



MagicBunny.co.uk

TopHat

May 2004 - Edition 26

May's TopHat ezine is full of interesting and extremely well-written articles by our contributors from MagicBunny. In Nigel Shelton's column, you'll find statistics showing the progress of MagicBunny over the past few months. These figures are reassuring and prove that the popularity of the site is growing rapidly. You'll find that Michael Jay's returning column (welcome back Mike!) is full of his usual thoughtful comments and this month he tips the secret of an excellent impromptu match effect, following his recent 'fire' articles.

From Argentina, Daniel de Urquiza brings to us another routine, this time utilising a stacked deck. Do not underestimate the power of these setups: this effect looks like a real miracle. Next, Michael Saint-Louis puts his "Let's Build Magic" series on hold to talk to us about Prince (yes, the singer!) Don't ask... just read.

Finally, Craig Browning's 'bizarre' series "Spirits Amongst Us" continues this month with Part 4 and he gives more presentation tips for a séance-type routine.

Enjoy...

~Jon Snoops~
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Contents

Every issue of the TOP HAT contains original effects and articles written by readers and members of MagicBunny.co.uk. If you have a submission, please email TopHat@magicbunny.co.uk

MAGIC NEWS: *"The Latest From MagicBunny"* by Nigel Shelton

MAGIC ARTICLE: *"From the Desk of Michael Jay: Getting Back to Business "* by Michael Jay

MAGIC EFFECT: *"Argentinean Stacked Transposition"* by Daniel de Urquiza

MAGIC ARTICLE: *"Thoughts From Mid-West America"* by Michael Saint Louis

MAGIC ARTICLE: *"Spirits Amongst Us Part 4"* by P. Craig Browning

The Latest From MagicBunny

The Latest From MagicBunny

Website News

By Nigel Shelton



Many of you may already be familiar with the concept of TV ratings and the importance that television channels and advertising agencies place on these figures. Thousands of willing volunteers accept responsibility for the acquisition of some form of monitoring device and this data is automatically fed back to a collating body. From these figures, television shows are allocated ratings that correspond roughly to an estimation of the number of people who watch these programmes. The figures published in weekly newspapers and magazines are the result of this unobtrusive data collection and, from these, different bodies are able to gauge the success or failure of any appropriate television programme.

You may not be aware that such data collection occurs online too. One popular example of this can be found at the following site:

<http://www.alexa.com>

Alexa was founded in 1996 and since then over seven million Internet users have downloaded the relevant software that allows Alexa to collect and collate their surfing habits. These users are given the use of a special toolbar that enhances their Internet navigation and, in return for this, Alexa is able to collect data regarding the sites that these people visit. From this information Internet sites may be allocated a rough rating, giving users some indication of their popularity.

At the time of writing this article, www.yahoo.com, www.msn.com and www.google.com have taken the top three global Internet positions. It was a long time private challenge that www.magicbunny.co.uk should enter the top one million Internet sites and, at the end of January 2004, this target was achieved – Magic Bunny achieving an approximate 980 000th rating. Despite all of the inaccuracies of this form of data collection, it was a very proud moment when Magic Bunny crept into the top one million Internet sites, even though this position was not maintained for long and the ratings fell again the following week.

Since February 2004, the Magic Bunny ratings have continued to climb week after week. In February we gained a 937 404 rating and then since then we have slowly climbed week by week through 700 000, 600 00, 300 00 to our current position of 258 569 (Thursday 5th May 2004) Whether or not we are able to continue to climb or even consolidate our hold on this chart is irrelevant. It is quite an achievement that a small, UK-based, independent, specialised Internet site is able to make such a dramatic climb over a sustained period of time to exceed the ratings of many other major commercial sites. To be honest, I can never foresee a time when Magic Bunny is able to compete with the clout of major commercial Internet sites but it is very satisfying indeed to know that we have been able to hold our own in the fierce battle of Internet ratings. Hopefully, since writing this article, our position will not have changed dramatically and you may be able to view our most recent figures by visiting the following link:

<http://www.alexa.com/data/details/?url=magicbunny.co.uk>

If you do happen to spend time glancing at this link, please do feel free to add further reviews or ratings to the site's profile and leave your mark upon this link. Regardless of whether you are able to do this or not, I would like to thank you for helping to make Magic Bunny such a popular site and able to hold its own in the face of competition from other contenders.

