

Magic Banny Presents Top Hat



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A Letter from the Editor

Michael Jay

Welcome to issue #9 in the second volume of Top Hat. This month's content is absolutely amazing and we are also kicking off a special section for the first time ever in Top Hat. This new bizarre section will be a monthly standard included at the end of each issue. I hope that you'll find this to be a useful addition to this magazine.

We kick off this issue with an article by Pete Stedman that offers several ways to use a tried and true effect from the past. Dave Wyton follows Pete's article with an excellent technique that can be seamlessly added to most any card set for augmented strength.

Gary Scott is our editorialist this month and he takes a cold, hard look at magic on television in this second decade of the 2000s.

Craig Chadwick returns with an excellent trick you can use while demonstrating the Stroop effect. After that, things change a little for our readers.

Mark Williams compares the bizarre with mentalism and explains why they are similar in effect. This is followed by a pair of articles detailing the use of mentalism to add spice to your presentations and how to connect on a deep level with your audience. Our guides are Tony Black and Mat Parrott, both men who know whereof they speak. Given time and effort, using these two articles together could be the start of a religion...

From there we move into the bizarre with some thoughts on Eugene Poinc and what his writing has meant to magic in general and the bizarre in particular. Weepin' Willie offers his usual macabre sense of humor by sharing a story of one of his customers...I can't speak for anyone other than myself, but I know that when I die I'm going to contact Willie to take care of the details.

And with that, I entreat you to enjoy this offering of Top Hat, Issue #9.

Plug For Free Will (1—2 Nothing)

by Pete Stedman

Several years ago I bought an effect called Free Will; this was based on a method credited to Deddy Corbuzier.¹ It's a cracking quick mental effect and the props supplied (three wooden discs about the size of £2 coins in a cloth bag) were very good. However, for a technical reason I couldn't get on with it so I sold it. I created the same effect using three sink plugs and gave it a light comedy routine.

(See this [attached video](#) for the routine and explanation.)

I have a friend who has another version using cards with the names of animals, this too is based more towards comedy. Looking on You Tube I note several other versions are available (including one revealing the secrets!).

Wayne Dobson created his own version using his business cards in his book *WD40*. Wayne does in fact credit this to 'Free Will'. Wayne then had his effect made up with plastic cards (credit card size) and it is commercially available under the name 'TNT Reloaded'. I think Wayne's version in *WD40* using your own business cards is really very good as you can give away your cards at the end. The manufactured plastic cards - to me - gets away from the lovely impromptu handling given in his book. If you like the effect then I recommend that you spend £15.00 and get the *WD40* PDF book with 39 additional very good effects. Well worth it.

The Effect? I call this effect '1 - 2 NOTHING'. You show a prediction card, which you lay down on the table. You then show three of your business cards on which you write something on the back of each. The cards are turned face down so that the words cannot be seen and the spectator is told to mix the 3 cards. The spectator is given a choice of which card to hold, which card the magician should hold and which to leave on the table. Even when asked, if the spectator wants to swap cards with the magician the prediction is always correct.

¹ It is generally accepted that Deddy Corbuzier is the creator of this method; further research may prove otherwise.

As the basic method has been around for some time many variations of effect have been produced and even more are possible if you give it some thought. Now for those in the know, in all versions the three props are marked in a subtle manner. In my dealer version the small marks were almost invisible in dim working conditions. I soon worked out that in practice only one item needs to be marked and, using my sink plugs sometimes in dim lighting, I made my one mark that could be felt as well as seen.

The effects are based on the use of equivoke.²

Equivocation is a verbal technique by which a magician appears to have a particular outcome, when in actuality the outcome is one of several alternatives. According to Wikipedia, "*...Equivocate is the process of psychological forcing combined with double entendre.*" You really wanted to know that didn't you? Taking the idea of using your own business cards, I worked out that the effect is easily presented using three unmarked business cards taken straight from your wallet.

Have your prediction card in your wallet. The prediction, printed on three separate lines, reads: [Line 1] I'M ONE. [Line 2] YOU'RE ONE TWO. [Line 3] ON THE TABLE IS NOTHING. See video for illustration of this. Reword to suit yourself of course.

Effect and Handling: Remove three business cards and prediction card from wallet also pen/pencil. You can allow spectators to handle them gathering humorous remarks of course. Don't comment that they are ordinary etc. (Why should they be anything but normal?) Without showing what you are writing, write the word 'ONE' on one card, placing it face down. On the second card write the words 'YOU'RE ONE TWO' then place it face down. On the third card write nothing at all but just pretend to do so. Place this blank card down. Spectator mixes the cards. The effect is now exactly as shown in the video demo.

HOW? The prediction card is placed writing side down in full view at the beginning. Although the business cards are unmarked you do mark one subtly during the handling. This is the NOTHING card. After you have apparently written something on the last card, as you place it down, slightly crimp one

² See 'Chatter On Patter' from Top Hat Volume 1, Issue 40: *Equivocate* by Craig Leonard

corner. Just enough for you to spot it. After the cards are mixed, ask spectator to select one. If the (marked) NOTHING card is selected, this is placed to one side. If either one of the other cards is selected the spectator retains it. The spectator now chooses another card. Once more, if the NOTHING card is selected, it is placed slightly to one side leaving one card that you say is left for you. If the spectator chooses the other unknown card, you say that is for you and the NOTHING card is placed to one side as before. At this point you know the identity of the NOTHING card placed to one side, but do not know the identity of the cards being held. As you are holding your card it is so easy to glimpse the writing side as you patter. You now also know the card that the spectator is holding. At this stage, point out that the spectator mixed the cards and had a totally free choice of the distribution of the cards and even at this last moment offer the spectator the chance to exchange card with the performer. Either way you know what cards you and the spectator hold.

Place the cards down. Here again is the subtle secret that is credited to Deddy Corbuzier (I think).

[1] If the spectator has the ONE card, ask them to pick up the prediction and read it out loud. He reads, "I'm ONE" and turns over their card revealing the correct prediction. They then read "You are one TWO". You turn over your card revealing it to be correct. They then read out "On the table is NOTHING" Turn that over and all predictions are correct.

