

MagicBunny Presents Top Hat

The Bizarre
Edition

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A Letter From...

...The Editor

Michael Jay

Welcome to the Bizarre Special Edition of Top Hat. In the upcoming 50 pages of this edition you're going to find some of the most bizarre articles and tricks that you could imagine. If you are already into bizarre magic, you will enjoy this offering; if, on the other hand, you've never performed bizarre magic in your life, you are going to find a great deal of food for thought on these upcoming pages. Please, read on.

Our magazine kicks off with a bit of history, but mainly a piece that will help you to understand what bizarre magic is and what the bizarrist hopes to achieve through his presentations. Yitzhak Schlomi explains the world of the bizarrist in clear and concise verbiage. He then follows up on that with a truly bizarre bit of magic that serves to teach the reader precisely what he should be on the look-out for in his own bizarre world.

Next Weepin' Willie shares his own macabre background with the reader in a bizarre tale of ghosts and corpses. The bizarre story telling continues with a tale of possession in an asylum, recounted to you, dear reader, by The Very Reverend S. Ulysses Wainwright.

The Reverend continues with a second article, a trick, that can be used to enthrall your audiences with a theme that will hook nearly anyone. The Reverend does give fair warning, though, that you should consider the spectators' belief system before you begin this powerful bit of bizarre theater.

Patrick Schlagel gives the reader a composition that takes us through war time, but beware - this is an exercise in free thinking and will require reflection on your own part. Following that, regular contributor Mark Williams chimes in with a close look at the Rosicrucians, giving the reader fodder for presentations right out of the dark ages.

And speaking of dark ages, Gary Scott recounts his haunted memories of Alucard, taking you into the nightmarish world of the Vampyre. Finally, bringing this fantastic offering to a close, I give you my own thoughts on incorporating one of Edgar Allan Poe's short stories into a delightfully dark piece of theater, but you will have to do some work to make it your own.

Enjoy!

Run the Other Way When...

...The Bizarre Magician Approaches

Yitzhak Schlomi



Bizzarrists *love* a good mystery. It is befitting that the origins of Bizarre Magic itself is a bit of a mystery. Some would say Bizarre Magic originated from Mediumship which evolved from the Spiritualism Movement. Others say it originated as branch of Mentalism or as an out-growth of Spirit Magic. To confuse matters more, some regard Mentalism as having its roots in Mediumship and Spirit Magic, but that the latter borrowed heavily from Mentalism. The Ritual Magick of Shamanism, Goeticism, Wiccan, and other spiritual traditions are the true origin of Bizarre Magic, according to some. One internet resource, as dubious as any other, even claims that Bizarre Magic has its roots in traditional stage magic. Although we may not agree on the origins of Bizarre Magic or when it came into being, most Bizzarrists would agree that the craft is continuing to evolve. Moreover, most Bizzarrists would agree that Bizarre Magic freely borrows ideas from other magic and magick disciplines. Let us narrow our focus on that last point – that Bizarre Magic re-purposes ideas, specifically effects, originating from other disciplines.

One example of Bizzarrists borrowing effects from magical disciplines comes to us through Steve Bryand's descriptions of his show *Apparitions* (see *Seance*, Winter 1991, No. 10). In *Apparitions*, the audience was told the story of a party-shunning bride who was coerced into playing hide-and-seek at her wedding reception. She was unfortunately too good at the game and goes missing; she was not found until six months later, dead, locked in an old steamer trunk – her body remarkably well preserved. During the



performance the ghost story was told by candle light, the candle was blown out, a strobe was activated, the audience saw a bride enter the room, and climb into a steamer trunk. The storyteller closes the lid, finishes the story, and opens the lid of the trunk to reveal a partly rotted, mostly mummified corpse clothed in bride's attire. Straight from the art of conjuring, the steamer trunk design came from plans in *Mark Wilson's Complete Course in Magic*.



Richard Kaufman's *A Rat to Plague You* (*Alter Flame*, Volume 6, Issue 3) is a gruesome tale, filled with anticipation and horror. It vividly

tells of the visit of a nervous newspaper reporter to a famous mage. In this eerie tale, the reporter is ordered to place his hands on a cold stone table and, to his surprise, he is immediately shackled to it. The mage tells the man that this may be his last day on earth, for it is quite possible that "the Black Plague may be returning to you, your family, and your friends." Indeed, the visitor had come to seek information about recent reports of the deadly disease. The mage continues, "...How do you know it's too late when it's already here and is as likely to kiss you on the lips as you pass by?", and, as he speaks, a cloth set in front of the visitor begins to undulate, squirming in an ugly, vile way. "You know it is too late when then sign of the plague appears...in the form of a rat, dead, with blood oozing out of its nostrils", the mage explains and he whips the cloth away to reveal a giant rat, lying on its side, blood around its snout. Richard Kaufman uses a Glorpy to convey the motion of the vermin to the audience - a most effective adaptation of a device from the close-up worker's table.

DeNomolos, the alter ego of the late Ed Solomon, has been casting his spells in the Bizarre community for many years. Ed was a masterful storyteller and an avid collector of small, exotic props. Within his large collection were two exotic, wooden boxes in the shape of pyramids. The pyramids were identical, except one was topped with a sterling silver capstone. DeNomolos would explain the concept of "Pyramid Power" (see *Pyramid Power* from *Egyptian Magic* written and published by Ed Solomon), explaining that in the two pyramids were five objects: a clay Ankh, the kneeling Osiris clay amulet, a clay Eye of Horus, a

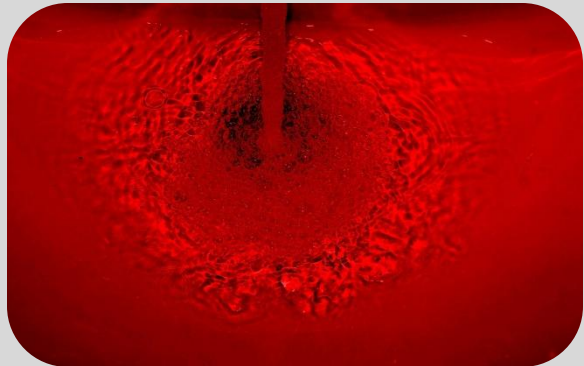


stone Scarab, and a silver amulet depicting the Sun God, Ra. He would reverently place the five objects on a mat in front of the Pyramid. In the silver-topped pyramid, he informed us, was a copy of just one of the five objects. DeNomolos would continue, "In the 60's and the 70's there was a great deal of experimentation with what was called 'Pyramid Power'." He would call on a spectator to choose one of the five items on the mat. To the audience's amazement, the chosen object matched the object in the silver-topped pyramid. To perform this feat, Ed expertly used well-known forces and techniques from mentalism - elements from Christian Chelman and Phil Goldstein.

A most effective adaptation of an effect from Mentalism is seen in Christian Pohl's *Rendezvous with a Vampire* (*Alter Flame*, Volume 3, Issue 1). In *Rendezvous with a Vampire* the audience is taken to the inside of a train in which two young men are travelling to meet Professor Frybarger – specialist in medieval myths and legends. As the train traverses snowy mountain passes bound for Romania, the two men recount the legend

of the Countess of Bathory, whose vile acts included bathing in the blood of young girls in an attempt to impart immortality to herself. A truly gruesome story is recounted

of how Professor Frybarger encountered an apparition of the Blood Countess and in his research of the castle in Romania exposed some astonishing revelations. As a means to test the Professor's theories, one of the two men



bid the other passengers in the compartment to write down names on some cards and seal them in small envelopes. The other traveller is bid to write down the name of the Countess of Bathory and seal it in another envelope. The cards are mixed and placed on a small wooden rack. As the story builds to a climax, raw eggs are appropriated from the dining car. They are cracked, one in front of each card. A disgusting site, indeed, is witnessed when one of the eggs is found to contain a great deal of blood – and that the card behind the bloody egg contains the name of the Blood Countess. Christian Pohl's employment of shims in the cards is a brilliant example of how Bizarrists borrow concepts from Mentalists.

The Last Gift by Tim Mochary (*Alter Flame*, Volume 7, Issue 3; based on the Hans Christian Anderson's *The Lost Pearl*), tells of the birth of a child. Five unseen angelic visitors bring gifts to the newborn – the gifts are represented by four cubes of wood on which were written "Hope, Faith, Joy, and Wealth". But the fifth visitor, we are told, says her gift will be 'unbidden' and will be presented at the appropriate moment in the



child's lifetime. The performer shows the cubes with the four gifts written on them. As the story concludes, the final gift is revealed – Sorrow – and the performer shows that the Joy cube has turned to Sorrow. Using a move derived from the expert dice worker Dr. Sacks, the tale ends quite sadly.

The Pure of Gold by Nigel Gordan (*Alter Flame*, Volume 7, Issue 2) must be one of the most creative uses of a Foo Can that has ever been performed. The audience hears about an old inn in the Alps. New roads have forced it into decline. “Years of study,” our narrator relates, “led me to believe this inn was a keeper of a secret.” We learn that this secret involved a man with several names, who practised dark rites, and seemed never to want for wealth. We learn that our narrator discovered a room at the inn, until then, hidden behind layers of plaster. It was in this room that the mysterious man had lingered. Now the room only contained a simple pallet bed, a chair, a table, an empty vase, and a plate. Contemplating his find, the narrator falls asleep in the room. In a dream, our narrator uncovers the magical nature of the mysterious man's wealth, and reaching into a glowing ball of light, pulls out gold coin after gold coin, dropping them into the vase. When he awakes, our narrator wonders if the dream was true and if the gold is still in the vase. He overturns the vase and sand pours out. For we are told, the gold cannot “last long in this world before it returns to whence it came,” and with that, the sand bursts into flame.



The classic mentalism routine *Seven Keys to Baldpate* (*A Book Without a Name* by Theodore Annemann, also recapped in *Practical Mental Magic*) has been adapted many times in Bizarre Magic routines. Briefly, in *Seven Keys to Baldpate* the audience is shown a lock and a number of keys, only one of which will open the lock. After mixing the keys, the performer finds the one key that opens the lock. The effect must be done with the lock in possession of the performer for most of the routine. However, in 1963 the late Carl Wolf of Merriss Magic invented the Key-R-Rect system for the *Seven Keys to Baldpate* routine which allows the lock and keys to remain in the hands of the spectators for the entire routine. Carl's one-and-only product was an exact replica of a Master brand lock with a smooth-working trick mechanism. Leo Kostka described (*Seance*,



Issue 8) his spooky adaptation of the Key-R-Rect in which the sitter is chosen, rather than the right key. Focusing on the sitter, rather than the objects, involved the audience in a way that the traditional handling of the Key-R-Rect did not.

