

Ring Report Ring #170 “The Bev Bergeron Ring” SAM Assembly #99

February 27, 2020|Archived Famulus

February 2020 Meeting

President Michael Matson called the February Meeting to order. We had one guest , Jim Femister. After reviewing locally scheduled public magic events, Mike showed us a special feature of our new membership cards. The cards have a unique trick built in. Thom Parkin gave a short history and demonstrated the Faro Shuffle. Jaffo followed up with a thorough explanation of the “Mexican Turnover” card-exchange move. Using a Mental Photography deck, Jaffo showed some amazing card changes.

Mike returned to show two small emergency kits that he carries everywhere. One had items like a small sewing kit, tape, band-aids and things you may need quickly before a show. His magic emergency kit had a rope trick, sponge balls among other things.

Dennis Phillips opened the monthly show by showing how to quickly make a “Liquid Appear” trick using inexpensive plastic glasses. He then used the glass to perform a “Drink in the Borrowed Shoe” comedy routine to a narrated sound track. Ryan Steiner used a matrix of audience-selected numbers to mysteriously know the number values of two balls. Colton Ginn commanded a chip to land on preselected cards in a card spread. He then had four aces and four kings change places.

Dan Stapleton used two audience members to assist him for the classic “Ropes through a coat on a hanger”. Daniel Hernandez did a clever version of “Razorblades in the mouth on a thread” but used cereal Fruit Loops which became threaded in his mouth. Jeremy Mikaelson did a series of unique single card productions where the cards are used like billiard balls. He ended in a blizzard of confetti.

Dennis Phillips

Secretary



Dennis Deliberations ... Ring # 170

“The Bev Bergeron Ring”

March 2020

Age is not a particularly interesting subject. Anyone can get old. All you have to do is live long enough.

Groucho Marx (1890 – 1977)



The Amazing Kreskin



If you have seen Kreskin live in performance his show is in two halves, the first consisting of mentalism and the second consisting of hypnosis, climaxed by Kreskin's find-the-check (Hellstromism) stunt. His show can be an abbreviated version (but 90 minutes nonetheless), no intermission, no hypnosis and no check finding.

Each time you see Kreskin live you are struck by the brilliant psychological structure of his performance. Every word, sequence and gesture has a conscious and calculated purpose.

From the outset, Kreskin seeks to charm, disarm and control. And he does so masterfully. His background in psychology is evident in everything he does. That his presentation has varied barely a word in the 30 years --and yet is delivered as if for the first time--is a testament to the careful thought and deliberateness behind this master showman's every utterance.

For example, following his standard introductory joke--"I suppose it goes without saying that...I KNOW what you're thinking..." (followed immediately by Kreskin's trademark open-mouthed aped laugh which he mugs for the audience and which compels even the crankiest audience member to join in the fun), Kreskin "confesses" that just prior to the show, in the darkened wings of the stage, he bumped into a ladder ("a ladder moved in front of me") and injured his knee. Touching his knee for effect, Kreskin tells the audience ("folks," always "folks") that he'll do the best he can on one leg. Then the punch line: "You're probably thinking to yourself, if Kreskin's such a mentalist, why didn't he see the ladder coming?" (immediately, again, the aped laugh from Kreskin).

Now, either Kreskin is the most accident prone performer in existence or he is an accomplished psychologist who understands on a deep level what it means to win over an audience before attempting to astonish them. In that one sequence, Kreskin established himself as likable and human, garnered sympathy and articulated--and thereby diffused--the thoughts of the skeptic who would insist on omniscience if the mentalist's abilities are to be at all believed.

Kreskin next seeks to bolster his credibility with his audience ("folks," remember) while also asserting control over the proceedings. He does this under the guise of sharing anecdotes about his numerous appearances on The Tonight Show, Regis and Kathy Lee, etc., as well as testimonials from the likes of Johnny Carson concerning the "mystery" Kreskin is about to attempt (the linking together of three borrowed finger rings).