By Nigel Shelton

Getting Back to Business

From the Desk of Michael Jay

Getting Back to Business

By Michael Jay

PART I

Well, it's been 4 issues since I've had the chance to work on an article for Top Hat. I'm pleased to say that I'm not only back, but I'm happy to be back. I hope that all of my readers have remained well and that everything in your lives has been good to you. I know things have been rough in my neck of the woods, but my magic business is picking up and slowly but surely I'm on the road to becoming a full pro.

A great deal has happened since I've had the chance to sit down and write a full column. For those who've been watching, I have been able to keep up with my Visions articles. I get a lot of e-mails regarding my controversial stance on many ideas and topics and I thoroughly enjoy what readers have to say, both the good and the bad, in regards to my view point and opinions. I seem to get equal mail telling me that I'm right on track and telling me to go and take a flying leap. I love it all!

The library at MB, which I've worked so hard to make a worthwhile forum, has grown by leaps and bounds over the last few months. My thanks to all who've contributed to that area of our forums and the interesting ideas that you've all contributed to the library. I have some big ideas in the works for our library and you'll be seeing some of that very soon.

Also, I'd like to thank the regular contributors to Top Hat. Peter Marucci, Michael Saint Louis, of course Nigel Shelton, our fearless leader and, more recently, Daniel de Urquiza. Along with the infrequent contributions of other members, these gentlemen listed above have done an excellent job in ensuring the continued success of our e-zine and they all have my respect and admiration. Thank you all - not only for your continued support, but also for giving me some of the best and highest quality reading on magic in our industry.

Furthermore, I'd like to thank all of our members, who've contributed and continue to contribute to the regular forums. I don't know if any of the readers realize just how important the simple day to day posts are in the continued success of Magic Bunny. All of you, from the beginning members to the venerable contributors to the forums in general, are responsible for MB staying alive on the internet. While the forums are financially seen to with private funds, none of this would be possible, or viable, without everyone's continued support and input. I've not been keeping up with the "Introductions" forum, simply because of time constraints, but you'll notice that I'm in there now and welcoming our newest members, who are the life blood of our forums. So, anyone who's introduced themselves in the past few months, whom I've not been able to welcome, I say to you, "Welcome to our forums. Enjoy. Make them your home and you'll not be let down." Thank you all!

Lastly, I'd like to invite all of our members to submit articles for publication to Top Hat. Over and over I've dealt with members who have submitted applications to the restricted areas. Some of them have been with us for almost a year before actually applying for access. One thread that binds them all is the statement, "I would have applied earlier, but I felt that I wasn't worthy." This also seems to be the thread that binds those members who would contribute to Top Hat, but feel that they don't have anything to contribute. Let me tell you all something...I want to read about the trials and tribulations of the beginning magicians. I want to read ideas and insights from guys and gals who aren't jaded by 30 years of working this gig for audiences. I want to know what you younger folks are facing. I want to read refreshing new ideas and thoughts. And, if you write an article and someone puts it down, you tell me and I'll tell the critics to go and get bent. You have my word on that! Aspiring magic writers and the fringe members who feel unworthy of the restricted area, I have one thing to say to you all, "You are worthy, you are important, you are the spice of our industry and don't ever forget that." Never be afraid to apply to the restricted area or share your ideas and insights with all of us in Top Hat. Please.

Getting Back to Business (cont.)