[2] If the spectator is holding the one TWO card (and you are holding the ONE card) then YOU read out the prediction as above . . .

If you have a particular sense of humour then the reading out of the prediction may well cause a chuckle. You will notice that I give no suggestions as to patter, as this is such a personal thing. Naturally you give away your business cards afterwards. If you don't want to give them away then of course they can be re-used. I hope you will try this some time.

Best of luck!

Seltroffe Control

by Dave Wyton

This is a simple and easy control. There's nothing new technique-wise, in fact probably nothing new at all; but it works.

Spread the cards from hand to hand and have a card touched, removed, noted and returned. Square the cards and take a little finger break above the selection.

Say: "If I were to spread the cards again and ask you to touch the back of any card, it's highly unlikely that you would touch the card you're thinking of. Possible but unlikely."

As you speak, spread a group of cards from the top of the pack, almost as if you were actually going to invite the spectator to try and locate his card. Then spread another group; keep spreading until you reach the break. At this point, each hand holds about half the pack. Casually raise each hand, partially showing the face card of each group. If you're spreading the cards from left hand to right hand, the bottom card of the right hand group is the card that was directly above the break—and directly above the selected card—and the card at the bottom of the left hand group is the original bottom card.



Note this hand raising gesture should not be done pointedly; everything should be free flowing and, as mentioned, casual. It's merely the conclusion of your mini-speech and the spreading process.

The unspoken suggestion is that the selection could just possibly be one of the two cards on view.

To conclude, place the left hand cards on top of the right hand cards; that is, the original lower half goes on top of the upper half. Result, the pack has been cut

and the selection is on top of the pack. From here, square, false shuffle, if required and continue as desired. That's all.

The mini-speech quoted above is merely a patter suggestion. The exact words aren't vital, as long as the spectators understand why you're spreading the cards; you're merely gesturing. Whatever words trip from your own tongue are always the best. But what is important is that you finish talking at the same moment that you reach the break. That way you stop spreading the cards at the same time as you stop speaking. In other words, the demonstration is over, what's to be said has been said, so why continue talking and/or spreading? No reason.

If considered appropriate, when the first group of cards has been spread, break/cut the pack at that point and raise the group slightly to flash the face card. Repeat and flash the face card of the next group. Note: Only the face card of the upper group is being shown. The top card of the face down groups remains face down and undisturbed. When you get to the actual break point, where the selection is the top card of the right hand group, a pattern has been set. Once again, flash the face card of the upper group without showing the top card of the face down group. Do the casual cut to bring the selection to the top of the pack.



Chavracadabra: The Decline of the Magician

by Gary Scott

Part 1 *Opprobrious*

Inspired by a recent comment on the Magic Bunny forums, I have decided to get this out of my system. It was a comment that inquired "How often do you see a trailer released for a handkerchief effect nowadays?" Now this comes from one of the younger magi and the expectation for there to be a trailer for anything at all defines the generation and thinking he's been brought into. So be warned about what I'm proposing here. It will not be pretty. Some will call this jealousy, others will agree with me and, of course, there will be those who find what I write downright deplorable. Unfortunately, as you will read, certain people put themselves out there on TV. When you do this, you're setting yourself up for judgment. Unfortunately, those mentioned probably shouldn't be on TV.

"How dare you write this about our representatives who are successful!", you may say...

I do ask you to keep an open-mind, as it may become obvious why certain people have been subjected to my writing. So without further ado, let's begin...

It was Christmas morning 2010 and, as usual, not a snowflake in sight. The mundane ritual of opening gifts had been over for a few hours, so I turned on the TV. Gordon Ramsay was preparing a live cook-in so you could prepare Christmas dinner to the same standard as his own culinary fare.



Vegetables were being processed, meat was being basted and being a Chef of celebrity status, Gordon's show had an influx of z-list celebrities who 'had the morning off'.

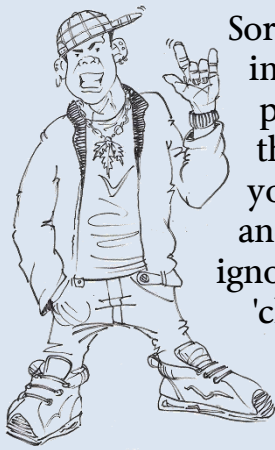
Then, something strange happened. In walked Dynamo (Steven Frayne) and was quickly shoved into the frame with Gordon and two females. After a very quick meet and greet, I had a niggling feeling it was trick time.

I froze in front of the screen, ready to chuckle, as I knew what I was about to witness and I wasn't going to be disappointed. The trick in question was 'coin in bottle' and, as expected, a bottle was required. Gordon turned around and grabbed an empty glass bottle from a rear shelf in a completely impromptu fashion...and yes, that last sentence was plenary sarcasm.

It's live TV. You're on a time limit. You have to get to the commercials. So grab a set-up bottle from the stage-set and quickly get on with it. Gordon passed the bottle to Dynamo and off we went into the fantasy camp that is Dynamo performing. I missed the actual trick but I did hear the success of it through the TV applause. Ok, how did I miss the trick? Quite simply, I had walked away from the TV in disgust.

After the bottle had been passed to Dynamo, he began his performance to the young ladies in attendance with his back to the camera...yes...you read that right! His back to the camera?!? So Gordon Ramsay had to save the day by grabbing Dynamo by the shoulders, spinning him around and saying "You need to face this way mate!"

Well that was enough for me. Here we have somebody with their own magic TV show who doesn't even know how to perform for a camera, or to a camera and mixed in with the personality of a paper cup, this sums up the state of magic on TV and magicians as performers in the 21st century.



Sorry Dynamo, your chav image, lack of handling skills and inability to perform to the standard of all, high-caliber, performers that came before you, is completely disrespectful to the image of the magician. You are a 'reality TV' celebrity. It's your sob story and chav image to the youth of today that sold and not your skill as a magician or performer. The fact that your ignorance of your TV producers making you be a Criss Angel 'clone' is astounding. Something needs to change...