Mention should also be made of the pacing of Kreskin's performance. Much like the dance "Bolero," he starts relaxed and low key, speaking almost in a whisper, and then gradually over the course of the evening builds in pace and tone until reaching the veritable (calculated) frenzy that surrounds the commencement of his audience reading (Q&A) segment when he is literally slinging papers and envelopes around the audience.

Three points of particular interest here:

1) In introducing the routine, Kreskin says he will attempt a "mystery" before "getting to the telepathy for which I am known." This was the first time I had heard Kreskin use the term "telepathy" to describe his talents.

2) At the point in the routine where the gaff must be ditched, Kreskin employs a clever bit of misdirection to cover the moment in the Linking Finger Rings: having just returned the first spectator's ring, he tells the spectator to "hold it up to the spotlight that is following you so dramatically." There is no spotlight, of course, but the audience looks at the spectator and laughs--just as Kreskin is dumping the gaff into his inside coat pocket!

3) At the start of the routine, Kreskin exposes the Himber Ring! He says that magicians (Kreskin, by implication, not being one) attempting to copy what he does have resorted to using trick rings, such as this ring with a slot in it (holds up a slotted finger ring) or one of these arthritic rings (displays and demonstrates a Himber Ring) that opens up to fit over a person's knuckle that is swollen with arthritis. (Legend has it that a so-called arthritic ring was Himber's inspiration for his famous ring.) But, Kreskin says, he will do the "real deal."

Kreskin commenced his Questions & Answers preparations. As with Dunninger, on whose routine Kreskin's is modeled, "Q&A" is a bit of a misnomer because, strictly speaking, questions are not posed by the audience and answers are not given by the mentalist. Rather, Kreskin, as did Dunninger before him, employs the more contemporary "audience thought reading" model.

Audience members jot down names, dates, numbers, etc., any thoughts that might be on their mind or that otherwise mean something to them, and the mentalist attempts to "tune in" on these thoughts. However, once the audience has finished writing their thoughts on the 2" x 2" slips of paper that Kreskin passes out amongst the audience, and the papers have been sealed in envelopes tossed about by Kreskin, from then on Kreskin, employing a lovely linguistic deception, refers to them as "questions." I heard a distraught audience member behind me say to her companion, "Oh, was I supposed to write a question?" So the impression is created that Kreskin is answering questions thought of by the audience.

This is a subtle but powerful linguistic gymnastic. It is one thing to figure out what someone has written down on a piece of paper; it is another to provide specific information known

only to an audience member in answer to that audience member's unspoken question. Kreskin bolsters this impression by saying, for example: "You're asking me whether I can tell you your social security number, correct?" In actuality, the person has written down their social security number; Kreskin reframes the information as a question. Kreskin further bolsters the notion that he is answering questions merely thought of by the audience, as opposed to simply spouting back information that was written on a piece of paper (albeit a piece of paper that Kreskin supposedly has never seen), by deducing a question from the information given.

For example, at this performance, I would bet my bottom dollar that an audience member had written: "Hawaii next year." Kreskin says, "You're wanting to know if I can tell you where you will going on vacation next year, is that right?" When he gets an astonished acknowledgment from the spectator, Kreskin says, "You didn't write that down, did you?" Well, she didn't, not in those words; she didn't even mention vacation. Very, very nice. Kreskin then reveals Hawaii as the location, of course.

As alluded to previously, even the method by which Kreskin passes out the envelopes to his audience is calculated for effect. After the audience has recorded its thoughts on their slips, Kreskin reenters the audience with a large stack of letter envelopes ("I don't have enough for everybody so you might have to share"), which he proceeds to (apparently) haphazardly toss around as he makes his way through the audience.