So, without further ado and boredom, I give to you:

PART II

In my last article (Issue 21 - yea, a while back!) I promised to let you in on some wooden match (or, kitchen match) magic. So, if you don't have a book of matches (the paper, safety matches) but you can lay your hands on a box of matches (which can be found in many houses), then this is for you!

Effect: The magician removes two wooden matches from the box and explains that wood has a relatively unknown property. Wood has the ability to pass through other wood, as if the molecules were simply loose enough to afford this "supernatural" effect. The magician proceeds to break the heads off of each match, then hold them between first finger and thumb, one in the right hand, the other in the left. The match shafts are held in such a way as to make two rings, one ring with the right hand and one ring with the left, by holding the shafts end for end using the first finger and thumb of each hand (the tip of one side pressed firmly in the middle of the thumb's pad and the other firmly in the center of the finger's pad).

The magician explains that under normal circumstances, the two pieces should not be able to pass, one through the other. As if to drive the point home, he taps the two pieces of match together, showing that they are solidly held between his finger and thumb tips. However, the molecules of the wood are not "normal," at least not normal as we understand it.

The performer draws one hand back and brings the match shaft down sharp and hard onto the other. The match penetrates right through, linking the right hand to the left hand! "As you can see, simple and unknown natural laws can look just like magic! You see, these two pieces and now linked together and shouldn't be able to come apart," explains the magician. Again, to drive the point home, the magician taps the shafts against each other again. Suddenly, he pulls up sharp and hard and the linked hands are now free of each other. The match shafts never break, nor move from the fingers.

Explanation: This effect can be found on Michael Ammar's video, "Ice Breakers." Prior to that it was published by Bill Tarr in, "Now You See It, Now You Don't." This particular effect is one that crediting its original author would be next to impossible, since this could easily have been achieved by a cave man with a couple of twigs!

Also, you don't need to specifically break off the match heads to achieve the effect. However, you'll find that the method is more easily facilitated by breaking the heads off.

To link the "rings" that you've made with your finger, thumb and match shaft, press the shaft held in your right hand (or left hand, whichever is more comfortable for you) tightly using the finger and thumb. The broken part of the match should be at the middle of your first finger's pad. You'll find that you can now separate your finger and thumb and the match shaft will remain stuck to your finger's pad. This small space that you now have between the thumb and the match shaft allows you to link the "rings."

You'll find that when you come down sharp and hard, opening the space between the thumb and shaft, the larger motion (coming down sharp and hard) will cover the smaller motion (the separation of the match and the thumb). Practice doing this for a while, since you'll find that when you first get started doing this, you are going to hit the match shafts together, which will send the one match flying. Of course, you want to avoid doing this during the performance, since you will look pretty dumb having to pick the match shaft up off the floor and try again.

To get the rings unlinked, just do the same thing as above, only in reverse.

If you decide to do this without breaking off the heads of the matches, I suggest that you slightly dampen (use your tongue!) the pad of the first finger that will be doing the dirty work. The match head will stick a bit better against the whetted pad of the finger.

Creative Thinking: Work out a patter that fits your performance. You don't need to follow the patter line that is given above. If you have your own box of matches on you, you can explain that you picked the

Getting Back to Business (cont.)

matches up from a wizard and that they have special qualities, imbued upon them by that wizard. Or that you got them at the magic shop.

Of course, such a simplistic approach may be deemed unsuitable, especially by the bizarre performers out there. This presentation could be morphed into the linking of two lives through marriage and the matches used in reference to the trial by fire (that being time spent together prior to the marriage). The secret here is simply spending some time and doing some creative thinking.

Also, don't be afraid to work out an in depth presentation prior to doing this in an impromptu setting. As an example, you may soon be attending a church function. Such a presentation could involve how God links our lives together. Always be prepared and when called upon in an impromptu environment, you will look like a great magician, rather than a semi-okay one! Again, the key here is creative thinking.

Good luck to you all and thank you for reading.