In a similar, imaginative way, the Key-R-Rect is used in Bob Baker's spirit play *The Diary of Lilly Dale* (*Seance*, Issue 4). In the involved, but engaging story, the cantankerous Rev. H. Hobson introduces the aged diary of Lilly Dale secured with large padlock. Hobson reverently explains that the diary is the last remnants of Lilly Dale, a woman who descended into madness, hating herself so much that she would hold her writing hand – that hand that wrote in the infernal diary – over a candle flame, scarring her flesh. Hobson explains that the diary is locked to protect it from prying eyes, but those of pure heart may open it. Handing a key and the locked diary to a sitter, he asks, “Sir, would you like to try”. The lock remains steadfast. “Perhaps you could try this key,” directs Hobson. The sitter tries several keys to no avail, each time dropping the discarded key into a crystal goblet. Turning to a female sitter, Hobson says “Madam, I believe you have a sufficiently pure heart to open the diary – kindly show me your hands. Yes, you will be satisfactory.” The woman takes the last key and, sure enough, it opens the lock. The lock is secured again and the working key is dropped into the goblet, all the keys are mixed, dumped out onto the table, and arranged in a line. The Rev. Hobson invokes the spirit of Lilly Dale to show the lady sitter which is the working key. After some deliberation, a key is chosen – it is found to be the working key. Upon examination of the sitter's writing hand, there, in the centre of the back of her hand, a circle of ashes – a sign from the spirit of Lilly Dale.

In summary, the Bizarrist unabashedly borrows effects and ideas from many magic disciplines. With the aim of telling a story, the Bizarrist adapts the effect in hopes of getting strong reactions from the audience. After all, it is the Bizarrist greatest aspiration to invoke emotion in the audience whether it is fear, passion, sorrow, disgust, or wonder. A bit of magic, whatever its origin, can be help fulfil that noble aspiration.

Lilit and...

...The Tzaddik

Yitzhak Schlomi

Background - An Excerpt from the Tale of The Evil Eye

Why would so many tourists visit the Polish town of Lyzhensk? I'll tell you! They seek the house of Rabbi Elimelech. You may ask, "Who is this Rabbi Elimelech? Why would anyone flock to his old house?" They come because Rabbi Elimelech is a holy man, a healer, a worker of wonders, a true *Tzaddik* - a noble person who helps others. So, to stand in the house where Rabbi Elimelech did so many miraculous things is a great thrill for anyone who is visiting Lyzhensk.

Tossed Into the Middle of The Evening

You, dear reader, are sitting in my small audience, the dim lights are soft and warm, the atmosphere inviting and full of wonder. You are listening to the tale of the *Evil Eye*. As you listen, you make a connection with tales you have already heard this evening. The stories you are hearing are based on Jewish Folklore. They are thick with cultural references - references that until tonight, may have been foreign to you. Throughout the evening's entertainment, a door is being opened to you - inside is a culture filled with strange customs, intense ritual, prominent mystic themes, wondrous events, and universal laws. As the tale of the *Evil Eye* concludes, you are primed to listen to my last story, *Lilit and The Tzaddik*.

What you Missed

During the evening, you learn that in the early 1700's, Rabbi Yisroel, Rabbi Elimelech, Rabbi Yitzhak, and others had a profound influence in the revival of Judaism - they were the founders of the Hasidic Movement, an Orthodox Jewish movement which emphasises mysticism and greater spiritual awareness. You learn from the story of *The Aleph-bet* that the



Illustration: The cavernous interior of the plateau mirror

founders of early Hasidic Movement possessed great powers, as one character in *The Aleph-bet* relates, "Rabbi Yitzhak, you know the secrets of the Sepher Yitzerah. You are a Master of the Holy Name.



Illustration: The RP to be added to the interior of the Mirror Plateau

With that knowledge you heal

the sick, you raise the fallen...There is no burden you cannot lighten." In *Lilit and The Tzaddik*, we are introduced to an unnamed Jewish mystic, similar to the figure of Rabbi Yitzhak, who banishes evil and protects a devastated family from future catastrophic harm.

When a hair is discovered in the milk in *Lilit and The Tzaddik*, you harken back to *Hair in the Milk* in which the balding Benyamin the Milkman causes panic in the shtetl when his wife predicts a plague affecting newborn babies. Milk, you have heard, is a symbol of childbirth and a hair found in milk is an omen that death will come during childbirth. The fact that the hair is long and black, further indicates to you that the message comes from the story's unseen antagonist, Lilit. Scrying into a bowl of milk, you recall from *Hair in the Milk*, is used divine matters of childbirth and the health of newborns.

The Tzaddik in *Lilit and The Tzaddik* uses sulphur and sweet spices, known to be irresistible to *Shedem* – Jewish demons, something you know from *The Double*. Another important element in *Lilit and The Tzaddik*, is a mirror, considered to be a window to one of many parallel worlds described in Jewish mysticism, as in the tale of *Rav Yitzhak's Discovery of Bahbadrah*. Specifically, the mirror is a window into the demon world, as it is in *The Double* where communication between two worlds occurs. A plot tool unique, as far as the author knows, to *Lilit and The Tzaddik* is the use of a bowl of milk placed on a mirror to summon the antagonist.

The final element alluded to in *Lilit and The Tzaddik*, is that Jewish demons are bound by the same Divine laws as humans, thus the Tzaddik is able to hold the antagonist to a legal contract which forbids her from further harming the family household. A similar situation arose in *The Wedding Ring* where The Law is shown to be applicable to all beings, even the un-dead corpse that terrorises a village.

Although the text in *Lilit and The Tzaddik* does not indicate the period in which the story takes place, you have been led to presume that the events take place in the late 18th or very early 19th Century in Eastern Europe.

Performance Thoughts

Some important stage directions are given within brackets ([and]) to give the reader an indication of actions not narrated, but (potentially) experienced by the sitters. The actions of the Tzaddik are intended to be acted out as if the storyteller *is* the Tzaddik. When performing this piece, it is vital that the ritualistic nature of the piece is brought out, for it is ritual, comprised of words, singing and chanting, and actions, which lends power to the piece. Stories in Jewish folklore are not meant to be read on a page, rather they are recited aloud, so as you read on, imagine yourself being told the story of *Lilit and The Tzaddik*.

The Story

Bidding him to our home after a bout of family tragedies, the Tzaddik¹ arrived at our house bearing a very old looking chest. Uncle Uri met him at the door and hung up his black fedora and his tattered and worn long black overcoat. The Tzaddik was a poor man. Instead of amassing a fortune, he devoted himself to prayer, and to study of the ancient books of Jewish mysticism. Uncle Uri ushered our Tzaddik into the room where we had all anxiously gathered. Uncle offered to carry the old chest, but the Tzaddik would not allow Uri to handle it. As he entered the room, he silently nodded and warmly smiled to each one of us – acknowledging each one of us individually. The night was dark and our room was dimly lit – even for a middle-class family lamp oil was expensive. Yet, our guest seemed to glow with a radiance of his own. Dressed in a yellowed white shirt, a black vest with a patch on the right side, and *tzitzit*² showing past the black trousers, he brimmed with reassurance. Without a word, he opened the chest, laid out a bright white table cloth, and placed the curious chest on top of the cloth. He handed a small pitcher to Aunt Dalia who dashed to the larder to fill the

¹A holy person. In Judaism, a Tzaddik has the power to heal, act as a seer, and protect and nurture an individual or community. If the Tzaddik is also a mystic, they may *know* the hidden worlds and, thus, wield great power. In lay terms, a sort of spiritual white wizard.

²Fringes on the four corners of the undergarment, the purpose of which is to remind the wearer of their religious obligations.

pitcher with milk. When she had returned, the Tzaddik stooped to sit, and as he did so, motioned for us to take a seat at the table with him.

As I approached the table to sit, I reflected upon what prompted us to summon the Tzaddik. In the

preceding three years, my wife, Miriam, had twice suffered a miscarriage – and...she was...pregnant again. Aunty Dalia, who acted as our mid-wife, was certain The Demoness had twice been in the birthing room; had it not been for her quick thinking, we would have lost Miriam as well as baby. Uncle Uri had been having nightmares in which a beautiful woman with long, flowing black hair was luring him away from the house with her sweet singing, but, in his dream, when he left the confines of the house, the woman would turn into a gruesome, hideous creature. His dreams were becoming unbearable. Myself, I began to hear scratching sounds at the window around mid-night each night. Each time I went to look...only to find that...nothing was there. We all agreed, something had to be done and that is when we called our Tzaddik.



Illustration: The Plateau Mirror and Covered Glass Bowl

I was the first to join the Tzaddik at the large table. As I was seated myself, he opened the chest again and removed a plateau mirror, placing it in front of me. I shuttered at the sight of it, knowing the purpose of it was to lure The Demoness to its silvery surface; I swallowed hard and placed my trust in the Tzaddik. Also from the chest he removed a covered glass bowl and poured a small amount of milk [from the pitcher] into it. He replaced the glass lid on the bowl and set it on top of the plateau mirror. I cringed at the thought of what was likely to happen next.

When everyone in the room had seated themselves and the room had quieted down, we could hear the Tzaddik humming a slow, simple tune. By and by, his tune became more complicated with strange, yet inviting, melodies the likes of which we had never heard before. His low, deep voice broke forth,

“HmMMM-hmm-hmMMMM-hmm-hum.

HmMMM-hmm-hmMMMM-hmm-hum.

HmMMM-hmm-yah-hmm-hum.

Hmmmm-dai-dai-dai-dia.

Yia-dia-dia-dia. Yun-yai-dai-dai-dai.”

His voice became louder and was filled with emotion and concentration. As he sung this *niggun*³ it seemed to become palpable, penetrating our hearts and piercing the roof of the house, making its way up to the Heavens. The intensity of the *niggun* accelerated and it got louder. Our Tzaddik began thumping the table in rhythm to the song; he bid us to join in. The thumping became pounding, the room was filled with the loud melody repeating over and over, each time with increased focus. For a moment, I thought I could see the letters of the Hebrew alphabet dancing around the room. The singing was boisterous and wild.

Suddenly, the Tzaddik stopped the pounding and singing. Several long moments passed silently. He was in intense concentration; his eyes closed.

At last he stood up, took the bowl of milk from the mirror [setting on the table], removed the glass cover, and started intently into the milk. He waved for us to do the same. Staring into the milk for what seemed like many minutes, I saw what I thought was my own reflection, but looking haggard and...and... No, the image I saw was Uncle Uri and around his neck was a band..of...thick, long black hair. At that moment, Uri gasped and nearly fainted, descending into his chair. But the Tzaddik continued to stare into the milk, waiting for the conformation he sought. Finally, when he was satisfied, he reached into his old chest and mixed several ingredients in a crucible. The mixture, which contained lumps of sulphur, sugar, fennel, and other ingredients I could not identify, he poured the lumpy powder into the bowl. Our Tzaddik replaced the lid to the glass bowl and placed it once again on the mirror.