Kreskin makes a big show of this right at the outset and repeats this display at various intervals as he works his way to the back of the crowd. Anyone witnessing this frenzy and trying to reconstruct the proceedings would remember envelopes flying about and would logically conclude that everything happened out of Kreskin's hands, thereby excluding the possibility that Kreskin could have done anything untoward with any of the slips. For good measure, when Kreskin returns to the stage, he says (breathlessly), "As I went through the audience, people kept wanting to hand me things. I said No, I don't want a darn thing." (The man has GUTS). Church performer , Felix Snipes, used an almost identical method, the several times that I saw him.

He tells the audience (per Dunninger) to seal the envelopes and pass them down the aisle, and for those sitting on the aisles to put the envelopes under their feet. Master entertainer that he is, Kreskin takes the opportunity to fill this potential dead spot with humor: "By the way, I'm not going to point this person out, folks, but twice I passed the same row in the

section over there; both times I was pinched...by the same gentleman..." (cue aped laugh from Kreskin).

Mention should also be made of Kreskin's use of psychological forces to keep the audience engaged whilst buying him the necessary time to do the dirty work with the stolen ballots, Kreskin, a la Dunninger, sits in a folding chair, comfortably ensconced in the angle-proofing confines of a draped v-shaped scaffold, with his folio ("pad") resting on his crossed legs, telling the audience members to close their eyes (how great is that!) and take a deep breath, hold it, hold it, now exhale (collective exhale from the audience) and imagine yourself in a cool green pasture, you can smell the dew on the ground in the early morning, etc., etc., take another deep breath, hold it, hold it, now exhale, now open your eyes; in a moment, I'm going to ask you to close your eyes again and imagine a number, a number that I've been writing over and over on my pad (genius!); "now close your eyes and picture a number written either in white on a black background or, if you prefer, written in black on a white background blackboard; a number, which I am continuing to write, between 1 and 50, both digits are odd, and both are different"...You know the drill.

When he asks the audience to open their eyes and to let him know by applause how many "got" the number--there were audible gasps. If he needs additional time, as he did this evening, Kreskin will use the even number between 50 and 100 force.

Speaking of Kreskin's "pad," Kreskin again employs sound psychology to diffuse suspicion concerning this unusual-looking prop as well as the v-shaped screen within which he sits while supposedly writing down and repeatedly tracing over the force number for the psychological force (or, as in performances past, jotting down his impressions of the playing cards in the hand of two spectators).

Kreskin works both items brilliantly. Commenting on the rather crude v-shaped screen (really just a scaffold with drapes), Kreskin jokes, "I want to thank the management of the Silverton [or whatever venue he is in] for going all out on the set tonight," thereby creating the impression that the screen was the management's idea.

Similarly, the first time Kreskin introduces his folio--a pad with "wings" at the top and sides, which fold closed when not in use--Kreskin confronts the issue head on. Opening and closing the pad with some amusement, Kreskin says, "This pad...looks...suspicious (aped

laugh), but I've found that if you see what I write you tend to focus more on what I am writing than on your thoughts." The audience readily accepts this, which also serves to explain away the v-shaped screen if there are any lingering doubts.

It is the little things that can distinguish the pro from the pretender. Kreskin does the little things, and does them consistently. By way of small example, each time I have seen him do his audience readings, about two-thirds into it, immediately following an impressive revelation, Kreskin does a little skip-step whilst declaring, "I am hot tonight, folks!"

Following audience readings, as his final stunt Kreskin closed with his version of Dunninger's telephone directory prediction mixed with a bit of hypnosis. After telling the audience how the manager of the hotel in which appeared in Monte Carlo a record 16 weeks stood in the wings night after night to watch this feat (and each night said, "My God, Kreskin, it worked again"), Kreskin selects a volunteer and brings her on stage (Kreskin invariably selects women as participants with the exception of his playing card interlude, which undoubtedly includes men because of their familiarity with cards).

He seats her in the same chair flanked by the screen in which he sat during the number forces segment. Kreskin displays an artist's sketch pad on which he has recorded a "hunch," not a "prediction" because his is "not a fortuneteller who predicts the future." Kreskin places the volunteer in a state of "suggestibility"--Kreskin denies that there is such a thing as a hypnotic "trance"--and performs the can't-open-your-eyes test and the rigid arm test.