By Michael Jay

Argentinean Stacked Transposition

Argentinean Stacked Transposition

Miracles with a stacked deck

By Daniel de Urquiza

Recently, I've been studying stacked deck magic. My favourite order is the Supermnemonica, from Juan Tamariz, although I'm familiar with the Aronson Stack, The Stebbins order and the Nikola Card System. From Tome I, page 198, Note 2, of the "Sinfonma en Mnemonica Mayor" de Tamariz, I've got the inspiration for the following effect. It's good, it's doable, it's strong. In a word, it's magic, and I have the feeling that you are going to enjoy it, as much I do.

EFFECT:

Magician takes the joker from the deck, and proceeds to place it face up on top of the deck. He/she asks the spectator to name out loud any card. The spectator does it. After the naming, the magician places the joker, face down, on the spectator extended hand. The performer shows turns face up the top of the deck, thus proving that the joker is in the hand, while asking again the name of the named card again. Immediately after the naming of the card, the indifferent card on top of the deck visually changes into the joker. Spectator turns over the card in his/her hand, only to find the named card. The joker can be signed.

METHOD:

Any stack will do it.
Have your stacked deck face down, dealer's grip in your hand.

Place a face up joker on top of the deck, while asking a spectator to name a card (any card...). Let's say he/she says 6C. Estimate and cut the 6C to bottom, keeping the joker on top. To achieve this, you must simply get a break at the named card, and perform a slip cut; which will render you the desired result. The joker will be the 'slipped' card, and by cutting to the break, you'll get the named card to the bottom.

To make this cut 'psychologically invisible' (Max Maven) you should be asking the spectator if he/she has a permanent marker with him/her, in a tongue-in-cheek manner, or something along those lines, causing the spectator to at least smirk. You comment that it's funny she/he doesn't have a permanent marker, because

Argentinean Stacked Transposition (cont.)

you always have one with you. By now, your estimation and slip cut should be over. Show the marker, and ask the spectator to sign the face up joker.

Ask the spectator to extend his/her hand, palm up to you. Bottom deal in his/her hand the named card, apparently the joker.

As I helped you to conceal the estimation, I will help you now to conceal your (our) bad bottom dealing, so stop complaining about the bottom deal, I can hear you from Buenos Aires.

The idea is to apply the 'change of time' from Erdnase. It is wonderfully exemplified by Persi Diaconis at the introduction to Revelations, with an effect from Jennings, that has a false deal in a similar situation.

Jennings and Diaconis suggest asking a question. I suggest that you should give an 'instruction.' So: tell the spectator: "Ok, now please extend your hand. Like this, that's it. Now, put it a little lower, so everybody can see...Thank you." When the spectator extends his/her hand, approach the deck, and prepare to do your bottom deal. When saying "a little lower," do the false deal, and WAIT, there, with the face down card, to the spectator to do it. Thank him/her. Place the card. You are done.

Continue by taking a step or two backwards, and do a double lift of the top two cards, showing the face of an indifferent card. Let the double fall squared with the rest of the deck.

Ask, as if you have forgotten it: "Which card did you name?"

Do now any visual change you know. The obvious choice would be the first Erdnase Color Change, explained at Expert at the Card Table. There are several both in print and in video you could choose from. See the ACR from Bill Malone on the loose, Video I, there are several changes you could use.

The indifferent card suddenly, visually, and openly changes into the signed joker.

The spectator is holding his/her named card.

A miracle.

To reorder, simply withdraw the joker, add the named card, cut to your natural order. You are ready to continue baffling people with your stacked deck.

ON THE ESTIMATION:

If you miss your cut, and cut the named card to top, it will be behind the face up joker. Proceed equally, but instead of bottom dealing, second deal the named card to the spectator hand.

