner. In a flash he was out of the LaSalle and running down the street. My helper, seeing his pay check running away in the 'closer than it appears mirror', jumped out to chase after him before I could come to a complete stop and it sprung the latch. It has only been forty years and I really need to fix that, but I keep telling myself I will replace the LaSalle someday and it never happens. As long as I hire assistants with a good right arm they can hold the door closed and it will work just as well. I would have been upset had it not been the funniest thing to look in my side mirror and see the cadaver running down the street and my assistant hot on his tail yelling, "Somebody stop that body! Somebody stop that body!" Ah, those were the good days.

No body can remember a time that Sister Mary Louise did not live in Hayville. (No body was not a typo. Nobody refers only to the living but no body also includes the dead). She was the favorite fortune teller of both my grandmother and aunt, and when I was about six or seven years of age, my mother asked her to read my fortune. I was excited as I was led into a dimly lit room and seated in an adult chair. "You will be a big man, someday," she said, as she gently stroked my palm, and that was it! Even today, I ponder what she meant by those words. Did she mean I would be an important person or big in size? Now, in my golden years, I am a scant four foot eight so I have realized the prediction was not in height. My business is marginal, actually dying, so that was not it either. However, being almost as round as I am tall I guess the prediction was reasonably accurate since children and adults in my days were usually malnourished and thin. Some would say she had peered through the veil and into the obese future of 21<sup>st</sup> century America, but we all know the future cannot be predicted because it has not been determined yet.

You see, that is where people misunderstand that telling a fortune and a future is not the same thing. That fortune tellers may be legitimate but future tellers are all fake. Imagine the future as a million loose threads floating around in space and as we travel through life we must make choices as to which threads we choose and which we reject. Those chosen pieces combine together to create what we refer to as the present; a series of decisions made by us and others for us. Nobody can know what decisions we will

make for ourselves, and then only at the time we make them, so the infinite combinations of decisions means telling the future is impossible. (Usage of Nobody is not being inconsistent because the No bodies of the dead know everything.) Future telling, however, is something different. While the future is something not yet created and cannot be foretold, a person's fortune is mostly defined as fate, coincidence, or accident and not by conscious thought and choice. Once the thought is planted in our minds, we will be encouraged to subconsciously choose certain paths and make certain decisions, creating the fortune spoken of; a self-fulfilled prophecy of sorts. We are the masters of our fate after all. Ah! Here we are."

A neon, eight-foot tall hand, spread in palm out position, with a big eye in the middle beckoned us to enter. She painted the sign herself and the fingers were a bit out of proportion but no one seemed to mind. Across the top and bottom of the well-lit sign were the words, "Sister Mary, Knows All, Sees All, and Tells All! – For a Price!" Most people thought the big eye was symbolic for the 'see all' statement but it was really a logo because she only had one real eye; the other was artificial. She never said whether the eye symbolized her real eye or the artificial one. As we exited the hearse and approached the porch, we were greeted by a frail old woman with long white hair that hung to her waist. Her appearance reminded you of the pictures of the old hag witch with crooked nose, warts, and the cat rubbing against her leg. She looked us over and, as she gazed toward my friend, her left eye remained stationary. It was a spooky sight. If anyone knew how she lost the eye they never said, but I suspect it probably involved a BB gun or a stick.

"Welcome, my dear children," Sister Mary greeted, her wide smile revealing a perfect set of artificial teeth. After holding forth her right arm and beckoning with her outstretched, arthritis ravaged index finger, she turned to lead the way, walking slowly before us, the cat reluctantly following. They say animals look like their owners and this was no exception because the hump in Sister Mary's back matched that of the black cat, which also had an artificial right eye; a green cat's eye marble I think. As we approached the doorway to her dimly lit parlor, I was reminded of the sixties; ugly women with long hair, love beads covering the door frame, and the strong smell of marijuana wafting in the air so strongly that I was not sure I was not seeing the future.

"Come, come, children. Have a seat at Sister Mary's table," motioning toward two chairs across from where she would sit. As we sat silent for a moment to allow her to catch her breath she asked, "Now, what can I do for you?"

“Actually, Sister Mary Louise, I heard about your mishap and thought it would be a good time to review your preplanning options. Such accidents do remind us that those final arrangements sometimes need to be changed.” I handed her the packet of information to review. “You can review this and get back to me later.”

“Thank you Willie, never know when those plans will be needed.”

“Also, if you would, could you give my friend here a sample reading?”