Kreskin displays the Las Vegas white pages, has the woman call "stop" as he riffles down the pages and then opens the directory at the selected location and places it on her lap. He then has the volunteer extend her arm and forefinger. He tells her to look at his left eye and slowly lower her forefinger towards the directory. Kreskin has picked the directory up off her lap and is holding it just above the level of the lady's chin and beneath her forefinger. The lady's finger lands on a listing, which she reads out to the audience. She also reads out listings immediately preceding and following the one she landed on to prove that the names and numbers were different. Kreskin then reveals his hunch matches the selected listing.

Kreskin concludes by "Hurling the Headlines" in David Hoy fashion, but with a twist. After predicting a number of events to occur in the next year, Kreskin tells his audience that next

Saturday, a monumental extraterrestrial encounter will occur in the desert of Nevada. In fact, Kreskin has arranged for vans to travel with him to the site "if anyone is interested." Kreskin knows that people generally are in Las Vegas for a few days or a week at most. None of his audience will be around a week and half later. If anyone was, I am sure if they remembered the "offer" and asked the hotel for information, no one at the hotel would have any idea what they were talking about. Vans? What vans?

As always, Kreskin leaves the audience with Dunninger's departing line: "For those who do not believe, no explanation is possible; for those who believe, no explanation is necessary." (I might have that backwards.) With a "God bless you all," Kreskin takes his well-earned, enthusiastic applause and exits the stage.

I think it was Al Goshman who said, "Amateurs do different tricks for the same people. Professionals do the same tricks for different people." By this definition, Kreskin is the consummate professional. He leaves nothing to chance and his performance is a jewel, honed to a luster through decades of experience. Even if Kreskin's star has lost a bit of shine (it has been a while since his heyday on television, and the Silverton is an off-strip hotel and casino), he continues to work steadily and profitably after decades in the business.

Any practitioner of entertaining deceptions would do well to study this master showman's methods, approach and dedication to his art.

One-out-of-Six Force:

Say that you need to force the regular Coke card and you do not want to use the old Hot Rod Force method.



Try this:

Spread the cards in a fan as seen in the photo. Ask the guest to choose 'odd' or 'even'. If he chooses 'even', remove the second, fourth, and sixth card from your LEFT. If he chooses 'odd' then remove the first, third, and fifth card from the RIGHT.

Either way, the target card is dead center of the three. A simple equivoque, or PATEO, from there, gets them to take the card you need to force.



My advice to anyone wanted to start doing magic is to ask yourself six important questions :

- 1) Why am I performing magic?
- 2) What do I realistically expect to get out of performing magic (money, fame, or a sort of personal satisfaction, etc.)?
- 3) Do I view “magic” as an art to be presented with wonder and mystery or as a puzzle to fool someone?
- 4) What makes me unique with respect to style, appearance and presentation?
- 5) Do I have the creative ability to invent or create a new presentations using classic principles?

6) With the world constantly changing so rapidly in the areas of technology, social interaction, economic conditions and many global concerns... honestly ask yourself ... Where should I devote the best years of my life to build a sustainable career and be of a real benefit to others.

Of course if you are a hobbyist, most of these won't take much thought and time to answer but in that case, focus on numbers 1, 3, 4 and 6.

The master at work. The late Harry Blackstone Jr. I just love this picture and joy on the faces of the kids.

He, as his father did, perform the classic Vanishing Birdcage. The Blackstone's version was made by his uncle Pete Bouton

and is known as the "non-rigid or fully flexible" version. For years, Pete (Harry Sr's brother) made these and sold them through Abbott's in Colon, Michigan.