To know about the certainty of your cut, you should be able to do at least one decent glimpse of the bottom card. The glimpse while squaring it's explained at Giobbi's Card College. Several interesting glimpses are explained at Expert Card Technique, from Hugard and Braue, and of course, at "Sinfonma en Mnemonica Mayor" de Juan Tamariz.

Finally, the misdirection to do the slip cut, while important, it's not that essential. Do your slip cut nonchalantly, with an open manner. It would be taken as a mere toying with the cards. Add some misdirection to it, and I guarantee absolute invisibility. The use of a joker is good to suggest off the beaten path patter lines, it has a special magical quality about it, and lets your stack complete.

By Daniel de Urquiza

Thoughts From Mid-West America

Thoughts From Mid-West America

Prince and 'It'

By Michael Saint-Louis

His name is Prince, and he is funky. I know you have heard of him, and you probably have an opinion of him. No matter what that is, believe this: you, as a magician, can learn from him.

In case you haven't guessed, I am shelving the magic building this month to talk about Prince. Next month I'll write about how to pull a wand out of your butt or something, I promise. But this month my wife gave me Prince tickets. It was our fifth anniversary a couple of weeks ago. She has been complaining that we don't get out as much as we used to (we used to not have children) so I got her a ticket package for a bunch of 'New Country' concerts I do not want to see. Maybe it's the fact that 'New Country' has more in common with 80's hair-metal power ballads than it does 'Classic Country,' maybe it's just all those wanna-be cowboys make my Indian ass a little too nervous, but I will not enjoy any of those shows. She got me tickets to Prince, whom she can't stand. Way before we ever went out, when we were managing the multi-plex down the street she gave me the double CD Prince greatest hits set that her record club accidentally sent her and then insisted she keep for free because she disliked Prince so much she didn't even want his free CDs. That's some powerful dislike. It has always given me secret pleasure to force her to listen to those CDs now that we are married and they are again her property (well, half hers). So in a wacky O. Henry moment we gave each other gifts that sentenced each of us to something we were dreading for the benefit of the other.

But she loved the Prince show.

My first big arena concert was Prince back in the day during his Purple Rain Tour. I was in junior high (that's about 13 years old) but I had seen many shows ranging from small punk acts to Elton John and the Beach Boys (both at outdoor festivals). Prince blew them all away. Fast forward twenty years and I have seen everyone from Agnostic Front and Murphy's Law to The Temps, The Tops and Ray Charles. I've seen guys mail in their performances, guys who were having a good time and guys too wasted or old to really know what was going on. Very few have had what Prince has. Johnny Cash had it. Sinatra had flashes of it, but he was old and tired by the time I saw him. Ozzy Osbourne has it. Now that's a collection, eh? It's like a bad joke: what do Johnny cash, Prince and Ozzy Osbourne have in common? It.

What is It? I'm not sure exactly but I think it is best summed up as sincerity. All these guys perform as if nothing could make them happier while trying to make sure everyone has the best time possible and seeming like they feel like the luckiest person on Earth. They each have (or had) a sincerity to their performances and almost nothing else in common. After all, they performed three different genres, were born of three different generations and split two races and two nationalities between the three of them. Ozzy is a mad man, running around the giant amphitheater stage blasting the front row and his band with a giant water gun. Prince, on the other hand, is a perfectionist who probably scripts his shows down to the second to seem spontaneous. And Johnny Cash just rolled along through his show telling stories and jokes while faulty wires were or broken guitar strings were changed. But at the end of the night, when each of the three of them thanked the audience for coming the audience believed that they really meant it. And I really think they did.

There are probably more similarities between these men than you would expect. I believe they each grew up modestly and were each touched by drugs and alcohol, for example. But that could apply to dozens of others I have seen and heard who don't have it. Most performers love what they do at some point. These guys with it seem to love what they do and love the audience for letting them do it. Once that is there, it doesn't matter if you have planned out every detail of the night or let it all come out naturally because both ways manage to reflect the love and respect you have for the people sitting in front of you.