Apologies to all those who feel that I'm attacking *everybody's favourite whipping boy* (Thanks MJ, love that!) but, unfortunately, the performance spoke for itself. I don't blame this guy for taking what was given to him and going along for the ride, but the TV producers need a bloody good spanking for unashamedly abusing magic and not producing what it could be.

Max Maven once wrote, "Magicians of the 20th century (and into this one) have taken something inherently profound and rendered it trivial!"

Never a truer word spoken.

Before I go any further, I will tell you this: Chavracadabra is going to be a trilogy of essays and hopefully they will appear in consecutive Top Hats. In the confines of what I'm writing, you will see that the magic industry is in trouble. Serious trouble. It needs help!

First of all, the fact that we use the word 'industry' with the word 'magic' to define what products we sell, rather than what show we sell, is irksome at best. Industry is a much bigger word than magic. The modern magician has utilised this and would prefer to turn industry at the expense of other magicians, rather than polish performance and create routines to perform to an audience. The only industrious endeavor a magician should be trying for is performing in front of a paying audience.

In other words, to a layman, a magician creates illusion to give the impression he is performing real magic.

To a fellow conjurer, a magician creates illusion to sell to other magicians.

These kind of magicians have become a sub-genre of our company and shall be forever known as... **'Releasers'**.

We practise an art form that, in its own right, should be deemed the greatest performance entertainment.

The study of magic should help give the skill, aptitude, knowledge, and personality to be able to at least be deemed worthy of this, even if you decide to keep magic as a most fascinating hobby. Magicians are failing. They fall into the trap of buying up the 'Releasers' latest offerings and learn nothing.

It doesn't help with the sub-sub genre of magician: The **'Quoters'**. Those amazing names that place their tag line on the back of every DVD box that contains the latest contribution to our community from their friend, The 'Releaser'. Do I need to name anybody whose sobriquet adorns these Eucharistic offerings? Not really. All you have to do is grab a couple of the latest and greatest DVDs from your library (you know you have some!), flip them over to the reverse side and you can do your own comparisons.

Ok, so far there's been a lot of vituperative script and that even bothers me because some of those 'Quoters' have a lot of talent. They need to remove themselves from the back of DVD boxes and just perform, lecture and teach rather than release.

Have you also noticed that at no point have books been mentioned on the release side of things? Why write a book when the thirty items you can offer in print can be divided up into thirty individual DVD releases, full of quotes from your releasing peers? You're not a magician deemed worthy of anything at all in this day and age, unless you have released something. Bow to pressure of your peers. Release something. Go on, you know you want to, but be quick, otherwise those other important lost souls may not know who you are. And there, my friends, is the flaw. We have made a magic industry out of selling rushed and incomplete ideas. Not fully workable routines; not rehearsed and worked-in performances; just ideas - magicians are selling ideas. This is why we end up with 2.0, 3.0, redux, and all the other releases of the same product three months later, only this time it comes in red. Yippee ki-Yay mother fucker.

So does this justify these people being called magicians? Or do the terms 'Releaser' and 'Quoter' now become more digestible? Magic is a performing art and has been so for thousands of years. In the space of the last decade the 'Releasers' have even managed to make the Max Maven quote prosaic by comparison. You can read about the decline of magic and how it's been trivialized as nothing more than fodder for children in a book called 'The Dramatic Art of Magic' by Louis C. Haley. This book is over a hundred years old and contains the very essence of what magic has become and what it should be. If you read this book, I promise you that the outlook you have on today's standard of conjuring will be forever changed. So why did I mention the complete Dynamo failure at the top of this mini-dissertation? Well if that's the standard of proposed top-flight performers on TV, we are up shit's creek.

The public only know what you give them. Dynamo is a representation of all of us, yet we all know somebody who can and would do better in that role. Magic's glory days on TV have long since passed and we will never have the likes of David Copperfield or Paul Daniels grace our screens again. The magic industry needs to improve...But how can we do that?

All will be revealed in Part two.

Siya on the boards

The Stroop Effect

by Craig Chadwick

The basic effect is based on an 8/10 card Brainwave style effect, but using the phenomenon known as the "Stroop Effect" to provide a novel presentational hook.

The "Stroop Effect" (the scientific phenomenon, not the trick) is named after J. Ridley Stroop who discovered this strange phenomenon in the 1930s. The effect has been used to create a psychological test (Stroop Test) that is widely used in clinical practice and investigation.

In a nutshell, the Stroop effect is a demonstration of interference in the reaction time of a task. For example, when the name of a colour is written in a colour not denoted by the name (i.e. the word "red" will be printed in blue ink instead of red ink), naming the colour of the word takes longer and is more prone to errors than when the colour of the ink matches the name of the colour.



The words themselves have a strong influence over your ability to name the colour. The interference between the differing information your brain receives (what the words say and the colour of the words) causes a problem.

The Effect

Ten cards are spread face up in front of your spectator. Attention is drawn to the fact that each card has name of a colour written on it, however each word is written in a completely different colour that the word it is describing (for example, the word "red" will be printed in blue ink instead of red ink).

It is also brought to the attention of the spectator that one of the cards is significantly different to the rest.

The spectator is asked to bear this in mind as they attempt the Stroop Test.

After the spectator has done this, they are asked to freely name any of the colours out loud. The named card is removed from the spread and placed to one side momentarily. The remaining nine cards are turned face down and counted out. They are all blue backed. The selected card is turned over and seen to be the only red card in the entire spread with a different coloured back!

Preparation

To construct this trick you will need 10 blank face cards, 5 with blue backs and 5 with red backs.

On each card write the name of a colour in different coloured ink to the colour named, for example:

RED Blue Green Orange Brown Black PINK Grey WHITE Purple

The stack is arranged so that the red backed cards are stacked on top of the blue backed cards. The order of the cards within each group is unimportant.

Method

First off, start by spreading through the cards face up and ask your spectator to name each colour out loud.

"Name the colours of the following words. Do NOT read the words...rather, say the colour of the words. For example, if the word "BLUE" is printed in a red colour, you should say "RED". Say the colours as fast as you can. It is not as easy as you might think!"

If your spectator stumbles at a particular colour, use that colour as the prediction, otherwise once they have completed the test, have the spectator freely name any one of the colours from the face up spread.

