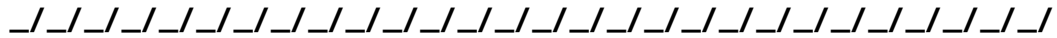


Magic Roadshow

January 20th, 2007 Issue# 63

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Hello All..

Welcome to the latest issue of the Magic Roadshow. If you are new to the Roadshow, then consider this a personal 'thank you' for taking the time to sign up for our publication. You can now put both your beverage and your feet on our coffee table, AND, play with the remote control...

Does it seem as if I'm using more and more video url's in the Roadshow? I am.. It's difficult to find nine or ten new magic sites every two weeks. New sites aren't being developed fast enough. After two and a half years of writing about magic on the web, I've managed to cover most of the major sites. I have the option of either repeating myself and publishing the same links again.. or publishing video links plus any new sites I run across. You know what they say.. " A picture is worth a thousand words".

I know some of you may not be able to access the video's, and I'm trying my best to come up with a solution. Sites like YouTube and Metacafe are not as family friendly as I would prefer. It's not that I'm prudish, there's little that surprises me, it's just that some of you are reading the Roadshow on systems that throws up a roadblock when you try to go to these sites to watch the videos. I'm thinking about embedding the video's on a page within my site and directing you there, and we'll see how the filters respond to that move.

I want to make everything as user friendly as possible. Did you notice that you can now download the Roadshow as a PDF file to facilitate those of you who like to print it out and read it later. Find the link in the text box on the left side of this page...

The last two weeks have been hectic. I spent last weekend in Columbia SC at the SCAM convention, visiting with friends like Henry and Helen Pettit, who graciously provide the Magic Roadshow with a table to advertise our newsletter, John Tudor, Chris Hage, Allen Young, Performer extraordinaire Mick Ayres, and my friend, and the #1 writer in all of magic, Inside Magic's Tim Quinlan.. the guy who's decreasingly smaller tail lights are all we can see through the Roadshow's windshield.. (<http://www.INSIDEMAGIC.com>)

All these outstanding hosts/magicians/performers/friends are directly responsible for making my visit to the SCAM convention the highlight of my year. Talent comes and goes, but these guys are forever...

Oh, the talent? All world class, all experts in their chosen field of magic.. Arthur Trace, Tim Sonfelt, Dan Sylvester (Sylvester the Jester), Luke Dancy, Paul W. Cummins, Jessica Reed, David Regal, and England's Mark Mason .. to mention a few. If you didn't learn a ton at this convention, then you went to the wrong hotel...

More later...

Then, this past Monday and Tuesday my wife was in the hospital for surgery, which meant I was in the hospital for two days as well... to keep her company. No internet connection put me a couple of days behind in publishing this newsletter. Fortunately, my wife's much better now, but we both are bleary eyed, sleep deprived, and on the verge of colds...

And how has your week been?

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One Year On - The story so far...

'Personal observations from my friend, Steve Owen, on the world of magic, performing, practice, and theory..'

May I take this opportunity to wish you all a Happy New year and as is common at this time of year, to further indulge myself by reflecting on my last 12 months as a magician (Yes Folks, I now call myself that!) I'd like to also take stock of what I have learnt so far on my magical journey and see how I can improve on this, in this forthcoming year.

For those of you who know, and for those who don't for that matter, it's been 365 days since I was shown the 'Ring and Chain' trick by my father. I quickly worked out how it was done by his insistence on showing me again and again. No one likes a show off.

Lesson one: never repeat a trick.

From that moment on, I've been hooked and this has sparked off something inside of me that has led me to pursue more than a passing interest in magic, spending long lonely hours with nothing other than a deck of cards for amusement and a DVD sent to me via the Internet and in a plain brown envelope. .

Prior to this I had no experience or interest in magic, So Happy Anniversary to me!

Here are my latest ramblings... Blame my father.

Much has changed in this time. I have spent the equivalent of a third world debt on effects, some I use, but most I don't. Someone once told me that you don't find the magic; the magic finds you. How true. I also have numerous DVDs, CD's and books. Not to mention the cost (albeit a comparable small one) on attending lectures and conventions. I think I am solely responsible for keeping a certain playing card manufacturer in business with the obscene amount of Bicycle stock that I have used and abused* along the way, and all in the pursuit of something you can't see.