Earlier I said that all performers could learn from Prince. Maybe they can't; maybe they can just aspire to be more like him.... I don't know. I do know that I don't love to perform the way that Cash or Osbourne or Prince does and that is why I didn't pursue magic as a career when I could have. I also know that you don't have to have it to be able to put on a really good show. Some of my favorites (like Reverend Horton Heat and Social Distortion) don't have it; maybe the old punk if you don't like it go XXX yourself gets in the way.

Thoughts From Mid-West America (cont.)

But, and this is probably the real lesson to be learned, if you don't have it, why not? Do you want to do the best you can every show, every audience regardless of the fee or conditions or do you just pay lip service to the idea? Do you thank the Creator everyday and night for being able to perform? Do you feel a debt of gratitude to everyone who takes a moment to watch you? Are you still having fun and feeling like the luckiest guy in the world because you are performing?

Prince is. Ozzy is. And Johnny was (he was cutting a new album up to the last few days of his life). If you aren't, can you fix that? Don't you at least owe it to yourself and everyone who has taken time out of their lives to devote to watching you to try? Maybe you have it, maybe you don't and can't and never will have it. I don't know. But I think you should at least try to find it.

By Michael Saint-Louis

Spirits Amongst Us Part 4

Spirits Amongst Us

Part IV of Series

P. Craig Browning

The ZARKAMORTA routine in Corinda has become our point of focus in this series. Our previous article lending insight on the idea of *Conversational Presentation* as well as the first phase of this particular act; the Cleansing of the circle; a rite that is quite common in the way of spiritualistic work, which helps to build suspense when it comes to the over-all presentation.

This month our focus centers on the next "need" when it comes to a spiritual séance type setting e.g. opening the doorway between the world of the living and the realm of the dead.

Needless to say there's a plethora of routines that fit this niche nicely. My offering taking the idea of ZARKAMORTA into a more personable point of experience for guests via a Living & Dead test. My personal penchant for the macabre and morose lending to us yet another subtle bit of potent psychological application. In this instance, our words or story line lay the foundation for things to come.

Before exploring said reality I feel that a few points should be brought forward on the issue of the L&D type routines. Firstly, 95% of them stink! Secondly, they rarely host any logical reason to exist in an act, outside of absorbing time and delivering yet one more manifestation that proves the medium's skill. Nonetheless, there are ways of employing this kind of demonstration as well as semi-logical reasons to explain why it is to be done; particularly, group focus.

One method I have used for the L&D involved *Dissolvo Paper*, a wonderful substance Docc Hilford introduced me to many years ago. As the name implies, this unique Rice Paper substance quickly dissolves when placed into slightly warmed water. My application being a stack of a dozen or so squares of paper (billet size) onto which guests jotted the names of living friends & relatives. One person in the group being asked to jot the name of a deceased individual – the person the group wishes to focus upon for the Séance. The idea being that if said individual was willing to commune with the living, it would be revealed via this test. Long story short, all the papers dissolve mysteriously within the urn used, except for one, which floats to the surface. Of course, that one slip bares the name of the deceased.

Though it should be glaringly obvious, the one slip that remains is not Dissolvo but rather a lightweight paper that matches the texture and density of the Dissolvo. I usually place this about 3-5 slips down from

Spirits Amongst Us Part 4 (cont.)

the top of the stack of billets being used, forcing it into the hand of the person chosen to write the dead person's name when I distribute the slips. It's just that simple.

In the case at hand however, my objective is to stress the idea of horror and terror. The name used in the test denotes someone either known to a member of the group or an historic personage that would obviously be visiting the deeper infernos of hell. Alternatively the issue of fire could pertain to the manner by which the person died i.e. a house fire or some such event.