Whichever one your spectator names, remove it from the spread while at the same time noting if it comes from the upper five cards or the lower five cards. If

it comes from the upper five cards you will need to cut the lower five cards to the top of the packet. You can do this simply by reverse counting the cards as you reassure them that they could have named any one.

Place the selected card to one side and continue to show the backs of the remaining cards by turning the packet face down and perform a *Hamman Count* to apparently show the remaining nine cards are all the same colour.

You then draw attention back to the selected card as you turn it face down to reveal that it is the only card to have a contrasting colour back.

To reset simply place the selected card to the bottom of the face down packet.

When performing the *Hamman Count*, make the switch on the fifth card. That way you can legitimately show a count of nine cards.

The ease of working and simple reset makes this the perfect item for the strolling mentalist and table hopper.

The Hamman Count (Brother John Hamman)

Hold the face down packet in right hand Biddle grip.

With your left thumb, start peeling the cards into your left hand one at a time. You peel one, two, three, four, and then on the fifth card you switch the packet in your right hand with the packet in your left under the guise of peeling off the fifth card.

To do this you simply clip the right hand packet between your thumb and index finger, while your right third finger and thumb steal the lower packet that you have just counted into your left hand and then continue to peel off the remaining cards into your left hand.

Maintaining a continuous rhythm is the key to selling this illusion and when you get it right, it is very deceptive.

Notes

If you are not comfortable performing a **Hamman Count**, use Ed Marlo's **Olam subtlety** instead.

Credits

WAVE: Andrew Normansell - (a 10 card brainwave effect)

8 Card Brainwave: Nick Trost - (The alternate handling is based on Nick Trost's 8 card Brainwave)

Hamman Count: Brother John Hamman

Olam Subtlety: Ed Marlo



Bizarre Magic or Mentalism

by Mark Williams

How can one define Bizarre Magic or Mentalism? I think that it would be safe to say that both can be emotionally and philosophically thought provoking. Either can give the audience a deeper meaning and a life changing experience. Sure, storytelling is a key factor in both genres to which 'belief' is paramount. Yet, belief is the tricky part. So, where does it begin?

We are raised throughout our young lives to believe a certain way. Think about it, when we are born we have no beliefs. It is our friends and family who influence us. Later in life, it is the schools that we attend which gives us grounding in those beliefs. We are taught to think in a specific manner. Certainly, we can decide for ourselves to change our beliefs to a different way of thinking, once we age and mature.

Belief is at the core of both Bizarre Magic and Mentalism. Speaking as a novice, I would say that as an entertainer in these fields of magic you must first believe in the presentations you perform. Give your performances some credence by developing a powerful storyline behind the actual effect. Allow yourself to believe in those stories, making your presentations even more meaningful. Once you have formulated your own 'belief', half the battle is won.

Next, you will need to work a little harder getting your audience to believe. Remember that they have been influenced throughout their lifetimes, as well. So, how do you get your audiences in the right frame of mind? Influence them yourself! Program your audiences prior to the actual performance by injecting some history into your presentation. Build a story or use a real event to enhance your Bizarre Magic and Mentalism routines. Tell your audience key points to remember throughout the story being told and remind them to be open to what is about to come. Let the information sink in and allow questions if necessary. You will be influencing your audience *even before* your presentation.

Carry on with your presentation and let the aforementioned story unfold. Belief

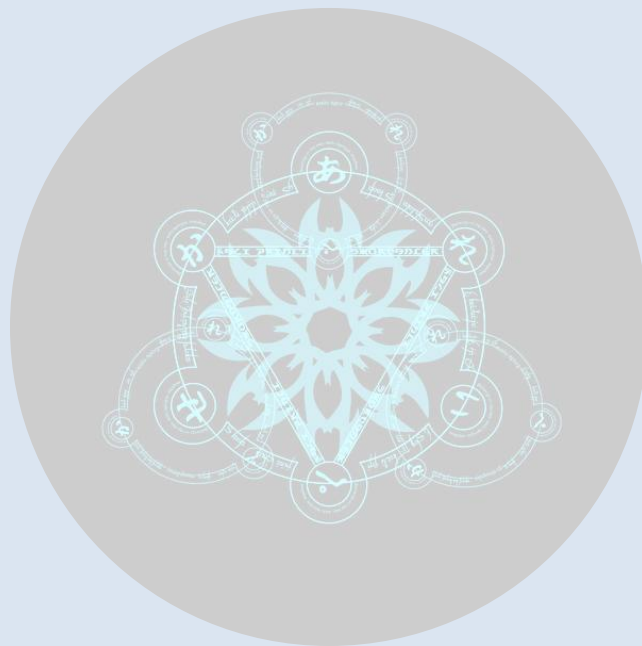
will come for some; others will not succumb to any amount of pre-programming. Let your presentation flow naturally and put all of your belief into your story. As long as your barriers have been opened, your audience will follow.

I would like to end with this excerpt from *Through The Looking Glass*:

“There’s no use trying” (said Alice). “One can’t believe impossible things.”

“I daresay you haven’t had much practice.” said the Queen. “When I was your age I always did it for half-an-hour a day. Why sometimes I’ve believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast.”

Believe in what you do and keep thinking about impossible things morning, noon and night!



A New Twist on the Classic Cold Reading

by Tony Black

Do you want to learn how to tell fortunes and be the life and soul of the party? Do you want to add something deeply personal to your performances? Readings are an important part of mentalism. Some people think they are the essence of mentalism. You can learn to read palms, tarot cards, belly buttons, or drawings of trees. Anything will do. But one useful place to start – especially if you want to incorporate readings into your mentalism effects – is with the basic cold reading.

I first came across the classic reading in Lee Earle's *The Gentle Art of Cold Reading*, a gem of a book and tape (it is that long ago) which I would highly recommend. The classic reading is twelve statements that manage to sound specific while being very vague. American psychology researchers came up with the twelve statements³ in the 1950s after studying too many horoscopes and scoffing too many fortune cookies.

The beauty of the statements is that most people will feel that they apply to themselves and their character. If you give someone a valid reason for accepting the statements (for example, tell them that you are reading their palms) then 85 to 90 per cent of people will believe that you are giving them an accurate character reading. They will also believe that the character reading is fairly detailed and specific.