Softly, the Tzaddik began to hum. Several long moments passed silently, with only the humming of this pious Jew. He was in intense concentration; his eyes closed.

“Hmmmm-hmm-hmm-hum-hmmmmm.

Hmmmm-hmm-hmm-hmm-hmm-hum.

Hmmmm-hmmmmm-hmm-hum.”

Then, in a soft, confident, commanding voice he continued:

³A song with non-sense words used as a pre-prayer ritual or pre-meditation exercise.

Lilit – made from dust.

Lilit – creature of night,

Lilit – terror for children,

Lilit – strangles in slumber,

Lilit – takes our light,

Lilit – smells new birth,

Lilit – comes at mid-night,

Lilit – takes newborn,

Lilit – takes mother,

Lilit – leaves anguish.

Lilit – comes in dreams,

Lilit – leads men astray,

Lilit – for intercourse, unholy.

Lilit – takes piety,

Lilit – leaves despair.

Lilit – colder than night,

Lilit – long black hair,

Lilit – 'round th'neck,

Lilit – takes breath...

Lilit – away at night.

Lilit – Adam's first wife⁴,

⁴From the literature of Jewish folklore, namely the *Alphabet of Ben Sira*, Lilit was Adam's first wife, who were both created at the same time and from the same earth. This contrasts with Eve, who was created later, from one of Adam's ribs. In the *Alphabet of Ben Sira*, Lilit is disobedient to the Almighty and opposes Adam at every turn. She casts herself out of Paradise and copulates with the Angel Samiel. Their children become the Shedim – the beings of the night - demons.

Lilit - unholy rebel,

Lilit - out of Paradis,

Lilit - [Angel] Samiel's consort,

Lilit - Shedim [Demon] queen

[It is possible that the sitters see a very faint glow from the milk, or perhaps, it is from the mirror? It is nearly imperceptible; it undulates. If they see it, it is so subtle that no one mentions it.]

[Next line directed at the sitters:]

Lilith⁵ YOU call her.

Lilit - Demoness of Night,

Lilit - Demoness of Fear,

Lilit - Demoness of Death,

Lilit - Protect you from her!

Lilit - rules Tamuz⁶,

Lilit - Tamuz her month,

Lilit - opposes The Name,

Lilit - [spelt] ה-ו-ה - Hey-Vav-Hey-Yud,

Lilit - beings reverse.

[For those observant sitters, there is a very subtle disturbance in the milk.]

⁵ Lilit – Lilith, who's legend is *still* used as source material in modern literature, occultism, fantasy, and horror.

⁶This name comes from the last letters of the words from Megilas Esther (5, 13) וְזֵה אֵינָנִי שְׁנִיָּה לִי. The gematria of this posuk is 480, equal to that of לילי"ת (Satan's wife), another allusion to her extra strength in this month. Also, Haman was the one who said the words in this posuk, and he descends from Esav, who has power over the month of Tamuz.

Lilit - Gematria⁷: במחלה - [Bamahlah]

Lilit - Th'Disease,

Lilit - perverts all,

Lilit - We call!!!

Lilit⁸ - לילית - Lamed-Yud-Lamed-Yud-Taf!!!

[pause]

Lilit - your name has been repeated 41 times as the Law requires; we know we have your attention.

Show us you are listening!!!

A long moment of silence followed. Finally, Aunty Dalia was unable to contain herself any longer. She snatched the glass bowl from the mirror. Without haste, she opened it...and...gasped, "Sh-Sh-She is here! ...L-L-Look...a hair in the milk!"

[Indeed, there is a long black hair in the bowl⁹.]

The Tzaddik commanded (in English and Hebrew):

בשמו של הכל יכול, אסור לך להיכנס לבתיהם של...

[B'shemo shel HaKol YaKol, asor lah l'hyah-keness l'beitim shel...]

Lilit, by the name of the Almighty, you are forbidden to enter the homes of [name the names of the sitters]

[pause]

The Tzaddik took a clear [shot] glass which was sitting on the table and poured out some of the milk from the pitcher. To my astonishment and terror, the milk had curdled! However, the reaction of our Tzaddik was one of complete satisfaction.

⁷The Gematria is 480.

⁸ The popular name Leila, with the double lamed root, refers to the evening. The Hebrew greeting 'Lyla Tov' – good evening - had the same root.

⁹The hair, courtesy my wife, should not be an indication that she, herself, is a demoness.

Bang! The Tzaddik hit the table with both closed fists. “Yia-di-di-dia-dah, Tia-di-di-di-di-dah. Yai-dia-di-dai-dai-dai!” he began. This *niggun* was different, triumphant and joyous...and louder than before. We joined in feeling a great sense of relief. We hardily sang with our Tzaddik.

After the song ended on an extended and exultant note, our Tzaddik packed his items back in the old chest. (I would certainly have liked to see what other items he stored in his curious chest.) He stood up to leave and I pleaded with him, “You have barred the Queen of the Demons from our house. We feel safe and content. Allow us to repay you!” He politely refused all I offered to him...with the exception of a small glass of Slivovitz.

That night, and all other nights, we have been secure living in our house. Uncle Uri's nightmares ceased, the scratching noises stopped, and five months later, my dear wife Miriam has a healthy baby boy.

We owe our happiness to our Tzaddik.

[pause]

May you all be equally protected from the Queen of the Demons. Be healthy! Be Safe! L'Chaim!

[Hand out trinkets – amulets of protection.]

Props & Method

The plateau mirror is loaded with a Raspberry Pi microprocessor (RP) with a small 70 mm screen (PiTFT Mini Kit) which provides the dim light and apparent movement. The RP, triggered remotely using a fob¹⁰, is configured to play a video of dim, amorphous moving shapes. The mirror itself is partially silvered; the video on the screen hidden behind the mirror is indistinct. Simpler methods to gaff the mirror, such as personal video players or LED tea candles are possible, but for the author the versatility of the RP be used for other effects justified the added effort to build and program the device.

The mixture added to the milk contains lumps of sulphur, one of which is loaded with a magnet. A coil contained within the plateau mirror, remotely activated by the RP, is all

¹⁰An article “Using Raspberry Pi to control an electrical outlet” was useful in integrating a 433 MHz fob.

that is required to get subtle movement in the milk. The hair in the milk is simply loaded when the mixture is being poured into the glass bowl. The curdling of the milk is done using crystallised citric acid – only a few grams is needed.

Before the performance, a small lipped pitcher is prepared by adding a small cup-like shelf of white clay near the top, on the handle side, and under the lip which serves to hide it. The acid is loaded in the clay shelf. Immediately after placing the pitcher on the table, a Thermos of milk at room temperature is produced (courtesy of Aunt Dalia) and poured into the pitcher; an aliquot of milk is poured from the pitcher into the bowl, and the pitcher is tipped backwards so that the milk mixes with the acid. Crystallised citric acid may be purchased where ever cheese-making supplies are found.

Interpreting the patterns formed by the mixing a few drops of milk to water has been historically used method of scrying, however the author elected to use pure milk. The visions seen during the scrying were added for this written version of the story; they are not part of the oral story. However, with good audience management skills, visions are possible and are simply due to the imagination of the sitters encouraged and guided by the performer. A likewise addition to the oral story is the action of Aunt Dalia. One audience member may be asked to play the part of the impatient Aunt Dalia. After delivering the line, indicate to the sitter, “Please be Aunt Dalia for us, snatch the bowl up, remove the lid, and tell us what you see.”

As you hand out amulets of protection to your sitters you might relate that, although you were telling a story, the ritual that the sitters were witnessing was *real*. “Be it that Lilit will not disturb you for all your days. Just in case, these amulets should ensure that you carry the protection from Lilit where ever you go.” Note the careful wording.

B'Shalom.

Be Careful! What You Ask For...

...It May Call For You

Weepin' Willie

People often ask why I chose the bizarre side of magic, and when they do I can barely keep my composure. I'm sure my extreme smile gives my thoughts away. YOU do not choose bizarre magic, bizarre magic chooses YOU! It's never a flash moment but a culmination of life experience and opportunities, both missed and made. Many try to become bizarre magicians, but the dedicated bizarre magician is what he/she is and they can be nothing other. I can illustrate by reciting my life story.

I was five, but I remember the experience well; it is indelibly etched in the crevices of my mind and I can relive it in detail at any moment if I will allow myself to slip back into it. My parents had both gone somewhere and I was left in the care of my sister, who was ten years older. It was a Saturday and a good day to go to a movie; her choice: Wax Museum in 3D. I don't know if she knew it was a horror movie or not, but she took me for a long walk to town to see it. The year was 1953.

I was enjoying the juggler at the beginning of the movie, but when the supposedly dead sculptor swung off the balcony and into the audience I felt something I had never experienced before, FEAR! And, it felt good. Very good. Perhaps too good.

After the show we walked home and mom and dad were still gone and my sister had locked us out of the house. Someone had to open the door from the inside, someone small enough to fit through the bathroom window in the back of the house. As she slid my frail body through the window and I walked through the house toward the front door, the shadows on the wall moved around and the feeling of fear returned and it felt good. Very good. Perhaps too good.

From that day forward I was an adrenaline junky, seeking out anything and everything that would give me a fear reaction. Movie theaters were good baby sitters and I was dropped off at the theater with a quarter to buy my ticket and a drink or popcorn. Horror movies were not bloody and gross in those days, after all black blood isn't very impressive, but I saw every horror movie I could, especially scary movies about burial alive, death and, of course, vampires. I'd go home so scared I would sleep with covers

around my neck in the heat of summer, just in case vampires were real. But, the fear felt good. Very good. And perhaps too good. I wanted more!

As a teen, I would ride the wildest rides at the fair and was constantly searching out fear inducing venues such as haunted houses. At the same time, I took up the hobby of Magic. "If only magic could be scary," I thought. I was placed upon a predestined path of discovery.

I had always been a vivid dreamer. Once, I dreamt that I had a red, metal fire engine and the next morning was disappointed in opening my toy box to find that it was only a dream. While you may say that dream was common, the next dream I am going to tell you about was anything but common. It didn't seem like a dream; it was as if I was actually there. I was young, very young, and my dad had me on his shoulders. I must have been only about one or two. The room was big, dark and the walls were very high. My attention was caught by a spot on the wall; round, dark, undistinguishable. My first impression was that it was either a flue cover or a hat hung on a nail. Of course, those would have been my later interpretations as at the age in the dream I would not have known those terms. There were people, laughing, crying, and then we went home in a car on a rainy and dark night.