You explain to the group (as you pass out the slips) how yesteryear mediums were able to make contact with an available spirit via a L&D test. In the course of your explanation you comment on how one the slips just passed out, has a black spot on it and whoever receives that mark, must write the name of the person you've been discussing (who died the violent death or lived a very violent & evil life.) You likewise explain why the slips are folded into quarters, reflecting briefly on how some charlatans could manipulate these little packets, so as to gain insight as to what was written within.

Once everyone has jotted down their name and folded the slips, they are piled into the center of the table or collected on a plate/tray. At this point you introduce a small sheet of foil and in so doing, act a bit flustered, asking folks to take back a slip whilst you retain one for the sake of demonstration (you actually push the pile back, separating some of the slips so as to redistribute them.) You follow this action by passing around a small stack of foil slips, similar to the one you are holding. Then proceed to show everyone how to enclose the billet with the foil "so as to prevent anyone from knowing the information written within"

While this is going on, you remove a small vile from your pocket. The label upon the bottle reads "Holy Water". You may then use a borrowed Q-Tip (or one you brought with you) to dip into the Holy Water and "bless" each of the slips, distributing them to each member of the group, telling them to focus on the name of the deceased only.

Within a matter of a minute or two one member of the group will begin to get very excited, complaining that the slip in their hand is getting very hot. At about the same time some will hear a light "click" upon the table, only to discover a small bead of molten glass.

The apparition of the molten glass bead allows you to take this particular L&D routine a step further, incorporating some spirit writing. The inclusion of which is not my idea but a routine inspired by Max Maven several years ago, employing the Ruperts' Pearl (molten glass bead), a Glorpy styled hank, and some kind of device onto which spirit writing can be manifested. In the past I've used everything from Rick Maue's TOPANCADMO to a small version of my own Spirit Slate system. I do not recommend using the older, more traditional form of Spirit Slate or anything that looks too "propish".

By creating a second phase to this routine, you are able to build a greater sense of suspense. Too, you change the feel of the L&D revelation, adding a hint more mystery (as well as entertainment value) to your routine. As to how you use the Glass Bead to segue into this phase and what you use for the spirit message to appear on, is really up to you. This is but a suggestion to help you get those creative juices flowing...

In Max's handling the device onto which the message will be recorded, is wrapped into a "borrowed" handkerchief (Glorpy). Prior to this he's shown how unbreakable the molten glass bead is – it's impossible to destroy! You hit it with a hammer and do all manner of action to sustain this fact. You then place it into the same hank your "device" and pencil will be placed into. You ask for two or three volunteers to assist you in touching the edges of the hank and calling upon the power's that be... slowly, the hank is seen to raise into the air. Instantly you react, opening the kerchief to reveal a fine glass powder from where the glass bead exploded... you then reveal the spirit message written upon the card/slate or *whathaveyou*.

Now, if you are holding to the tale supporting the idea that your invited spirit died in a tragic home fire, you may find it convenient to have articles from that tragedy that can be incorporated into this and other parts of your Séance routine. Several years ago I shared an idea with members of the Shadow Network in which I used an old slate roof shingle as a spirit slate. Given this theme concept, the use of a piece of roofing shingle that survived the horrible fire, only makes sense. As to how the spirit message appears on this completely un gimmicked item is also, simple. Ironically, it is a method that's been highly ignored, if not forgotten over the years. Corinda, I believe, making reference to the idea of using a septic pencil. However,

Spirits Amongst Us Part 4 (cont.)

Daytona Magic offers "Ghost Chalk" at around \$8.00 a stick that's superior. Long story short, this stuff allows you to pre-set the slate with a message yet, when you wipe it off in performance, with a damp cloth, the slate seems to be completely clean – the writing materializing on its own, as the "wet" evaporates.

One of my favorite messages for this part of the routine, reads "*Look Out The Window*" or something along those lines. Said command guiding the audience to notice a message within the condensation on the glass. This being done via a wonderful substance sold as "Ghost Glass". Though it does involve some serious pre-show preparation, the audience reaction is priceless!