What most magicians don't know is that the initial research also revealed that some of the statements are more believable than others. I have eliminated the least believable, thrown in one more, and presented them in their order of believability. I then rewrote the original statements into a script suitable for palm reading. The script gives a bit of waffle beforehand to add to the

³Originally called The Forer Effect, named for Bertram Forer who was indeed a psychologist. Forer devised the original set of 13 statements designed to be perceived as accurate even though they are vague. While it has been examined and tweaked a bit here and there over the years, at its heart it remains Forer's.

credibility of the reading, and gives an upbeat ending. In other words, it represents an improvement on the traditional twelve statement reading.

The script is 400 words long and will take about two and a half minutes to deliver. In other words, it won't kill you to learn it. The best way to learn something like this was explained to me by an actor. He said that to memorise a speech, read it out loud five times in a row, for five days in a row. That will take you a little over ten minutes a day for less than a week. After that it is fairly much burned into your memory.

This is just the beginning of character reading or fortune telling. Most professional readers use a tool such as tarot cards, and they observe their clients carefully, searching for clues. If you have the empathy for it and put the time in, you will find all that falling into place naturally. But there is nothing wrong with sticking to the basic script. It packs a punch.

Effect: You hold someone's palm, stare at it for a few moments, then deliver a startlingly accurate personality reading for that person. That can be stand-alone, or part of a routine; pseudo-psychometry, for example.

Performance: Ask your volunteer to step forward, smile at her to build up empathy, then begin to deliver the following script:

“Are you left handed or right handed? Right handed . . . Could I have a look at your left hand, please? Just hold it out in front of you.”

(Take her hand gently in yours at this point.)

“Both hands tell us different things about a person. The left hand tells us about your basic character. It's your non-dominant hand and it's governed by your subconscious. The right hand is governed by the conscious mind and is less useful to us. Leaving aside the various lines, the life-line and so on, we can tell a great deal just by the way you hold your hand, the shape of your hand, your fingers, and whether you hold them apart or together. That's what I'm going to concentrate on right now. I am going to try and tell you some basic things about your character just from the way you have presented your hand to me.

“The first thing I see is that you have a tendency to be critical of yourself. This

leads you to have serious doubts as to whether you have made the right decisions or done the right thing. Variety is the spice of life, and you require a certain amount of change or variety, otherwise you can become dissatisfied and feel hemmed in.

“Experience has taught you that it is unwise to be too frank in revealing yourself to others. Your hand shows me that while you like to appear disciplined and controlled on the outside, you tend to be worrisome and insecure on the inside. You are an enigma – at times you are extroverted, affable, sociable, while at other times you are introverted, wary, reserved.

“You pride yourself on being an independent thinker, and don't accept the opinions of others unless they can back them up. While I can see some personality weaknesses, you are generally able to compensate for them. In relation to that, I see you have a strong need to be liked by others, and for them to admire you.

“Security is one of your major goals in life. I see that you have a great deal of unused capacity which you have not yet put to use. I don't know if you realise it, but you have some psychic ability, and at some point in the future you may wish to develop that intuitive gift.

“Thank you for allowing me to look at your palm, the roadmap of your soul. I hope you got something useful out of what I had to say.”

Gently let go of the person's hand and smile at her. The reading is over.

There you have it in a nutshell. If you are doing this for a number of people you can just deliver the same reading time after time, as long as they don't overhear one another. They won't remember the details clearly enough to realise they are all hearing the same spiel.

If people are able to overhear each other's readings, just deliver the opening remarks as usual, then begin the meat of the reading – the twelve statements – in the middle rather than at the beginning. So vary the order of the steps in the above reading. When you come to the closing statement, just change it slightly. Instead of telling them they have psychic ability, tell them they have a natural empathy with people that might express itself as a healing ability. That will be enough to make it sound like a completely fresh reading.

That is the secret of being a psychic without being the seventh son of a seventh son. Guard this secret closely and use it often. Nothing is stronger, in terms of its impact on your spectator, than cold reading. If you read a palm as a joke, you will instantly find a queue of people lined up to have theirs read. So be warned - only do this if you are willing to face the consequences!

Did You Know?

Bertram Forer, an American psychologist, died a few months short of his 86th birthday in April of (the year) 2000. He is the author of the original subjective validation test, also called the Forer effect, but best known to magicians as the Barnum effect. Forer originally administered the test in 1948. Those who took the test were asked to grade the accuracy of each statement on a scale from 1 - 5. The average evaluation was 4.26 and in the years since, this test has been administered hundreds of times to thousands of different participants. Even today the average accuracy still stands at, about, 4.2 (my, how times haven't changed).

The original test statements:

1. You have a great need for other people to like and admire you.
2. You have a tendency to be critical of yourself.
3. You have a great deal of unused capacity which you have not turned to your advantage.
4. While you have some personality weaknesses, you are generally able to compensate for them.
5. Your sexual adjustment has presented problems for you.
6. Disciplined and self-controlled outside, you tend to be worrisome and insecure inside.
7. At times you have serious doubts as to whether you have made the right decision or done the right thing.
8. You prefer a certain amount of change and variety and become dissatisfied when hemmed in by restrictions and limitations.
9. You pride yourself as an independent thinker and do not accept others' statements without satisfactory proof.
10. You have found it unwise to be too frank in revealing yourself to others.
11. At times you are extroverted, affable, sociable, while at other times you are introverted, wary, reserved.
12. Some of your aspirations tend to be pretty unrealistic.
13. Security is one of your major goals in life.

Creating a Connection

by Mat Parrott

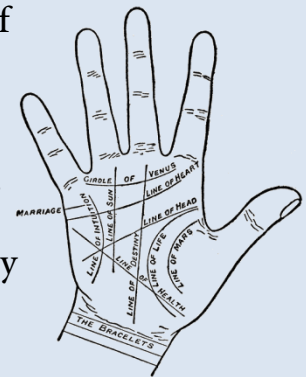
Magicians are unique in the spectrum of artists. We often mistakenly believe that our tools are what is important, promoting them rather than using them as what they are: tools to create a connection and to develop emotions in our audiences. Whilst Bizarre magic may not be my preferred modus operandi, I do respect and enjoy the capability of building an emotional attachment beyond that which other styles of our craft are normally adapted. This is often possible through the telling of fantastically inimitable stories that capture the imagination and use magic not as the art, but a tool to develop a more grandiose plot.