Here is [the source for the History.](#)

La Cage Volente, La Cage Eclipse, The Flying Cage or as we know it today, The Vanishing Birdcage was the invention of one man Joseph Buatier. In 1873 French magician Buatier (who would later add deKolta to his name and become Buatier DeKolta) created the first hand held cage that could vanish. The first model, possibly a prototype was made of highly polished wood. The bars were possibly string or elastic. It appears the original shape of the cage was square or rectangular but at some point he created a longer cylindrical cage with a round top and bottom.

The Vanishing Birdcage was a sensation and was also quickly ripped off. In the Summer of 1875 Harry Kellar is said to have purchased a cage from DeKolts's cousin for \$750. Of course this was unauthorized because Buatier never sold cages to anyone. This cage was probably the very first one outside of DeKolts's act, but it wouldn't be the last. In fact, Harry Kellar can probably be credited for the deluge of Vanishing Birdcages in America because he sold the secret to a magic dealer in exchange for props. In Europe a letter from Robert Heller to Charles DeVere the French magic dealer shows that the cages were already for sale in December 1875.

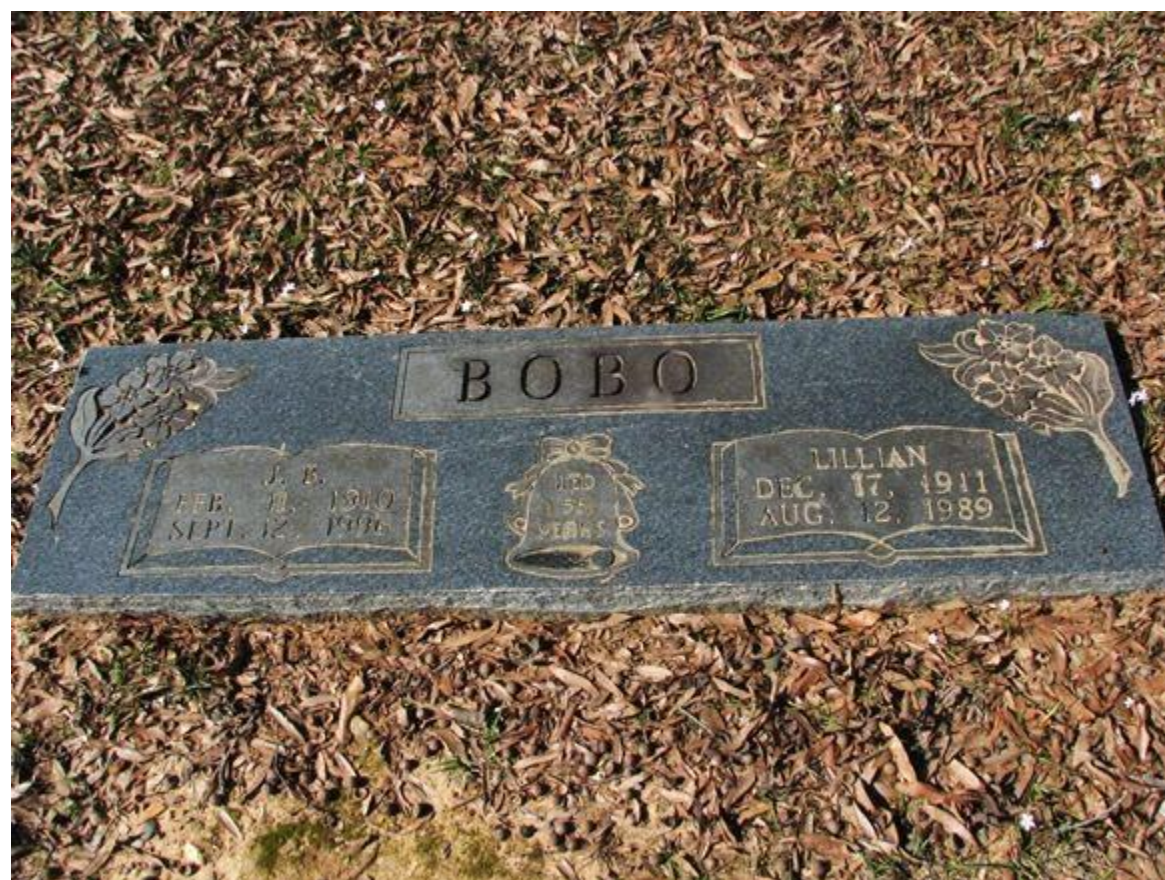
Harry Kellar stirred up a bit of controversy while in Australia over his presentation of "The Flying Cage" as he called it. Harry Kellar's routine was simple and direct, he counted to three and the cage with a live canary inside would vanish! A rumor circulated that Kellar was killing a canary every time he presented the effect. An inquiry took place and Kellar proved that was not the case. He showed that he had one bird and one bird only that he had been using for a long while. But this same controversy would come to haunt other magicians across the globe. In fact, this controversy was used as a minor plot point in the movie "The Prestige" in which they give a rather fictitious explanation on how the cage works.