I never remembered waking from that dream; it was as if I had actually lived it. Finally, in great confusion over what this event was, I talked with my mother a couple decades later. I told her what I remembered: the room, being on my dad's shoulders, the spot, and the weather. Her face flushed with shock and she looked at me in silence for what seemed like an eternity.

"There is no way you could know that," she said. "That was the wake for your Uncle Bill, he always hung his hat on that nail in the wall."

"Why could I not know that?" I asked.

"It was at least five years before you were even born and the child you described wasn't you, it was your brother."

My brother? I never knew I had an older brother. I was the one with the shock laced face now. Because his sudden death from measles was such a shock, my parents had forbid any family member to ever mention it - no pictures and no relics; he was dead and that was it. Had I channeled the spirit of the dead and lived an event from their life?

Of course childhood experiences led to life-long employment opportunities and choices. My obsession with fear led me to an obsession with Death, the greatest fear for most people. While all my friends played 'doctor and nurse', I would find dead bugs and

bury them in my mother's empty medicine bottles. Sometimes, I had more bugs than caskets so I would convince mom that she had not taken her pills for the day. She would take the extra pills and I would have the casket. Of course, she would sometimes twitch a bit or lose consciousness but she always survived the over-medication. At least until the last time. Obviously, I would naturally choose a bizarre occupation in the Death industry field.

It was in embalming school that I met my first love. She was beautiful and I was fascinated. I met her in one of the lab classes that we both attended. I even wrote a love poem about her:

Undying Love

You were my first, but not my last, I thank God I met you in that embalming class.
I held your hand; your skin had the slip, so I made the incision just above your hip.
I held you closely to ease your pain, as I inserted the needle into your vein.
As I kissed your lips, I thought, "What a waste," and I'll never forget that formaldehyde taste.
Your life was so fragile, like eggs in a basket; I wept from my heart when I closed the casket.
Whether Hell below or Heaven above; I'll always be your last true love.
Roses are red, violets are blue, even now, every embalming reminds me of you.

I would have married her had it not been that marriage is 'until death we part' and that time had expired for her. I have never seen myself as a poet but it also inspired me to write another poem about cremation:

A Deep Burning Love

Your heart was aflame from all of the gas,
I could see it on your face as I looked through the crematory oven glass.
There was space to your left, and also to your right,
The oven was still hot so I thought that I might:
Put in some cookies, two pies and a cake,
Don't waste the heat while there's still time to bake.
I wish you were here to see all of these muffins,
Because nothing says lovin' like something from the crematory oven.

I was going to use that last line as my business slogan but my business partner thought it was a bit insensitive, so I refrained. A few years later, another baking company successfully modified it and made it their own. Opportunity lost.

After Embalming and Funeral Director school, I was employed by the Death Emporium and Crematorium. After his death, the owner's son would have inherited the business had he not been caught having sex with a girl he presumed to be dead. It actually

turned out that she was not deceased but only in a coma; however, the discovery led to an investigation and it was found that she was not an isolated instance, just the only occasion with a witness able to tell.

I understand his fascination, dead girls are more fun, but such practice is frowned upon in the funeral industry, so the business went into bankruptcy and later sold for default of taxes. Opportunity gained!

I bought the emporium for mere pennies on the dollar but business was slow and the news of the previous owner's infidelity with the Dead made it next to impossible to establish a clientele with exception of a few homeless people and missing persons on someone's hit list. It seemed like the business would have to close until Ned came along. Ned had been a Carney worker and forced to stay in town when the circus left because an elephant sat on his leg and broke it. Being stranded he decided to sell used cars on the abandoned corner lot at the edge of town. He only had one car and when asked about it he said, "Only need one car! I can tell you never understood any of them carnival games did you boy?" Ned had been a magician in the circus and we immediately hit it off. He was to become my business partner and advisor.

"Why don't you just tell the truth to overcome the negative image this place has on it?" Ned suggested.

"What do you mean," I asked.

"Just tell 'em, 'we promise not to have sex with the Dead!'"

I thought about it and wondered why other funeral businesses never advertised it and Ned said, "Can't keep the promise. Nothin' will kill a business faster than broken promises."

So I adapted the slogan and the funeral business boomed. We had more business than we could handle because they were bringing them from out of town and occasionally out of state. Seems like necrophilia was an issue no one wanted to talk about and I was the only one who had the solution. Even to this day our embalmers sign a sworn statement on every Death Certificate that they did not have sex with the person listed. At least not after death.

Because of familiarity, the fear factor was soon gone and, with exception of a corpse sitting up because the abdominal muscles contracted or an occasional moan from gasses escaping through the upper GI as I inserted the trocar to suction the abdominal cavity, work was boring and I was going into burnout. Then Ned suggested I liven things up a little and do some magic. So, whenever I gathered a couple corpses waiting for their

display date, I would lean them up in a chair or turn them slightly on the embalming table or in the casket and perform bizarre magic effects. Most people think the Dead are silent, but it is because they do not listen closely. Next time you go to a funeral, while everyone else is disrespectfully laughing and talking, draw close to the deceased and whisper, "What are you doing?" And they will say, "Nothing."

After every show the cadavers would applaud in their minds, since the embalming fluid made it impossible to do it physically, and some would seem to smile bigger than the one I had placed upon their lips when I pulled the thread through their upper palate, passed it through the septum, and cinched the knot. A couple cadavers have been so impressed they expressed on the embalming room floor, but I wasn't angry; I just cleaned it up. They Dead are polite and they would have apologized for their action had I not immediately placed my finger to their lips and reminded them, "Death is never having to say you are sorry." It was at this time that Richard Grayson came to town for a friend's funeral service and wrote his books about my life, *Weepin' Willie* and *Return to Hayville*. As for the dreams, they no longer bother me because the veil has been rent and the separation between dream and reality has been forever removed.



I leave you with this reminder that "Your last Mile is My First Priority!"

Weepin' Willie

*Purveyor of Death at
Weepin' Willie's House of Discount Funerals and
Birthing Center
(We service our customers from the womb to the
tomb.)*

Up On...

...Mortwood Hill!

The Very Reverend S Ulysses Wainwright

Mortwood Hill Asylum for the criminally and mentally insane opened its doors to the world in the winter of 1864. It was built to house and conceal the madness, corruption and deep, deep melancholy illnesses of a disturbed Victorian society.

Precisely thirteen months later, on a cold harsh unforgiving November night, Mortwood Hill hosted a birth.

That night, the heavens creaked, bulged, and shuddered. Some soul-less God of another universe unleashing his anger and hatred at the world.

The little baby? Oh *he* looked perfect . . . So the nurses thought at first. Ten little perfect pink fingers, ten little perfect pink toes - but his eyes. . . Oh those eyes, eyes that stared AT you, searched FOR you, reached out TO you . . . into your very soul. Such a helpless little boy.

The nurses whispered in the dark shadowy recesses of the asylum.

"There's something not right about that child."

"He never cries."

"He *watches* you - have you noticed?"

"He's heaven's mistake and hell's gain - mark my words."

The child's mother, Lucy Wainwright, an orphan of no fixed abode, had been admitted to the asylum after having, what the courts described as, an 'inappropriate liaison' with a young priest who later claimed she was a harlot, a temptress and a servant of Satan himself.

A medical examination later revealed that she was 'with child'. Only fourteen years of age, she had always proclaimed her innocence maintaining that the priest had in fact raped her.

No one believed her.

In passing sentence that day, Honorary Judge St John-Mortimer slowly leaned forward towards the girl, his face contorted into a deep, ugly, contemptuous frown.

"May the demons be cast outside of you, Lucy Wainwright. And on the Good Lord's judgement day, may heaven refuse you and Hell welcome you. For you have no place in this society.

"You madam, are an insult to the name of the good Lord God and his children. You will be sent to Mortwood Hill Asylum where you will be incarcerated under due restraint for the rest of your unnatural life. In seven months, you shall give birth to this 'child' but you will never see it, for it *shall* be taken from you.

"May your God go with you," he said, dismissing her with a raised hand.

As she was led away, the crowd in the court whistled and cheered believing justice to be done. Lucy Wainwright suddenly dropped to her knees, started to roll her head slowly from side to side - and a low, almost demonic moan seemed to emanate from the very pit of her stomach. The crowd suddenly went quiet.

In Mortwood Hill Asylum, Lucy was confined to a cold, dark windowless cell. A dirty white canvas straightjacket tightly girdled around her small frail body, night and day. This, said the court, was more a precautionary measure lest she inflict some damage on herself.

The air in the cell was thick with the pungent odour of vomit, stale urine and disinfectant.

Nurse Emily Doherty, a gentle Irish girl with a passion for chamber music, was assigned to spoon feed the girl once a day. At each feed, Lucy Wainwright sat obediently with her head slightly tilted to one side staring into some dreamlike world of her own fabrication - never saying anything

Over the months, Emily grew fond of the girl, in a paternal sense, and took pity on her. As a respite from the silent, ritualistic feeds, she brought in a small, delicate ornamental Russian music box, given to her by her aunt Mary.

Each day, just before starting to feed the girl, she would carefully wind up the little box, its lilting gentle melodies filling the cold dark cell.

Eight months later, the child was born.

He was kept in a small damp cell next door to his mother with only an old wooden orange crate for a crib. The thick cell walls dripped with damp slime, and the dark shiny hard marble floor of the cell only added to the cold.

Nurse Emily and the very elderly nurse Margaret McCaig were instructed to take turns in feeding and changing the child twice a day.

Two months passed, and the child had still not cried or uttered a single sound since the night of his birth. But he was listening. . . and learning. . .

That evening, the child's little alert ears heard the lock of his cell being unbolted, and he was acutely aware of the 'huffing puffing' one, Nurse Margaret McCaig who, when she lifted him to feed him, would gently whisper Celtic curses into his ear and would also dig her long, dirty, unkempt, scraggy fingernails into his small frail body often drawing blood . . . but he never cried.

God how she despised him, this bastard child with the evil watching eyes. She would have to get rid of him. No one would ever suspect? Suffocation? Yes, that was the way. Clutching a filthy tartan shawl, she walked towards the crib.

Suddenly, she slipped, her massive weight thumping down onto the hard marble floor, her head receiving a fatal blow which killed her instantly. As she lay stone dead beneath the crib, blood pumping steadily from the large gash in her head, the child finally found his voice.

Some said that what she slipped on was in fact a small pool of the child's urine which had been seeping from a soiled nappy which should have been changed two days previously. Others added that the urine had been gathering there, patiently waiting for its victim.