The message delivered must ultimately confirm the identity of the person named on the Dead slip. I prefer doing this in a way that gives me an "out" in that you do sometimes encounter those individuals within your gathered group, that don't want to cooperate and write the name of the person being discussed, that fits the tragedy in question. I've had this happen and thus, the reason for all this extra information.

In the first phase of this routine all the billets are placed into a pile in the center of the table. The Dead slip itself, marked so that you can easily identify it and steal it out – swapping it for a dummy as you demonstrate the action of wrapping the foil envelope. Given the tons of misdirection built into this routine, you have all the time in the world to cop your read and insure that the right name is on the slip. Secondly, if the wrong information is on the slip you gain sufficient time to change course and cover your butt. This being done either through your acting as a channeler to make the reveal, stating something along the lines that, "*No, there's two... someone amongst us is thinking of another who has crossed over... I'm seeing ____ but the name upon the slip is _____*..." Alternately, you could quickly pocket write the new information and use something akin to TOPANCADMO to ring in the corrected information.

Granted, you will have to play around with your own story line and experiment with methods that work best for you, for covering this kind of situation. My only point being that you must be prepared for such potential circumstances.

Getting back to the routine... the glass bead, as I've stated, is nothing more than the classic Ruperts' Pearl which can be purchased from most of the established and reputable magic dealers about the world. I usually get mine from Hank Lee. I highly recommend that you buy these little ditties vs. attempting to make them yourself (the method for making them can be found in some High School physics books); the reason being, quality and dependability.

The Hot Slip is not a new idea but rather a twist to a great yesteryear bit of business that's seen recent revival. Admittedly I still do it the old way, employing a chemical substance that many consider to be very dangerous stuff – *Mercuric-Chloride*. Pay attention to that first word in the name! This stuff has suspended Mercury in it. You should make absolutely certain that you do not rub your eyes or other sensitive parts of your own body after handling – WASH YOUR HANDS ASAP! You may also offer the person holding the hot slip a cool washcloth so they can cool off their hand. This gesture adds to the idea that the slip was exceptionally hot and also allows the guest to wipe off what little chemical may get onto their hand.

The real secret to this particular sequence is the Q-Tip, which you retain in your right hand coat pocket. It is there that you have the vile of Mercuric-Chloride secured, so that you can dip one end of the cotton swap into it prior to removing said device for consecrating each slip with the Holy Water. The vile of Holy Water is simply a small ornate bottle filled with real tap water. As you place thee "blessings" onto each slip, you merely swap ends on the next to last slip, apply the Mercuric-Chloride and switch back to the water dipped end to bless the last slip. These actions are so subtle and unsuspected that they go completely unnoticed. Too, the entire handling leaves you "clean" should anyone get curious after the fact.

Some minor experimentation will teach you how much of a time delay you'll have before the key slip gets warm. This is the only critical point to the act I've outlined. You must learn to pace your patter and keep an eye on the person you know has the hot slip. The expressions on their face, the glances they make towards their hand as the heat becomes more pronounced, will tip you off as to when things are about to happen. This is when you flip the bead onto the table.

How?

Spirits Amongst Us Part 4 (cont.)

The bead is stolen when you replace the Holy Water in your pocket. You simply keep it available and ready to spring out from your fist, at the right time. It's like shooting marbles; the bead resting atop the thumb.

DO NOT PANIC if you over-shoot the table or can find the bead. This does happen. What I've found though, is that people recall the slight clicking sound it makes when it bounces across the table or a wood floor. In some cases it may be found after the event, in which case you have a nice follow-up that can be presented as a curiosity.

I hope that these insights prove helpful to those of your playing with the idea of creating a Séance type experience for your late summer and fall schedules.

Next month we'll get more into the nitty-gritty of the actual Séance. Until then...

By Craig Browning

Many thanks to this month's contributors. Please send articles to TopHat@magicbunny.co.uk for the 10th June for inclusion in next month's edition.

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