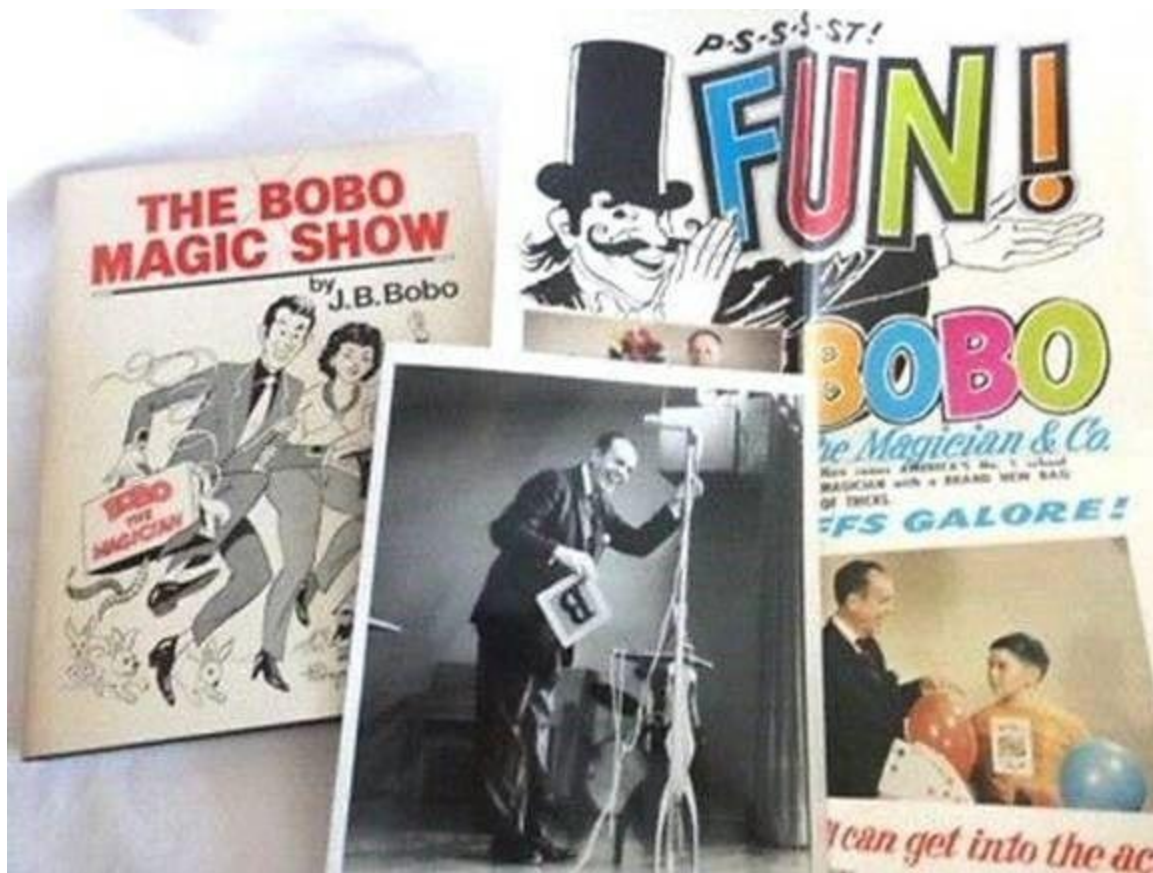
Magicians worldwide began using the Vanishing Birdcage. A few included; Carl Hertz, Harry Blackstone, FuManchu, Fred Keating, Arnold DeBiere, Servais LeRoy, John Booth, Frakson and many more. In recent times the Vanishing Birdcage could be found in the acts of Walter 'Zaney' Blaney, Harry Blackstone Jr, Lance Burton, Billy McComb, Jonathan Pendragon, Tommy Wonder and James Dimmare.