“Of course, my child.” Sister Mary Louise said, her eyes getting big at the opportunity to perform. The artificial eye fell out of its gaping socket and bounced twice before rolling across the table and making a clanking sound as it came to rest against the crystal ball. She cackled like a little school girl as she picked it up, swirled it around in her mouth to clean and lubricate it, and pushed it back in its socket, not realizing it was in backward. A couple blinks and everything was back to normal. She took my friend’s hand and stared intently, gently caressing the palm as she responded. “Hummm, uh huh, uh huh, You will be a big man someday!” At first I was a little taken aback that she had given the same prediction she had given me fifty years ago but, then again, a preacher often preaches the same sermon and a singer sings the same songs so why could not a teller of fortunes not use the same prediction?

On our way out, Sister Mary Louise led us by her display case for my friend to purchase one of her Authentic Haitian Voodoo Dolls, and in the process of bending over to remove the doll, her glass eye fell out and rolled across the display case stopping at the very edge. As we walked toward the LaSalle, Sister Mary waved goodbye, holding the artificial eye in her outstretched hand, “Come back soon! I’ll keep an eye out for you!”

My friend looked a bit disappointed when he examined the Authentic Haitian Voodoo Doll and noticed that the tag said ‘Made in Taiwan’, so I reminded him that in Hayville, nothing is ever really as it appears to be.

### **Unexpected Guests:**

Sister Mary came to my office and placed a box on my desk. The box was an eerie shade of blue and had a silver moon figure on the top.

I opened it and gazed at the glowing bottle before me for what must have seemed like several minutes but was probably just a few seconds.



"Lost soul?" I questioned. I had heard that souls are comprised of energy and when they leave the body they assume a glowing image, but this is the first one I had actually seen. "Afterlife has always been a mystery in every religion," Sister Mary explained, "What happens when we die? Where does our soul go?" She allowed me ponder that statement for a moment before continuing, "In Greek mythology, the soul was thought to leave the body and was ferried across the river Styx by Charon to the place of the dead. While the name of the river and ferryman changes according to cultures, the stories remain very similar in all cultures. Ancient people would sometimes place a coin in the mouth of their dead because the ferryman required a toll, and if it wasn't paid, the deceased's soul would be required to wander the earth for 100 years."

"I do not know about you, but I certainly do not want to put up with some of my relative's sorry butts for another 100 years; it is a small price to pay," I said. She let out one of her cackles before continuing, "I was once a fake and pretended to communicate with the departed souls, but one night all of that changed and I actually made contact, or maybe I should say they made contact with me. At first, it was just something I thought I saw out of the corner of my eye, but when I looked in its direction there was nothing there."

"I must admit that I have had those times as well, when something moved in my peripheral vision but vanished when I turned to see."

"Everyone has the experience sometime within their life time," Mary added, "But few realize what it actually is - the dead trying to communicate. They dismiss that moment when they feel a presence, hear a voice call their name, or see movement, but there is no one there, only them. What I discovered is that these sightings are encounters with the spirit world, but not those who have passed over but those who are abandoned on this side of the veil.... Homeless spirits."

"Homeless spirits?"

"Yes, spirits that for some reason were either rejected or couldn't cross over. I felt sorry for them so I decided to rescue them and find them a forever home."

"Like an animal adoption service does for abandoned animals?" I added.

"Yes, but you must be careful because some of the spirits are not friendly. Fortunately, emotion is visual and you can tell the temperament by the color of the aura it gives off. If it glows blue it is generally benign and passive, if red it is evil and angry, green ones



are kind and helpful, and yellow ones are mischievous.”

The restless orb began to move within the bottle, so Sister Mary Louise removed the cork and it floated out and into the space just above it. Fortunately, it was a green orb and was not a threat. The glowing orb moved as if she had full control over the spirit; it would rise and move according to her gestures and commands, almost a graceful dance. If she formed a circle with her arms, it would float through them and at times would circle her body. She tossed it into the air, “Go to your eternal, forever home, my friend!” And the glowing orb quickly rose toward the ceiling and out through the open skylight. I sat there in awe for quite some time before I could speak.