I've recently been developing an idea to create a connection within my performances that I hope my participants never forget.

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but they will never forget how you made them feel."

-Maya Angelou-

One of the longest surviving forms of fortune telling is that of palmistry. The modern style finds evidence of ancestry in ancient times, with suggestions of Hindu Astrological origins. Something about the procedure for the readings creates a long lasting and powerful connection. My belief is this comes largely down to the hands themselves. Whilst I don't find the methods of palmistry to hold much stock, I suggest that by holding and handling the audience's hands they develop a connection and a trust that other methods don't achieve.



It is not common that we as humans allow others to touch our hands, it's normally restricted to our loved ones, so when someone holds our hands and handles them in a more delicate manner than anyone else may have done we can't help but develop a connection to them.

"Nothing in this world compares to the comfort and security of having someone just hold your hand."

-Richelle E. Goodrich-

During a performance I often start by building a connection, choosing a participant and discussing how we as humans often spend a large proportion of our lives disguising parts of our bodies and being that we believe betray the illusions of ourselves, rather than the image we would wish to appear to have. We cut our hair in certain ways, wear shape flattering clothing, use make up and yet we miss the one thing that truly shows who we are as individuals; our hands. Whilst palmistry may be a load of nonsense, we use our hands for everything we do, from hitting the snooze button for the first time in the morning to when we turn the lights off at night.

I present my hands at this point, showing the cuts and calluses suggesting I have a physical job that can damage my hands on regular occurrences. "With your permission may I borrow your hands?"

At this point I've given an explanation as to why I need to borrow their hands and they feel comfortable with the situation, rather than the usually stilted and uncomfortable requests that we as a brethren often commit to. By taking both hands delicately into mine there is an emotional connection naturally built that is unrivalled.

"Invisible threads are the strongest ties."

-Friedrich Nietzsche-

From here the routine methodologically is nothing particularly spectacular. I use a series of Barnum Statements as a way to read the participant, occasionally using any signals that the hands may actually produce. The statements I use aren't necessarily all related to the hands, with my opening line often being, "You often appear to others to be the life and soul of the party, being the centre of attention, however internally you feel separate from the others and apart from the group. You feel as if you often analyse things far more than others, giving you a unique perspective".

This method of performance is so powerful it can be kept going indefinitely. However rather than keep my audiences in my grip until they collapse from malnutrition I steer the topic in the direction I wish.

"You consider yourself to be quite a creative person but find that life gets in the way of your creativity. This may not necessarily present itself obviously. You don't play an instrument do you?"

No matter what they say the follow up ends the routine in a subtle manner. "No," is proceeded by "I thought so, but you have thought about learning, yes?" To which everyone replies positively.

Following an answer of "Yes," I respond, "I thought so, and you've thought about learning another, yes?" Once again this elicits a positive response. Both positive responses are followed by "You should, music is an excellent way to demonstrate our creativity and energy. With your permission I'd like to use your creativity for something else."

Following this I often proceed to perform Peter Turner's *Wish You Were Here* from *Freeform Mentalism*, however any piece that uses the spectators imagination as a plot point can be incredibly effective. It can be followed by a trivial card trick, however I feel this weakens the effect of such a powerfully set up connection.



Bizarre Bursary

It is here that we immerse you into the macabre, kiddies. First we have some thoughts on that master of the bizarre, Eugene Poinc. Then, our dear friend Weepin' Willie is back to disturb and torment you with more tales from his House of the Dead and maybe even share a trick with you...But we'll have to wait and see.



Weird Gene

by Michael Jay



Who amongst us can say that we'll continue contributing new material to the magic community for 3 years after we've died? Dead and buried, our (living) legacy will continue for, fully, 3 years? Eugene Poinc did precisely that.

After his death on July 23rd, 2002, Eugene's column 'Out of My Mind' continued in the IBM journal *The Linking Ring* through much of 2005. Gene was 73 years old at the time of death and the magic community was all the poorer for the loss of this great and unique pedagogue.

One of the disappointments of my life was that I never got to meet Gene.

If you are a member of the IBM, I urge you to look up everything that you can on Eugene Poinc in *The Linking Ring*, if you are at all interested in bizarre magic.

Everything that Poinc ever wrote is pertinent to bizarre presentations, going so far as to be the cornerstone of what every bizarrist seeks to achieve in his own strange and twisted career. Eugene Poinc is the bizarre made reality; he is the incarnation of the weird; he is bizarre magic personified.

Eugene Poinc is, and forever will be, peerless in the assiduity of the bizarre cosmos and all that it entails; all that it was, all that it is, and all that it always shall be.

Gene wrote, in one of his columns, that, "Magic is the fast food of the entertainment world – It fills, but it doesn't satisfy." That statement has haunted me ever since. For nearly 15 years I have given deep thought and consideration to precisely what the implication is in such an allegation.

I had been blindly cruising along, performing magic for well over 25 years, when I came upon Gene's imputation of magic and it felt as though I had been hit in the head with a board. Gene was first to influence me in such a way as to give me pause; to actually excogitate the significance of my performances; to maybe take my presentations to a

deeper level and attempt to draw in my spectators with careful attention to each and every word that I spoke; to perform magic *theater* instead of magic *tricks*.

With that thought, that idea, as the spark to light the kindling, Gene then fanned the flames in a later column where he told me that, "Sometimes you must kill your children."

Sometimes you must kill your children.

This is something of which every magician, not just the bizarrists, should take heed. All too often our patter is littered with useless dreck that simply doesn't drive the story line or the presentation. Regardless of how proud you may be of a particularly clever line, or a terrifically funny statement, if it doesn't move the plot forward then it must be taken out of your script - it must be excised with extreme prejudice.

Sometimes you must kill your children.