That night, sleep did not come easily to nurse Emily. When it did come, she suffered such *horrible* dreams. Dead Margaret McCaigs bloated face peering over her as she lay in bed. A quivering corpse, blood pumping steadily from the hole that *was* her mouth. The mouth then whispered quietly, "Beware, Beware."

Stories of the death spread like a raging forest fire throughout the village. On a night when too much ale and whiskey had been consumed, a meeting was hastily arranged in the village square.

A large crowd of people turned up.

They talked about Nurse Margaret.

"A poor innocent woman."
"Would never have harmed a flea."
"A regular church goer."
"Her *poor* husband and four children."

Then they talked about the boy

"He's not of this world."
"The devil incarnate - Satan's messenger boy."
"He should be made to pay."
"He must be punished for his sins."

And as their fear rose, so did their anger. They marched towards Mortwood hill, flaming torches burning bright. Nothing but fear, hatred and a lust for revenge in their hearts. Something was pulling them towards the asylum. Servants of the Great God.

They arrived at the big heavy oak doors of the Asylum.

Thump! Thump! Thump! Thump!

Nurse Emily awoke from her nightmares, covered in sweat and wheezing heavily. Her eyes focussed on the grandfather clock in her room.

Eleven o'clock.

She heard the angry mob outside. Sensed their fear and hatred and knew she would have to do *something*. It was only a matter of time before they broke down the doors. God alone knows what violence would follow. She would fetch the child and give him to them. They would understand.

Much as she had grown fond of the child, she could *never* look him directly in the eyes. She knew deep in her heart that this wasn't right. She was only doing her duty after all. God would understand.

She was vaguely aware that the clock had struck thirteen times that night. She ran down the stairs in her nightclothes and made her way towards the child's cell.

She peered cautiously over the crib. He was wide awake and looking straight at her. Eyes *too* focussed for a child of only two months old.

She reached into the crib and lifted him out, trying not to look him straight in the eye, but a mixture of deep guilt and sadness at what she was doing overwhelmed her so

much, that her eyes caught his. Just for a moment. Then she felt a horrible unearthly burning sensation in her head. Everything started to go black. Closing her eyes tightly, she opened them a second later, and found that she was looking up at herself, at her own face. *She* was somehow now in the child's body! - They had swapped places!

The woman in whose arms she now lay, smiled reassuringly, moved her head closer to the small baby in her arms and gently whispered, "There, there now little child, lets deliver you to those that want you, desire you"

Nurse Emily started to scream, but all that came out was a baby's bawling cry.

Did You Know?

The Talmud, the venerated commentary on the Jewish Bible, the book of commentary of the Torah - The Pentateuch, the Good Book, the Five Books of Moses, relates that Rabbi Yosef (ca. 270 C.E.) knew the mysteries of the *Markava* - the Way of Spiritual Ascension and had studied the Ways of Creation. The Rabbi's students, Rava (299-353 C.E.) and Rabbi Zeira learnt the lessons of their teacher well and were credited with the saying "If the righteous desired, they could create a world". The ancient tradition holds that these two learned men worked for three years meditating, and when they finally mastered it, created a calf, which they had butchered and fed it to their entire community. So great were their powers that, once, "Rava created a man" and sent him to Rabbi Zeira; when the latter asked the creation a question, he found it could not talk. For reasons quite rational, it was shown the creation was not perfect. The phrase "Rava creates a man as he speaks" in Hebrew is "רַבָּא בְרַא גְבוּרָא" - *Rava Ba'Rah Ga'Bahra*. Putting this same phrase in first person, it becomes "אֲבִירָא כְּאַרְבָּא" or *Avara Ka'Davra*. The letter ב - B is frequently written without the *dagesh* - the diacritical mark, which is its double letter כ - V. Those translating the above phrase confused the two letters giving us the most used magic word of all times: *Abra'ka'dabra*.



Sins 'R' Us

The Very Reverend S Ulysses Wainwright

EFFECT

Your guest is invited to the Pearly gates, in the void between heaven and hell, to participate in a little game.

Your guest is instructed to confess to two wicked sins that they have committed in their lifetime and scribe them onto two very unusual business cards. They will be judged on those sins.

They await their fate, and are finally rewarded with a very mysterious message.

MATERIALS

Two Sins 'R' Us business cards. (Fig 1)

1 x Fountain pen. (Fig 1)

Folding instructions for A4 paper (Fig 2)

1 x sheet of A4 paper folded into an aeroplane. (Fig 3)



Fig 1

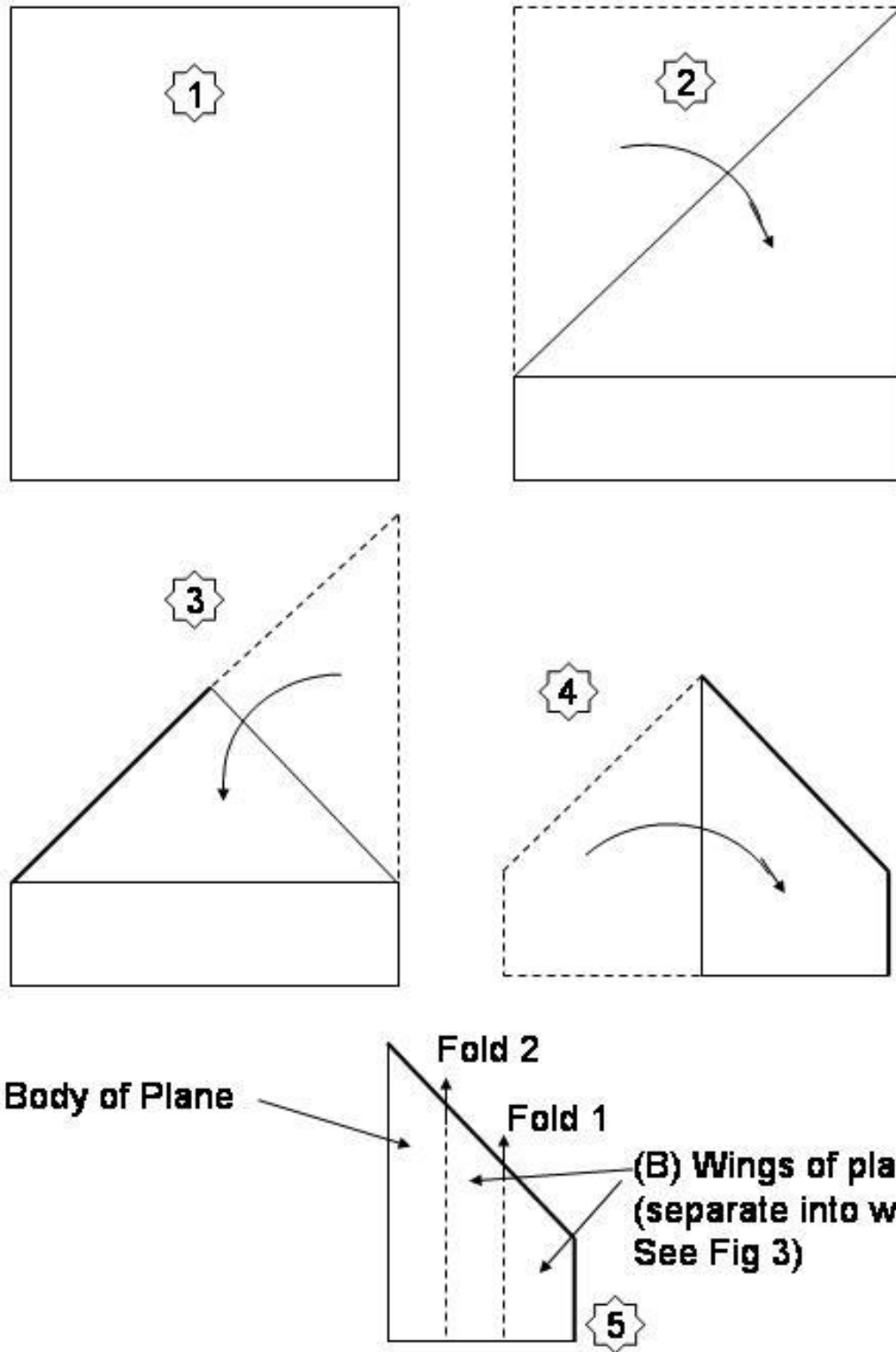


Fig 2

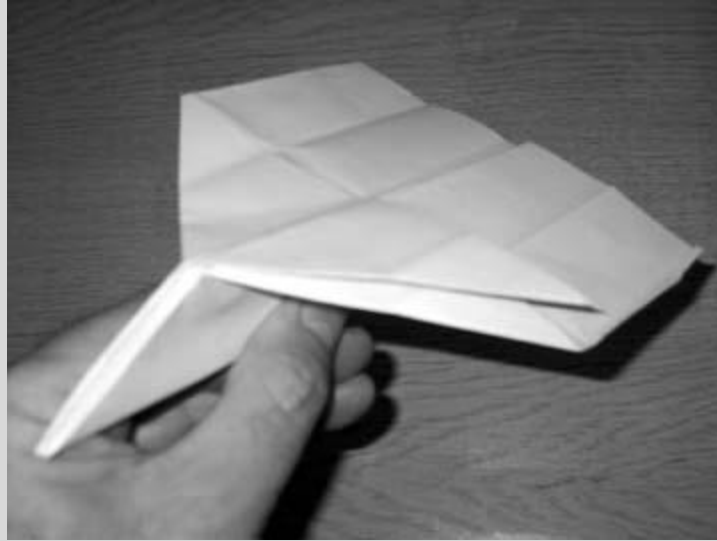


Fig 3

PREPARATION

Place the 2 x Business cards in your wallet and put the A4 folded paper-plane and pen inside your right inside jacket pocket.

SCRIPT

*"I want you to imagine you are at the entrance to the famous pearly gates.
Stuck in the void between heaven and hell."*

"But Saint Peter is no longer there. No, he was getting on a bit and chose to take early retirement."

*"The powers that be decided to outsource the job to a local contractor, Sins 'R' Us.
Here is their business card."*

Lay out two Sins 'R' Us cards face-up in front of guest.

"They are here to judge you on the sins you have committed during your lifetime."

"They will ultimately decide your fate."

*"I want you to think of two sins that you have committed in your life so far.
Nothing too heavy, I mean you don't need to mention the time you put laxative in your bosses
tea... ..but we won't go into that."*

"No, two small sins. Got them in your mind?"

"Please write a brief description of each sin - one on each card."

Hand guest the pen and wait to they complete both cards.

"By the way, Sins 'R' Us have chartered their own aeroplane to transport you to wherever you end up going."