### **Performance:**

The performance is just as described above. There is a lot of room for added or deleted movements as well as storytelling. It is basically an Invisible Thread routine with a spooky theme. Steve Fearson once published an effect called Area 51, which was an adaptation of his floating cigarette routine with a mini glow stick. In his version, the glow stick dances around and is finally released into the air where it floats away in the night. I think it is included in his Master levitation System. If you are just curious or on a discount funeral director’s budget, look at this link, which is free and will give you most of what you need routine wise: <http://magicjoint.com/pages/levitations/super-spinner/> Amazing JoeJoe only asks for a contribution if you find it useful and you can choose how much to give. Joe really gives a lot of tips for using the thread and I think an experienced handler may find some pointers useful as well. His penny reel is a great idea and the video plays in short segments. What I like about this link is he shows a lot of live footage in actual performance after each segment. You can buy the wooly nylon in black or brown from most fabric stores and strip out the single threads yourself or you may choose to purchase the stronger threads from a magic store or even the fabric store. The one thing I do not agree with is the use of the silicon putts as I do not think it holds as well as magician’s wax. Both have their value and you will have to decide what fits your needs.

### **Considerations:**

This glow effect must be done in subdued light conditions (and at night if you are going to let the spirit rise into the heavens.) However, the routine would work just as well without it and the disappearance into the sky is more preparation than I will do. There should not be excessive lighting as it will take away from the release surprise and while



it will take a little audience management skills these are not hard to acquire. By choosing the right color glow stick for the theme of your performance you could use the spirit to help with your magic or to launch into a séance. It would be a perfect lead in to Meteors by Juan Mayoral. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p-qVcljkw6s>) If you choose red, be sure to have some glass breaking and blackouts for your audience to experience. Hope you have as much fun with this as I have.

**Note:** Invisible Thread is fragile so it is possible, maybe we should say probable because it is almost as certain as Death, to break. You are doing this as a main act, which is usually not recommended, and if the thread breaks you will need to have a back-up plan. There is nothing quite as stressful as having an audience waiting and your only trick is a dud. It is worse than having a funeral without a body or a single funeral with two bodies. Trust me I know! You can have an alternate setup or just use the glow stick as it is for a séance or some other effect. Have a backup plan.... Have a backup plan..... Have a backup plan!

#### **Other suggestions:**

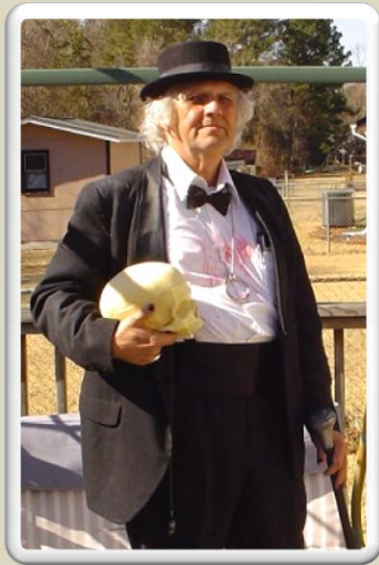
Now, let me also say that if you are not comfortable with IT, you can expand this principle to almost anything. For example: Use a drill and cut a hole through a ping pong ball and insert the glow stick and make a miniature glowing zombie ball routine. When I did this, I found a glow stick at the Dollar Tree that was just right for this effect. I also bought the ping pong balls there, as well, but I prefer the more expensive hard ones. To insert the glow stick, I drilled a hole with a wood bit the size of the stick and placed a drinking straw from one side to guide the glow stick and prevent it from falling inside the ball. This insertion is done after breaking the stick and must be done so it is still glowing brightly during your performance. You can test your sticks for duration and determine this.

You can get glow sticks in various sizes from your local dollar store and, if none fit your



need, you can take the liquid out of a large one and fill whatever container you choose to use. Be creative, but be careful because the liquid will stain what it touches.

Hope some of you use this effect and trust me, it works really well at a dusk time grave side service. You just pluck the spirit from the coffin and let it go. You'll find out who are the screamers, runners, and fainters.



**Your friend in death and life,**

**Weepin' Willie**

**"Your last SMILE is my first priority!"**

## Production Team

Designer & Publisher: Michael Jay

Editor: Michael Jay

Proof Readers: Gary Scott

Shaun Robinson

Scott Fridinger

Paul Rey

Technical Advisor: Wayne Clancy

Assistant Tech Advisor: Tam McLaughlin

*Based on the design of Wayne Trice*

The next issue of Top Hat is due out the 1st December. If you are interested in submitting an article for publication please direct your inquiry to [tophatv2@gmail.com](mailto:tophatv2@gmail.com) - the deadline for submissions is the 15th November.

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

### **PARTING SHOT:**

Be natural and use your head.



-Dai Vernon-