You may have a powerful bit of business that you've added to your presentation, something that does them in and leaves them gasping for breath, but that bit of business simply doesn't belong there - it rubs wrong against the grain of the presentation at hand - and even though you are thoroughly pleased with your ability to put it where it doesn't belong, you must, nonetheless, get rid of that dross, and you must do so with extreme prejudice. You must, *you absolutely must*, kill your children.

Each word that you utter, every move that is made, the entire presentation, must be looked at with cold indifference. If it doesn't move the story line forward then it has no use - it doesn't belong and, therefore, it must be excised. There can be no emotion in this process. Like a doctor cutting out a cancerous growth, you must take a draconian stance with your own material.

With heartless apathy, you must kill your children.

Eugene Poinc is a paragon of bizarre magic. You can still find his website on the internet if you really try. On that website Gene shares his autobiography and bizarre presentations that you can use, based on old tricks of which nearly every magician is familiar. By way of example, his presentation for the dancing cane is not a dancing cane, but rather a cane formerly owned by Jack the Ripper that attacks the handler (instead of dancing with the magician). His full presentation for this bizarre act with the cane can be found in *The Linking Ring* and it includes another powerful magic effect that is

usually used frivolously by regular magicians; the two tricks married into one, bizarre, presentation that is guaranteed to give the observer nightmares.

If you want your magic to do more than just fill, if you want it to satisfy, then you should study the complete works of Eugene Jerome Poinc.

As always, take care and thank you for reading.



Smokin' Hot Body

by Weepin' Willie

Welcome back to the Death Emporium! I was not sure you would be back after my last dreary tale. I was napping here in the casketing room thinking about Mary and did not hear you come in, so please excuse my not welcoming you at the door. "Who is Mary?" you ask. Well, I guess I could tell you about her since I do not have another appointment for a couple of hours. Pull up a seat or lay down in a casket if you prefer, this may take a while.

Mary was a tall, homely woman with short, dark hair and a thin, frail body. Dressed in black, she was the typical widow. You do know why the widow dresses in black, do you not? No? It goes back to the belief that the Dead cannot see black. By wearing black, you would be invisible to them and they will not be able to follow you home. That is why funeral directors wear black as well, but then again, that is another story.

The first time I met her, Mary had come to the Death Emporium to make arrangements for her late husband Earl's final departure. Earl had been a traveling salesman and had spent a lot of time on the road, while Mary stayed home and took care of the business. It was the perfect arrangement with Earl being the worker bee of the company and Mary the queen bee business manager. However, not all endings are a 'happy ever more' ending like they are in the fairy tales and obituaries. On his final trip, Earl had a heart attack in his motel room and Mary had just been notified of the death that next morning. When she came to me, she was tearful and sobbing uncontrollably at times and talking about how much she was going to miss the love of her life. I offered tissue after tissue to the poor grieving soul and consoled her as best as I could, but she just kept crying and rambling. Crying is beneficial in my trade and we encourage it because if the water flows from the eyes it does not flow as much from the bladder and maintaining the restrooms is an easier task.

Working with the Dead for so many years teaches patience with the Living, so I waited.

Eventually, Mary was able to gain her composure and the basic arrangements were finalized. Earl had insurance and it would take a few days for payment to clear, but everyone knows it is not polite to keep the Dead waiting and his body was due in at

Five O'clock. State Law requires a twenty-four hour waiting period, in case the family changes their mind and not in case the person is not dead; so I had her sign the necessary papers for the cremation process and scheduled the service for two days later. I felt sorry for Mary and wept a special tear as I watched her seductively disheveled form walk slowly out the door. I guess I was drawn to her because she reminded me of my dear wife Sally, another tall, tooth-pick thin woman with dark hair and a flat chest. I



think Sally may be a bit thinner though. I have to go shopping with her because she is so frail she cannot activate the automatic door sensors at the mall. Well, that is enough about that, I know you have things to do and I have cadavers to do.

It was a wonderful service, with friends and family eating Bar-B-Q and giving blazing testimony of how faithful and loving Earl was and how he always helped out those who were less fortunate. His urn sat on the tall, brown display table and pictures of him were scattered around as a memorial; however, what no one knew was that Earl was not in the bottle like some Genie waiting to be released in a puff of smoke, at least not yet.

The Death Emporium, also known as the House of Discount Funerals and Birthing Center, was a discount establishment and to compete in the market I had to cut corners any way I could. When cremation became popular I could not afford to build a new crematorium, so to be competitive I would rent Joe's Pork Palace on Thursdays, when he was closed, and do my cremations then. Unfortunately, Earl died on a Sunday, his body was received on Monday, and his service was Wednesday; one day before cremation day. I explained to Widow Mary that I had a complication and offered five pounds of free Bar-B-Q from Joe's if she would go ahead with the service and pick the ashes up on Friday. She was delighted with the free offer and agreed to do so.

It was a week later before Mary returned for Earl's cremains, and the Mary that walked into the Emporium that day was not the same widow that left on Wednesday the week before. Her long, blond wig cascaded in curls all the way to her rib cage and bounced as she walked, occasionally brushing across the over-sized breasts that were half revealed in the V of the mini-skirt dress, whose shortness also revealed shapely thighs. I could not believe how she had transformed herself from the beautiful frail person she was into this something less of a woman and, at first, thought she must be punishing herself with grief. Mary placed her manicured hand on my shoulder and whispered in my ear, "Willie, dear, do you think you could keep Earl's ashes for a few more days? I have

planned a trip to the beach and Earl never liked the beach, so I thought I'd pick him up when I got back." I nodded in agreement and watched her promenade out of sight, knowing I would never see her again and that poor Earl was now mine to care for.

After a month, I moved Earl from the urn to a cigar box and slid him under the bed of the guest room. I had a difficult time understanding Mary's actions, but the rumor was that the motel bill had come in and it was occupancy for two. Earl had his heart attack in the arms of another woman and that explained why Earl's undershorts were on backward when he arrived. The woman had evidentially dressed him before calling 911. Had she not taken the time to do this, Earl might have lived to die another day.