*Mercury card fold and card warp for those with an inquisitive mind.

I have spent many an hour* practising the 'double' and controlling the card to the top or the bottom, double undercutting, and false cutting along the way. I play with an American Half Dollar constantly, which in the UK attracts undue attention, and no I haven't gone blind yet. I still can't palm it without it looking unnatural, and don't even get me started on invisible thread. That stuff is the spawn of the devil himself, and should be banished from whence it came, sealed in a lead box, and protected from the human race using kryptonite. Forever!

I have also had nine girlfriends during this time, but I don't think there is a connection between the two!

* Read MONTHS into that little admission

So what have I learnt so far and what have been highlights for me?

Well in terms of learning that is a difficult one. I am just at the start of a massive learning curve, which has many branches leading from it, and has fundamentals, which are very deep rooted, and are all as relevant and important as the next.

Yes I have learned a few card and coin tricks along the way, and various sleight of hand techniques and manipulations. I have learnt the very basics of audience direction, management and participation. Notice how I refrained from using the word misdirection, it has negative connotations to my mind. But probably the most significant thing I'm learning is that this is just the tip of a massive magical iceberg that we are sat upon, as many of you already know, and goes far deeper than I could have ever imagined. The more I learn about magic and performance, the more I realise that there is even more to learn. I probably spend more time now, reading about theory and performance and other peripheral subjects than I do learning a new effect. This includes articles on the business side of things by the way, and getting that all-important gig. I have also learnt not to use invisible thread.

In terms of highlights, there have been many for me, but three in particular stand out as the most influential and memorable and for various reasons. These are in addition to the four gigs I've done so far.

Firstly, must be my experience in my magic clubs close up competition around July time. This was a leap of faith for me, as I suffer badly from nerves, and hadn't been practising and learning for very long. However it turned out to be a great confidence booster for me and one of the best learning outcomes of my magical life. Yet, at the same time very amusing to those watching me getting it wrong, on every level.

Now, before some of you claim that that was either very foolhardy or very arrogant and bold of me, let me give you an insight into my thinking on this one...

Prior to this I had never performed in front of anyone other than my 10 year old son and my father, so I wanted to test myself with a wider audience and test some of the material that I was working with at that time. I needed to perform under the most difficult and yet realistic conditions available to me, so why not in front of some judges. So I chose the close up as my platform.

I think the term is Baptism of fire!

As I've mentioned previously in an article, I didn't win, no surprise there though. I shouldn't have confused one of the judge's borrowed £20 notes with the flash paper, but I digress. But winning wasn't the point. I wanted to experience what it was like to perform my magic* and to entertain* those people in doing so.

* I choose those two words loosely in my case.

So what did I actually learn for putting myself through at that well, my routine was one of the more technical ones, hard to believe I know, and I was poorly presented in jeans and a shirt. I was also the one who had prepared the least, not necessarily in terms of practice, but more in terms of setting up for my two ten minute performances. Everything that could have gone wrong did go wrong, including the production of four sponge balls. Now this might seem a mighty feat of manipulation for a newcomer and one the Mr Burger himself would have been proud of, (he produces 24) but I was only supposed to produce the one.

Failure to prepare means prepare to fail, as they say, but at least I got a laugh.

Now Joe, the guy who won, had the least technical routine of all, all self working to be exact, but gave the best entertainment/performance in the eyes of the judges and at least looked the part of a magician and therefore won, and deservedly so.

Lesson two: it is all about the overall experience not individual tricks.

The second highlight was seeing a lecture by a respected and very busy magician, Harry Robson (who has a very good, practical and none technical DVD out, which is available in the US by the way).

One of the things I learned from him was that it was ok to use short cuts in performing magic for the paying public. Prior to this I'd been caught up in the 'fooling other magicians' line of thinking to an extent, which is a drawback of joining a club in my opinion. Emphasis on club nights tends to be on technique and technicality rather than overall performance of an effect and entertainment. This is one area to watch in the future, as I think this could be very damaging to a potential performer. I'm glad I spotted that one in time. Other clubs take note!