Take out the folded aeroplane and show your guest. (Fig 3)

"Tell me, would you like to sit in the top part of the plane on the wings or in the main body of the plane?"

Based on their choice at this stage, there are two outcomes, A & B – both are detailed below.

OUTCOME A (See outcome B further on)

If guest says body, tear off first piece of portion B (wings) at fold 1 (Fig 4) and then tear off at fold 2 (Fig 5) – put these pieces aside and place portion A on the centre of the table.

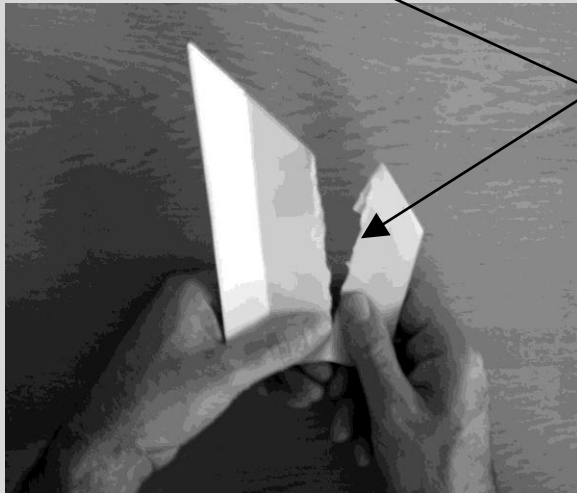


Fig 4

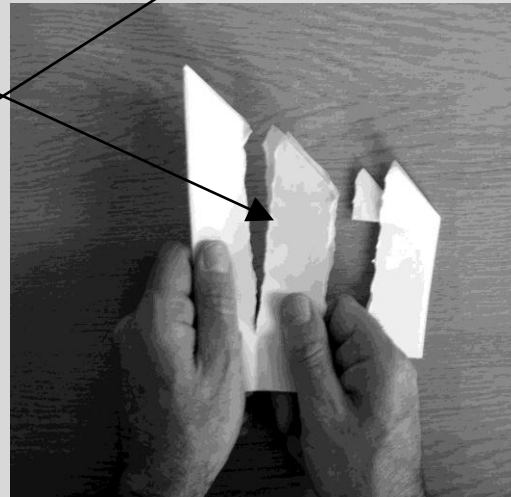


Fig 5

"Guess what....more choices."

"I want you to choose which sin you would like to be judged on and place that sin on top of your part of the aeroplane. Right there."

Point to portion A.

"I'll take the other card."

Place on top of portion B

"Let's read the sin you chose to be judged on."

Pick up card and read out sin - opportunity here for some humour

"Well, aren't you lucky?"

Open up portion A to reveal cross. (Fig 6)



Fig 6

*"The sin you chose to be judged on has sent you to heaven.
You chose wisely. Enjoy your journey.
But wait, let's look at your other sin"*

Pick up 2nd card and read out sin - opportunity here for some more humour.

"If you had chosen to fly on the wings,"

Pick up portion B and arrange the letters to form the word HELL. (Fig 7)



Fig 7

"Your destination would have been somewhat different."

Give guest the cross as a souvenir.

OUTCOME B

If your guest says wings, tear at Fold 1, then fold 2 and put two portions on the centre of the table. (Fig 8, 9)

Take the remaining piece, portion A, and put aside.

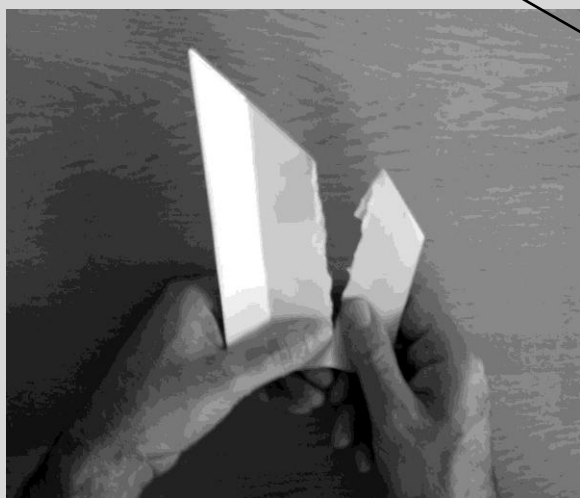


Fig 8

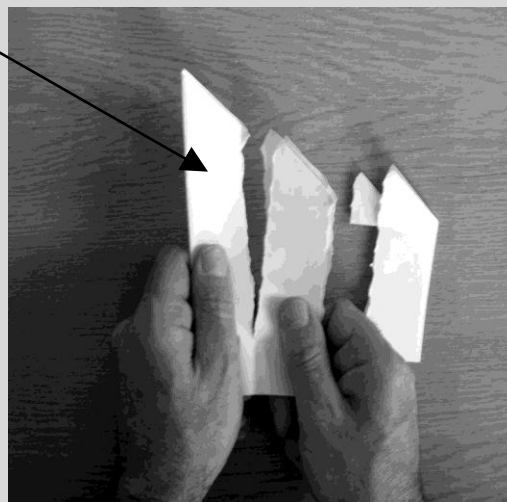


Fig 9

"Guess what...more choices. I want you to choose which sin you would like to be judged on and place that sin on top of your part of the aeroplane. Right there."

Point to portion B.

"I'll take the other card."

Place on top of portion A.

"Let's read the sin you chose to be judged on."

Pick up card and read out sin - opportunity here for some humour.

"Oh dear, the sin you chose to be judged on has sent you somewhere you may not want to go."

Arrange letters to form the word HELL. (Fig 10)



Fig 10

"Now on the other hand, if you had chosen to fly in the body of the plane"

Open up portion A to reveal cross. (Fig 11)



Fig 11

"You would have been going somewhere very different."

"Have a nice journey... .."

Perform your most wicked theatrical mocking creepy laugh here and give guest the cross as a souvenir.

CREDIT

The Heaven and Hell trick from the Martin Gardner book "The Encyclopedia of Impromptu Magic".

INSPIRATION

I enjoyed the effect and I wanted to develop a routine and story which reflects the current social industrial practice of local government, in the U.K. at least, of outsourcing key roles, contracts and functions to local companies who will then charge an "arm and a leg" to local government for those services.

So, in effect, the working man ultimately pays the price. (O.K. - I'm off my soapbox!)

THOUGHTS BEYOND

This effect could be played really dark and serious but, I feel that this would be totally missing the point.

I approached the scripting of the effect in a tongue-in cheek-manner so that it could be “light bizarre”.

There is ample opportunity for some humourous interplay with your guests as you read out the sins.

I believe it's also wise to be aware that the subject matter (the heaven and hell concept) may conflict with some folks' belief systems, or current circumstances, so I am very careful who I present this to.

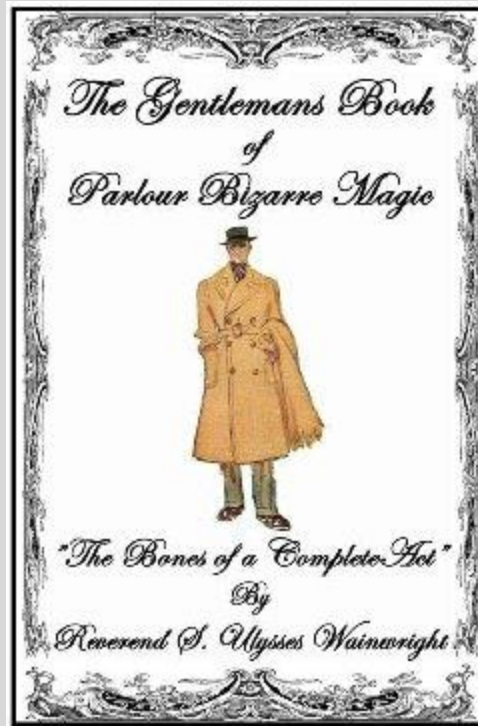
A find it a good ice-breaker, opening effect which takes the “puzzle effect” away from your guests.

It also fits nicely into your wallet and can be performed with zero preparation.

The “Sins 'R' Us” routine is from the following book:

The Gentlemans Book of Parlour Bizarre Magic

This book is a collection of seven bizarre magic presentations created by The Reverend S. Ulysses Wainwright, a bizarre magician and musician.



Here you'll find weird, odd, tongue in cheek, sinister, cute and funny routines using Tarot cards, coins, a dollar bill, business cards, playing cards and smoke machines.

Fill In...

...The Blanks

Patrick Schlagel

This is from a forum discussion. No methods are discussed. It's a story and some ideas for props.

As you tell your story, the items from the book change one by one. The peace sign changes to a sharpshooter badge, or a purple heart. The book changes to an army or marine field manual. The headband changes from rainbow to black, and the roach clip to a bullet. *Whiskey A Go-Go* matches to a bar name with English and Vietnamese printing. Finally the papers change to a pack of Marlboros. (No cigarettes inside, just the peace sign pendant.)

So I started with free associating basic ideas and props...60's or 70's story line Props a la Christian Chelman "time capsules". Hollow book, papers, tobacco tin or baggie of oregano (could get you stopped), incense, incense burner (as a prop, it could be bowl or strip type), headband, peace sign pendant, matches

(*Whiskey A Go-Go*) or lighter, hat pin/roach clip, Che Gueverra book, Abbie Hoffman, "Steal This Book", Kerouacs "On the Road" (book test), 8 track tape (as prop) or 60's background music, photos, Woodstock tickets, (untorn, he snuck in).

So, anyway, here's the story I came up with, inspired by some recent poetry, served locally. And some of Mr. Chelman's previous work. Before you read the story, look at the props and see what you would do with them, and what you might do with the story. Make a note or two, and THEN proceed.

I would be interested in what else people come up with. Just ideas and concepts, I'm not asking you to write another story (But I'm not telling you not to either.)

**

Yeah, we went from WW11 and Korea, where soldiers were heroes, saving the world, to Vietnam, where doing your duty was called being a baby killer and saving your ass by hiding in your mothers attic was fighting the establishment and bravely risking jail for your political beliefs. You could get in big trouble for saying something like that in the 60's- you were a called a fascist, or worse.

Public opinion is a funny thing, notice I don't laugh when I say that. It all comes down to advertising and marketing, selling your view, making it the most popular, and convincing newspapers and TV that your opinion would sell papers or bring in viewers to watch the Marlboro commercials.

I had decided that I would go if called, but I wouldn't volunteer, and they abolished the draft about 3 months before I would have been called. My older brother Sammy didn't have the luck of timing that I did. Sammy didn't smoke Marlboros, maybe that's why he had to go. Insufficient consumerism. He didn't die over there, he made it back, but he didn't talk about what went on over there, he just got quieter and quieter, until he didn't talk at all. A little bit after that, he quit getting out of bed. After a couple of years, my Mom couldn't take it anymore, and taking care of him was killing her, so Sammy moved to a place where they could take care of him, I've seen my Dad do some things he really didn't want to do to take care of us, but this was the heaviest load I had ever seen him carry. I found this in the room we used to share after Sam left.