Earl's would turn out to be one of many future abandoned cremains. I guess it is easier to leave a box of ashes than it is a full corpse, although I have had a few of those abandoned as well. Between the vagabonds, abandoned spouses, last living survivor, and unpaid repossessed cremations I was collecting more than I could store and, within a short time, had filled up the clothing closet and every casket had an urn stored in it. So, what was a proprietor to do? Building a separate room was a solution but not the final answer because in my long life I have learned that you will always need just one more room.

At one time, I launched my Rent-A-Cadaver program so people could have that fourth person at the bridge table, the person who will patiently listen without interrupting, or that movie night date that would not eat all of the popcorn or drink all the soda, but that ended when some renters took their rentals to the rifle range to use as targets. Patching the holes was way too time consuming and costly. However, something similar might work here. Ever wanted an Uncle Fred? Now you could have one with my Adopt-A-Cremains program. Just take him home, sit him on your mantle, and make up stories about him to impress your company like you do with all those souvenir plates you buy at yard sales. It was a successful program. The Cremains have a home, the people a beloved and famous uncle, and I have empty coffins and my clothing room back. Definitely a win-win-win situation.

So, now I have time to spend with the cadavers and to entertain them with my bizarre magic. Of course, to the Dead, there is not too much that is bizarre, but they still smile and watch intently; sort of a captive audience you might say. I would be glad to show you one of their favorites, if you would like. Since it is a parlor effect, you will have to come with me into the parlor.

The Performance:

"I would like to give credit for this magic effect I am about to do, but like the names of the many cadavers over the years, I no longer remember where I learned this illusion. I do know it plays well at both wakes and funerals, especially for cremations. I call this, 'Smokin' Hot Body.' Bet you thought the title was about Mary, did you not? Well, in magic, as in death, nothing is really as it appears.

"One of the growing thoughts is that death is the final destination. As modern, scientific minded people, we buy into this misconception because we lay our loved ones to rest and see them no more."

(Pick up the pack of papers and open the tab, opening the lid and closing it as if it were a coffin.)

"We deny that there are more things that are anonyms than things that are known. Death is one of those mysteries of life we fool ourselves with, pretending we understand. Part of that is because we make assumptions based upon our ego-centeredness. For example, we say when someone dies that they pass from life to death, but what if death in our experience is actually a birthing from death into life? That we, the Living, are the actual Dead."

(Remove a sheet from the packet, which is the flash paper, and place the packet down. Display the piece of flash paper for a moment and keep it moving slowly.)

"If your kids are rolling their own, it is not cigarettes; these papers are not cheap."

(This statement is important because it establishes that what you are holding is what should be in the pack without stating it or directing suspicion toward it. Tear the paper into the four parts).

"Upon our death, the veil is rent and we think it is over, that there is no way that such a loss can be repaired."

(Move the papers around a bit between thumb and forefinger to verify they are torn apart. Roll them into a ball and stick the pin into them to hold them together. Be careful not to stick yourself.)

"So we bind up the body and put it away."

(Hold the end of the pin and display the ball of paper at the opposite end.)

“But, what happens then? We do not know.”

((Pick up the lighter or move toward the open fire source.))

“There are transforming forces in nature we do not understand. Fire can warm you on a cold night but it can also burn you. It can heat your coffee or melt the ice in your tea. It can transform water through its forms of ice to water to steam. Each transformation is a mystery. What if there were such a transforming power in death?”

(Light the ball of paper on the end of the pin and, after a flash of fire, a ball of paper is still seen impaled to the end of the pin. Have a spectator remove the paper or you can do so yourself and open it up).

“Who knows what restoration or healing comes through death. Although still bearing the marks of the trials of life before it, it remains intact and whole.”

The Secret:

If you have a real Voodoo pin, there is no secret but for the rest of you it can be done this way:

A pack of 1 ½ inch cigarette rolling papers. I like the JOB brand the best.



A pack of flash paper close to the same size. If you can only get the sheets you can cut them.

A long hat pin or needle point skewer.

A cigarette lighter or other source of fire such as a candle or match.

The ability to tell a story, which is more important than all the props because without this skill it is just a cheap trick and not a performance.

Preparation:

Carefully open the pack of rolling papers and remove the content. Remove the staple from the pack of flash paper and separate the pages. Fold the flash paper pages in half



longwise and interleaf them with the rolling papers so that every other paper is a flash paper. You will only be able to do about half the pack of rolling papers. Place this



prepared pack of papers back into the package and the first paper sticking out should be a normal rolling paper.

If anyone opened the package it would look like a regular pack of rollers. Gather your materials, get your storyline together, and you are ready to perform.

Effect:

Just before you are to perform, and out of sight of the spectator, open the rolling paper tab and remove one rolling paper. When you pull it out, the flash paper under it takes its place in the slot. Close the tab.

Roll this paper into a tight ball and thumb or finger palm it where it is not visible. If done properly, it will not hamper your dexterity.



As you are telling your story you present the pack of cigarette rolling papers and remove a sheet, which is flash paper but only you know that.



Tear it in half, then half again, forming four pieces. Show these as distinctly torn pieces then group them together and, in the process of forming them into a ball, wrap them around the palmed ball previously rolled earlier.

Pin the ball together with the hat pin or skewer and show the ball of paper on the end of the pin. It is not necessary to push the pin all the way through the ball but only enough to impale everything on the point of the pin. The ball will look a bit disheveled and that is what you want. Neatness is not the goal.



Hold the pin by the opposite end and at the appropriate time (don't be in a hurry) light the ball and the flash paper will burn off rapidly, leaving only the rolling paper in a ball on the end of the pin.





Give it a moment to cool and let the spectator remove the ball and unwrap it to show it whole.



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The next issue of Top Hat is due out the 15th of July. If you are interested in submitting an article for publication please direct your inquiry to tophatv2@gmail.com - the deadline for submissions is the 30th June.

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



PARTING SHOT:

You'll learn more in front of an audience than all the advice you'll get in a forum. Presentation really comes down to how an effect sits on you, and you alone. So, by getting in front of an audience and always looking for the highs and lows, you'll get rid of the lows and keep the highs. The routine should get better in some little way, each and every time you do it.



-Michael Jay-