Harry showed me one little aid that stood out and one that I have adopted and has subsequently changed my handling of cards, and given me more confidence in public. This revelation came for me at a time when I was fighting my conscience over sleight of hand and self working, which I'd mentioned in issue 50 and raised its ugly head again after the close up competition.

I was also hung up on the deception aspect of magic, the thought that I was deceiving people didn't sit well with me, and still doesn't for that matter. It showed in my handlings and my vocals. I wanted to do it all by sleight of hand, aka like a real magician, but wanted my conscience cleared in a way that can only be granted via the self working route. This was further confused by the fact that I was convinced, as many newcomers are, that the spectator knows what I'm doing, what I'm about to do and could see everything as plain as day, which in the case of the sponge balls, they did.

I can admit to you that I have spent many, many months working this one out in my head, and will continue to do so. You see I don't want to come across as someone who is blatantly fooling people, I know that is the nature of magic, but I have seen many magicians who view it as a challenge or competition to fool the public. I don't like this kind of approach or performance at all, and I don't want to fall into that trap.

My own father, I'm sad to say, was, and still is an early example of the, "I can do this you can't"

approach.

He is currently paying penance for this little indiscretion. I won't tell him how he once saw a magician put a coin into an empty wine bottle and then take it out again, and it's driving him mad. Knowledge is a powerful thing!

Lastly, my final highlight and probably the most enlightening, was attending a lecture by Michael Close here in the UK. This lecture more than anything else cemented thoughts that had been on my mind since I started learning about magic. Thoughts about performance; presentation and methodology. Which one to choose and more importantly which one defines ME.

I was very impressed to say the least with Mr Close's enormous attention to detail and his attitude. Everything had been given some thought and attention and been incorporated into his magic. No matter how small the detail, he had given it some thought.

Detail in how he dressed and presented himself, how he spoke. Detail in how he set the cards upon the table. Detail in how he stored his cards and props in his briefcase, and how he handled them with care and respect. That impressed me more than his effects, and that's not to disrespect his handlings by the way. I went to see how one of the world's top pros create magic and was given an insight to how he did this. I got more from what he didn't say, as much as what he did say; if that makes sense.

However he did say something that completely changed how I perform, something I had been pondering for a while...

I'll share this revelation with you dear readers, it's very simple and very, very obvious, but it had a profound effect on me, it settled my dilemma about the deception aspect of magic and how I deal with that and opened up magic for me.

He said this; 'I'll do whatever is necessary to make an effect work. If it means I have to carry four decks of cards for one trick' I'll carry four decks'

Right there and then, in that one sentence, he'd given me the green light I needed to use sleight of hand with self working effects, to use gaffed decks, gaffed coins and packet tricks and to use any method and advantage I could find to help my magic become better magic for the viewer, not me. I had been caught up in the 'must be sleight of hand' thinking and it was hindering my mental progress.

Believe me it was very dramatic at the time. I drove home that night and completely changed my view on how I performed magic.

Lesson three: it's not about what I think; it's about what the audience thinks. They shouldn't know the method.

So there we have it, my year in a nutshell. I've learned a lot and thought a lot, spent a lot and practiced know where near enough, but I've enjoyed the journey so far, albeit a short one. I have met some new people and made some new friends and enjoyed every minute of it, though I still don't know what NFW stands for. Ah well....

I'll leave you with an overview of my observations so far. They are by no means new or original I just wish to share them with you.

Observation number one: Look the part; people who are being entertained expect a certain standard of dress etiquette from performers. If you look the part, they'll think you are the part. A successful businessman dresses like a successful businessman. He doesn't carry his work in a plastic carrier bag. (Yes, I've seen magicians do that)

Observation number two: Prepare for the effect. I don't just mean learn the trick to perfection, but know where your next prop is in relation to your previous move. Fumbling around your pockets or pausing whilst you think of your next movement isn't conducive to a successful and fluid performance.

Attention to detail matters.

Observation number three: If you get the previous two points right it won't matter if the effect your doing is self working or as technical as a NASA spacecraft. Lay people don't even know or care, they want to be entertained and have their beliefs suspended for a while. That's magic.

Observation number four: Don't use invisible thread, ever!