(Hollow book with props.)

Sammy used to wear the peace sign, and had long hair, he used to read "On the Road," and Che Gueverra; I asked him if he was a hippie now, and he said "no". So I asked him why he dressed like that, and he said "chicks dig it."

We can't know what changed him, I've always felt that he never changed. He went into a bad place, and stayed a good guy in a situation where being a really good brother wasn't a really good survival trait. The "right" side of right and wrong, good and evil, follows public opinion, public opinion does what it's told, after it's been told enough times, and it's told enough times courtesy of the people with the money.

But their sons and brothers aren't the ones who have to go. And in a war of ideals, it's people who die.

Some things never change.

*
**

Captain Shelby shook the canteen again. Well, so much for positive thinking, somehow, condensation hadn't filled the thing since the last time he checked. What, 5 minutes ago?

You couldn't say it had been a bad landing, he'd walked away from it, they all had, and walked and walked.

He rubbed the necklace Sharon had given him, "for luck". He could see her right now, like a mirage, with all her spices and herbs, the incense, all those things she did that would have made Mom and Dad uncomfortable. And Reverend Bob would have had a month of sermons if he'd seen her doing her stuff. But she was good, all the way down, and that was more than good enough for him.

He drank a little toast to her, pretty much the last of the water, he'd either be back soon, or be dead like the rest.

One hundred miles didn't seem impossible. They'd gone on twenty mile hikes plenty of times in basic. But 20 miles on a hard packed road in Mississippi was considerably different from 20 miles in deep, dry, stinking sand in Africa.

Marty had gone first. Who would have thought. He was built like a linebacker. But the third day he had just fallen over, and there was no waking him up. No dramatic last words, here one minute and gone the next.

They had pooled their water, everyone got a drink, same size cup, same time of day.

Kind of sucked for the bigger guys, but no one had tried to cheat. Good guys, every one of them. He drank a little toast to them. That was about it, a couple of drops maybe.

It was getting light, time to get on a shadow side of a dune and stay in it as much as possible, try to get a little sleep before setting out at dark again.

The next evening was like the evening before that, and the one before that. Hot. Hot and dark. He'd heard that some places it got real cold in the desert at night. Not here. He had better take a drink, drain those last drops before he got on the road.

The road, that was funny. He'd love to be on a road. He'd love to be in a bar. He'd love to be home, or even back at base. He'd love to have one more stinkin' drink of water. Hmm, well, that was nice, kind of a last request.

He could just about hear something. Unless it was his imagination. His eyes had played enough tricks, now it was his ears.

Could be distant machinery, hell, it could just as easily be Sharon calling him in to dinner.

Well, one more drink and he'd head that way and damn well find out.

*
**

This is obviously a story for a lota vase. There used to be a lota canteen available, and a lota flask. I would think a canteen would be best for this, and lacking a canteen, people in an emergency situation would take anything that would hold water.

Feeling thirsty yet?

Did You Know?

Called the Grandfather of Bizarre Magic by some, the Godfather of Bizarre Magic by others, Eugene Poinc was not only a prolific writer of Bizarre Magic, but also performed on occasion as he saw fit. Eugene twice appeared on the television show *You Asked For It*, once billed as "The Artist Who If He Can't Sell His Paintings -- Eats Them". Even death could not stop this Master Bizarrist from publishing his writings, as his articles continued on in *The Linking Ring* (IBM journal) for many months after Eugene was buried.



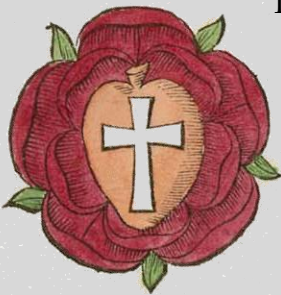
Order of...

...The Rosy Cross

Mark Williams

The Rosicrucians date back into Medieval Germany with a theological doctrine which is built upon esoteric truths of the ancient past, secretly concealed from the average man, providing insight into nature, the physical universe and the spiritual realm.

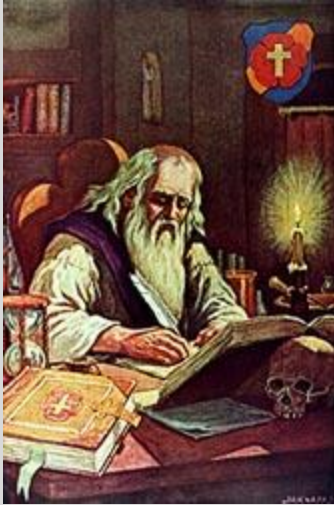
Rosicrucianism is symbolized by the Rosy Cross.



The symbol represents a fully developed human being, a *Master of Existence*. It represents someone who, by their wisdom and command of circumstances is not enslaved by destiny. One can say that the Rosy Cross symbolizes the inner state of perfection and power. One way in which the Order of the Rosy Cross is defined is, a Visible School that transmits the secrets and knowledge of the Spiritual Fraternity that its symbol represents.

During the late 17th Century the Rosicrucian Order caused excitement all throughout Europe. Their manifestos inspired Alchemists and Sages to transform the arts, sciences, religion, and the politically intellectual landscapes of these times.

More recently, Rosicrucianism seeks to prepare the individual through harmonious development of mind and heart in a spirit of unselfish service to mankind and an all-embracing altruism. According to it, the Rosicrucian Order was founded in the year 1313 and is composed of twelve exalted Beings gathered around a thirteenth, Christian Rosenkreuz (considered the founder). These great Adepts have already advanced far beyond the cycle of rebirth; their mission is to prepare the *whole wide world* for a new phase in religion – which includes awareness of the inner worlds and the subtle bodies, and to provide safe guidance in the gradual awakening of man's latent spiritual faculties during future centuries.



The Order of the Rosy Cross perpetuates the wisdom and inner truths of the Rosicrucians of every age who, over the centuries, have taught those who follow their teachings to develop their physical, mental, and spiritual abilities, and understand the relationship that exists between all people, the Cosmos, the laws that govern it, and **God**, by whatever name He is known and however conceived. The wisdom which one acquires through this historic Order, followers become aware that all people can come *to be all they should be and obtain what they need*, regardless of class or other limitations.

The Order of the Rosy Cross expounds upon many aims and practices. First, the principal aim is to preserve and propagate Christian esotericism - the true essence of the Western Mystery Tradition - by means of study, debate and meditation within a consecrated space.

Next, their Fraternity is truly inclusive, putting up no artificial barriers to membership. They admit both men and women of the Christian faith, and do not insist upon any prior membership of any other Masonic or esoteric body - nor do they restrict their members from joining, or remaining as members of any other Rosicrucian body: "tolerance", not intolerance, is their watchword.

The Order of the Rosy Cross is rich in history, as well as, symbolism. Masonic roots ground Rosicrucians beliefs. Levels of consciousness can be reached through the *Essence of Spirit* and the *Essence of Life*.

The Rosicrucian teachings hold that Consciousness manifests on Seven Planes, each of which these planes are interlinked. But each plane is composed of seven sub-planes, and each sub-plane of seven minor planes, and so on until the multiplication is made seven times.

I. The Plane of the Elements

II. The Plane of the Minerals

III. The Plane of the Plants

IV. The Plane of the Animals

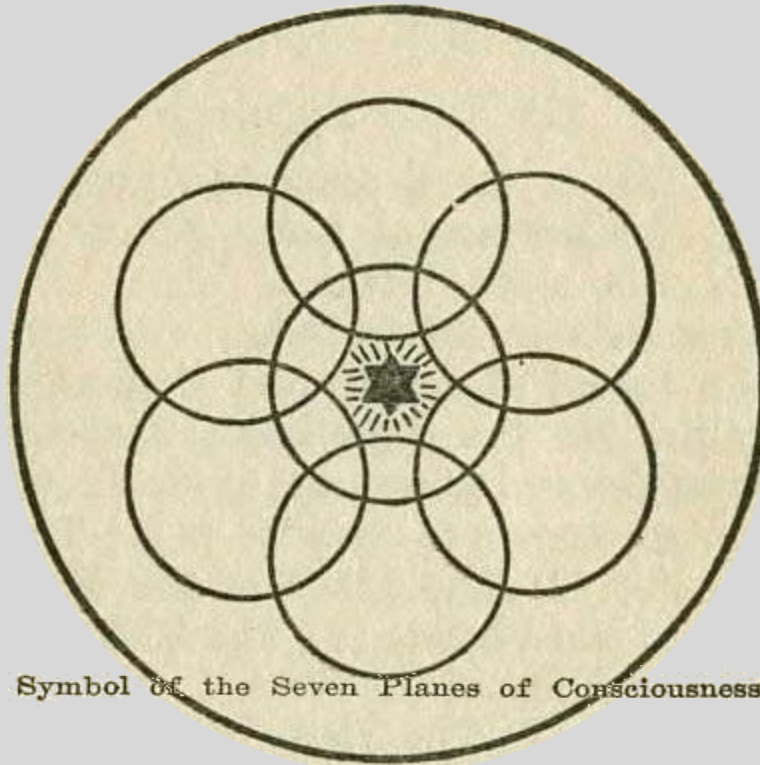
V. The Plane of the Human



VI. The Plane of the Demi-Gods

VII. The Plane of the Gods

The following illustration shows how each level of consciousness is intertwined with the others.



Symbol of the Seven Planes of Consciousness

Order of the Rosy Cross members can achieve higher enlightenment from each level of consciousness. It is their belief, that with each new level reached, higher awareness beyond Cosmic Realms becomes easily attainable.

Although this has been a brief look into Rosicrucianism, it serves as a testament that possibilities are endless. Keeping an open mind will help one to accept alternate ways of thinking.

This then is the Order of the Rosy Cross.

Alucard...

...1576

Gary Scott

Well here we are at Top Hat's first ever Bizarre issue. Having been fascinated with all things dark, grizzly and supernatural from childhood, I think it befitting for me to publish my first ever essay written for the bizarre crowd, based on my character Alucard Van Horn that was a stage work circa 2005.

Before you begin reading my offering, please set yourself up with some atmosphere. I found the following good background music to have playing whilst digesting something so arcane.

<http://youtu.be/mIrt5MkGpy0>

So get Top Hat ready, press play and read on.

*
**

I see them. The marks of life hanging over me. A distant reminder of a past life. Ingrained into the oak above me, I stare into the grooves of death. I place my fingernails into the furrows that were created during the last moments of my life where breath was a constant. How I screamed. For days I cried out to be saved. I remember that last inhale. The suffocation. The last airless moment.