I hope you all have learned as much as I have learned, and enjoyed your own personal journey so far, at whatever stage you're at.

May 2007 be a Great Year for You and your Magic..

Steve Owen

Oh, and by the way just in case some of you were wondering, do I still include the very first trick I ever learned in my small repertoire of effects? Well no! As I still can't get that bloody ring on that chain as good as my father can...

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Secrets of Street Magic - Video

Street Magic? It seems I've heard that term used somewhere...

We all have our own definition of Street Magic and what it encompasses and represents. Personally, I like to think of it more as an attitude than any set structure.

The producers of 'Secrets of Street Magic', first broadcast by FOX TV several years ago, think of Street Magic in terms of arm twists, impossible predictions, cigarettes thru quarters, and bringing flies back to life..

This David Blaine approach worked for David... so who am I to quibble?

If you want to view this resource, you're going to have to watch five different videos. I know, it sounds like alot, but in return you're going to have access to over thirty minutes of broadcast quality, free, street magic secrets ...

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iSbWbO0PFk4&mode=related&search=>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fkjs9p5nsw&mode=related&search=>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lsPGixE0W3E&mode=related&search=>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hqA_c8E5gCU&mode=related&search=

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=spfFahJXFSQ&mode=related&search=>

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Interview: The Amazing Kreskin

Yes, Kreskin is slightly older than the pyramids, but the guy has been around the block a time or two, and has learned a few invaluable secrets along the way. As a performer, Kreskin still awes audiences around the country on a regular basis. I read a review of one of his recent shows, written by a respected mentalist, and Kreskin is still doggin' 'em..

Read this interview I found with the Mental Master himself on MySpace..

<http://www.301url.com/kreskin>

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Coin Magic - Video

Look for coin magic to be the next 'big' thing in the ever changing world of magic. Yes, that's simply my opinion, and my opinion and \$2.95 will get you a cup of coffee at Starbucks..

If you're fairly new to coin magic then I honestly think you will enjoy this video. Learn the basics of the coin vanish, the retention vanish, clips, table vanishes, and coin bites.

This is one of those video's you may want to bookmark and refer back to from time to time, to remind you of how good you could be if only you practiced a little more often..

<http://www.301url.com/coinmagic>

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How to Produce Smoke from your Fingertips - Video

Wouldn't it be cool to be able to make smoke appear at your finger tips at will? OK, maybe not anytime at will, but anytime you're prepared. And this video will teach you what you need to do to be prepared.

Take a readily available substance, grind it up to a powder, put your thumb and forefinger in it, and as you rub these two fingers together smoke will appear from your finger tips.

I wish I had known this secret years ago...

<http://www.301url.com/smokevideo>

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Make a Pen Cap Vanish - Video

This is the very first vanish I learned. Actually, this was the first 'magic' I was paid to perform. Come to think of it.. I wasn't actually paid to perform, I was paid a whole dollar to reveal the 'secret' to an adult who saw me perform this simple miracle. I not only sold the secret, I gave him the gimmick and my performing tips as well..

Long before pulls and ravens, there was the good 'ol RB. What? You don't know what RB stands for..?

I learned this secret when I was maybe ten or eleven. My aunt was a truck broker, and while visiting her at a packing plant outside Mount Olive, North Carolina, I saw a truck driver vanish a safety pin right in front of my little eyes. I couldn't believe it. After watching the vanish several times, and never coming close to discovering the secret, I begged for a revelation..

The driver taught me the secret and I felt so special. Now.. I could actually do something that many adults couldn't figure out, and I reveled in my knowledge..

<http://www.301url.com/capvanish>

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Last year a Friend of mine told his friends he wanted to make his living as a magician... and they ALL laughed..

They're not laughing any more...

Friends.. 2007 is here, and there's NO EXCUSE for being a so-so magician. I honestly try to help each of you in any way I can when you write with your questions. But...

I have friends who are among the VERY BEST in the world. And they will show you things that are far removed from anything you've seen or experienced before...

Don't let other's laugh at YOUR dreams.

<http://www.301url.com/streetmagic>

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TikiMagic - Free Magic Videos (From our Archives..)

Here's four really nice video's detailing four different card tricks you can watch without downloading anything. You will need something like the free Windows Movie Player to view the videos. (link provided)..

Where Dit Go, Mind Merge, Don't Do It, and Conscientious Objector are each nice effects that don't require complicated sleights. Watch the performances by clicking on the images, then, learn the secret by clicking the links to the right of the images..

I've featured these tricks in Magic Roadshow in the past, but I feel they deserve to be watched again. If you folks are anything at all like me, you watch an effect, tell yourself you're going to learn it... and then forget about it..

I do that all the time. I've had the opportunity recently to sit and watch a couple of dvd's I purchased last year. A trick will play and I'm telling myself " hey, I was going to learn that last year..! "

Don't wait until I'm forced to run these tricks a third time...

<http://www.tikimagic.com/free.html>

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The Secrets of Mental Math Demo - Video

Watch Art Benjamin, Professor at Harvey Mudd College and Mathemagician, presenting "magic squares", just one of the concepts taught in his book. The Secrets of Mental Math. Art regularly performs his MathMagic act The Magic Castle in Hollywood and is a frequent speaker around the country. He also presented at this year's TED Conference in Monterey, California.

When properly performed, a magic square CAN be very entertaining. It's all in the presentation. If you don't believe it, watch Art perform...

<http://www.301url.com/mentalmath>

Create your Own Magic Square in an Instant - Video

You can instantly create your own magic square IF you know where to place four numbers. Yes, four numbers, properly placed, will give you a magic square that's identical to those of the pro's.

Now, you can look like a mental marvel, even if you can't balance your check book...

<http://www.301url.com/magicsquare>

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Simple Prediction

I remember one of the very first 'mentalism' effects I learned as a young neophyte; It was a 'prediction in the envelope' effect that was total simplicity. It's effects like this that inspire more complex and compelling effects from the many fertile minds in magic. It's those special 'little' moments that create mankind's truly startling theories and inventions. Who could have predicted that an apple falling from a tree would lead to the understanding of gravity. Or, a key and a kite would help unfold the secret of electricity.

Maybe a card in an envelope will help inspire mentalism's greatest effect...

Effect:

The magician gives the deck to a spectator and ask them to look at the faces of the cards to assure that they are all different. Then, the spectator is to shuffle the deck thoroughly. Once the deck is mixed, the spectator can leave it as it is, or look at the back of the cards and move one to the top of the deck.

The magician then places a small envelope - one that has been sitting to one side - on top of the deck. After the appropriate chatter, the magician ask the spectator to lift and open the envelope, remove the prediction inside, and read it aloud.

The spectator is then asked to turn over the top card of the deck, and the prediction and the top card are found to match.

Solution:

All that's required is for the magician to put a prediction in an envelope and remove that predicted card from the deck. The card is carefully kept out of sight, under the envelope on the table. When the magician lifts the envelope to place it on top of the deck, he also lifts the card and secretly places it on top of the deck, concealed from sight by the envelope.

Everything is totally self-working from this point forward. The prediction is in the envelope and the card matching the prediction in on top of the deck. The spectator, of course, thinks that he controlled the top card to that position.

All that remains is the reveal..

R.Carruth

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Erdnases' Expert at the Card Table - Download

If you're a new subscriber, you can download your free version of Erdnases' classic ebook at this link..

<http://www.301url.com/erdnase>

If you have a problem, let me know and I will send you the ebook as an attachment..

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Tha.. tha.. that's all, folks! Look for a new issue in about twelve days, as I'm goint to try to get back on my old schedule of publishing around the 1st and 15th of each month..

Interested in what Wikipedia has to say about the Magic Roadshow?

<http://www.301url.com/wikipedia-1>

Questions, comments, rants or raves...

EMAIL ME

To watch high quality sample video's from our favorite teaching web site CardTricks1..
<http://www.301url.com/cardsleights>

Remember to visit some of my other sites at:

<http://www.StreetMagic.info>

<http://www.MagicRoadshow.com>

<http://www.Mentalists.info>

<http://www.StreetMagicSecrets.info>

<http://www.BellaOnline.com/site/shareware>

<http://www.StreetMagic.info/blogger.html>

<http://www.MadMarketing101.com>

May my next issue find you well ..

Rick Carruth / editor

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