I felt my eyes forcing past my eyelids, the tightening of my lips and the explosive beating of my heart.

Then nothing.

They knew what they were doing. It was a planned assault. They found me on a feed. This was no ordinary meal, but an ambush. They had left the injured child in the glade. A sacrifice to remove this demon from their lives. Her ankle had been broken purposely. A small anlace had sliced the meaty part of the calf muscle, just below her knee. The blood ran thick and true. It was the life I now hold that drew me to her. No

matter what other gifts I have been bestowed, I must feed. The smell of the blood was intoxicating. I could hear the whimpers of youth that were deafening to me. I needed the silence and the pabulum. I backed around a thick sycamore that protected me in the shade of the moon.

Acorns had fallen in the lofty breeze. I knew she was dying. I could sense the rush of blood leaving her body. I got ready to engulf my prey. To take her life would mean culling both our pain.

I made eye contact by edging out from behind the tree. She looked at me, her skin now pale as mine. She reached out with her open left hand. Calling me out as her saviour. Her previously unwanted death was now something for which she begged. Her ability to walk had diminished to a crawl, dragging herself through the pool of blood that had now encircled her torso. It was as if she had been playing with her own bodily fluids. I watched her writhing for a while. Gleefully enjoying the loss of life that was occurring. I took one final glimpse at her last moments. Clinging onto the life she no longer wanted. Our eyes met and I rushed out into the glade, ready to impose my will.

I held her in my arms like a child of my very own. We looked at each other. She feebly stroked my face. Her long, dark and mangled hair now covered half her face. Her lips trembled as she spoke.

"I'm not afraid!" came the words of innocence.



She knew what I was. She knew that the Vampyre must feed. She turned her head, ready to accept the penetration of her jugular with my now growing incisors. I forced my mouth and canines against the open space of her neck that she had so freely given me. My fangs pushed past her skin and deep into the pulsating vein that held the flow of life that I was

about to extract. I began to drink feverishly and watched the excess claret run down her shoulder and stain the white ruffled collar that was on a dress fit only for paupers. I watched her feet kick wickedly at first, but the more I drained from her, the more the kicking subsided. I was drinking my fill and my eyes had changed to the fiery red that had given me the demon moniker from the villagers. It was over. I lay her down with

grief in my heart. She reminded me so much of my love. So young. So innocent. My Elizabetha.

I felt the pitchfork rip through the membrane of my back and penetrate its way through my chest. Part of my lung and stomach lining attached themselves to the end of the prongs. Internal organs that no longer sustain me. Their requirement nullified by my eternal curse. The instinct of my new life and its gifts took over.



With an injection of fresh vitality that I had taken from the female offering, the surge of power replenishes my ardour for all the things that I am. The villagers know not what they have done. I turn to face them. The pitchfork still protruding through my carcass. A crowd of fifty, possibly more, have torches and farm implements in hand. I could smell the blood of my sacrifice attached to the blade of the woman furthest to my left. My gifts have given me the ability to sense genetic flaws so as to not drink weak or diseased haemoglobin. This woman's genetic make-up was all too familiar. She was the mother of my immolation.

Humans are fascinating creatures. All too ready to sacrifice their own to save their own pathetic souls. I charged the woman with pitchfork affronted. The trident buried itself into her chest and forced the remains of my rotting organs inside her. The impact made her squirm like the pig she was. I retracted and her lifeless body hit the ground. The others around me hesitated. They stepped back cautiously. I glided upwards, towards the tree tops, above this unholy ground. Bellowing in voices of old, my vocal enchantments raised the awareness of my plight to the children of the night. The Wolves. The howls filled the empty night sky. The growling began. They were close. Fear took hold of the villagers. Unable to hold onto their torches or weapons of choice, they turned to flee, only to find themselves pursued by my canine brethren. I could hear the screams of capture and the ripping of flesh. It was the symphony of the night I had been craving. It settled me.

I moved to a horizontal position above the terra firma. Focusing on the ground below me, I dropped with great speed towards the solid and worn terrain. The impact shook the forest around me. The pitchfork dislodged itself from my eternal corpse. It took flight, impaling itself next to the body of my feed. I brought myself to my knees, hunched over as my regenerative powers took over.

The cavities left by the piercing of the villagers' means of destruction began to close. I was whole once more. I walked over to the pitchfork and wrenched it from its

placement. I looked down at the young body whose life I had drained. She did not deserve the end of life by the means that befell her. We Vampyres are not soulless. We crave the companionship and love that accompanied us in our human life. I could save this child's soul and validate my curse. I had until sunrise to immortalise her.

So here I lay in my home. A wooden box made from the finest oak, laid with the soil from a thousand lands. It cuts out all light and allows me to regenerate in the darkness. A permanent reminder that I am forever. Immortal. A demon that feeds on the blood of the living.

She lays on my chest. A warmth I have not felt since times of past. Her hair wraps itself around my hands and I stroke fondly. We are bonded. Fallen angels that have come together through chance. Our home is the night and our children adorn the forest.

We are forever.

We are Vampyre.



The Masque...

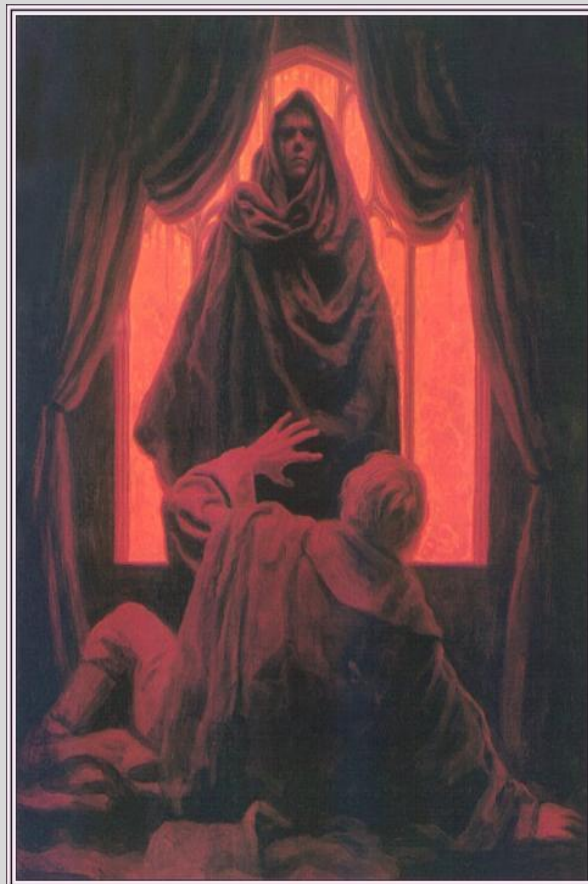
...Of the Red Death

Michael Jay

This is a bizarre presentation for Poe's short story of the same name. Very little is needed by the performer in the way of sleights and the most important part of this presentation is the need to be a good story teller. As you can see by the articles above, bizarre magic is about the story and about the atmosphere that is set by the story teller himself. When you present this trick to your audience, ensure that the atmosphere is appropriate to this story line. And, before you attempt this presentation, please read *The Masque of the Red Death* by Edgar Allan Poe.

Equipment: Six court cards from a regular deck of cards and a special card to represent the Red Death. You can use a card prepared for this trick that has the picture of the Red Death similar to the illustration to the right or you can simply use the ace of hearts to represent the Red Death (at your discretion).

If you decide to use a specially prepared card, there are a myriad of ways to get the picture onto whatever card from whatever deck that you please. You can search Google in order to find a picture that more suits your needs or you can simply print out this picture to place on a card using a specialized printer or just by using rubber cement to glue the picture to your card of choice. Triple ought (.000) steel wool can be used to take off the ink from nearly any card, of any make, to set up the card for this picture (or any other picture, for that matter).



Presentation: You'll need to have the back of the Red Death card marked subtly in some way. This isn't impromptu as a result of this requirement, however some magicians know how to mark cards 'on the fly.' If you can do this, then any deck will work at any time and this can reasonably be an impromptu trick under such circumstances.

The important thing is the story and the atmosphere.

If you are using the special Red Death card, then you don't want it to be seen by your audience. Have that card on top of the deck and spread through the cards, up-jogging the two black kings, the two black queens, and the two black jacks. While you do this, tell the story of Prince Prospero inviting the lords and ladies to his strong hold to avoid the Red Death that is running rampant through the country side. Ensure that you don't spread far enough to reveal the Red Death card on top and use a *Vernon Strip Out* move (Card College, Volume 3, page 520) to remove the court cards while adding the Red Death card (unseen).

You will now have 7 cards in your hand, face down. More astute spectators may realize that there should only be 6 cards. If this is pointed out (and only IF this is pointed out), explain by saying that the Red Death already walks amongst them. Otherwise, just continue on with your story about Prince Prospero and the lords and ladies.

Put the cards face down on the table and mix them with one hand, pushing the cards around on the table top so that there is no way to tell which ones are which and when you're finished the cards will be spread chaotically (all backs up, i.e. face down), none touching the others. This is the masquerade that Prospero is hosting and represent the lords and ladies mingling. You now have a spectator help you with the story, choosing which of the lords and ladies are to be taken by the Red Death (because even though Prospero has promised to shield them, the walls of his castle still cannot stop the Red Death).

Using the PATEO force, eliminate all cards except the Red Death. As each card is eliminated, flip it face up and continue to tell the story of Prince Prospero. If you read Poe's tale, you'll have no problem telling this story in a compelling and entertaining fashion while you eliminate the revelers (the court cards). The final card, the Red Death card, is left face down.

Slowly turn the card and say, "And Darkness and Decay and the Red Death held illimitable dominion over all." (This is the final line of Poe's tale.)

I have purposely left out the script for this trick because I think it's important that you write your own. I've also left out specifics in the method and technique for presenting this excellent piece of macabre theater. There are no extreme sleights and, in fact, no real need for any sleights at all. The only thing honestly required for this is an understanding of the PATEO force - a force that can be found in many old books from past masters. If you like this trick and you are not familiar with the PATEO force, then buy books and find it.

Also, my article isn't about the trick, as per se, but rather it should be viewed as a stepping stone for your own creative purposes and designs. I've given you the foundation for a powerful bit of bizarre theater, now make it your own.

As always, thank you for reading and take care.

Production Team

Designer & Publisher: Michael Jay

Editor: Michael Jay

Proof Readers: Gary Scott

Dan Cunningham

Dave Wyton

Technical Advisor: Wayne Clancy

Assistant Tech Advisor: Tam McLaughlin

Based on the design of Wayne Trice