A description of the DeKolts's routine says that he made the cage vanish with a tossing motion. Then he would remove his jacket so that the audience could examine it. After putting the jacket back on DeKolts would make the cage reappear once again.

Harry Blackstone Sr and Jr. used the idea of repeating the effect successfully. After making the cage vanish once, Blackstone would walk offstage to get a second cage and this time invite children up to place their hands on the cage. While attempting to cover the cage with their hands the vanish would occur and their hands would all collapse together.

This is beneath a pile of leaves at the far end of a Texarkana cemetery, the final resting place of magician, author and lecturer J.B. Bobo.





Spending decades entertaining children across the country with his unique style of school assembly programs with his wife Lillian, Bobo wrote one of the most exhaustive and influential books dealing with the subject of magic with money, "Modern Coin Magic". Even though this extensive work was first published 68 years ago in 1952, the information contained within the pages are timeless and continue to serve as a valuable resource for magicians and to the art of magic.



[MJM Magic](#)

My wife's comment was: "Oh! Please! You want to smell more like your musty magic closet?"

The "Magic Motif" often gets used on both sides in politics, where the use of deception is a common label applied to an opponent.



Richard Nixon was referred to as "Tricky Dicky" and Bill Clinton was called "Slick Willie".

The late President George H.W. Bush was a visitor and customer at Al Cohen's Magic Shop on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C. , as have been a number of

of political and military leaders. The hero of Desert Storm, General Norman "Stormin' Norman" Schwarzkopf, was an amateur magician and Cohen customer.

When I lived in D.C., the late Colonel John Fedko was a Pentagon officer and a friend, who I met at Cohen's shop.

He used to come to my house, in suburban Bowie, Maryland, in his full military officer's uniform. He was on his way home from work at the Pentagon and we talked magic.

He gave me one of his classic "Beads of Prussia" effects. Wooden beads mysteriously link, visibly, in a clear tube. I still have it!

M-U-M

MAGIC • UNITY • MIGHT

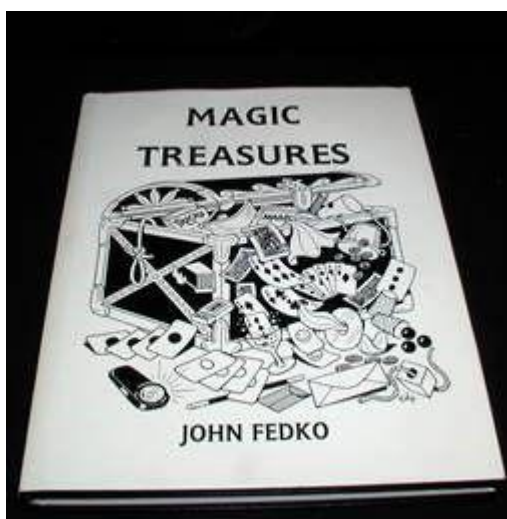
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JOHN FEDKO
ASSEMBLY 110



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Pure showmanship :

European Magic seems to be far more sophisticated and “artsy” than American Magic. And American artsy magicians, Norm Nielson, Marvyn Roy and others have done very well in Europe.

If you think back to David Copperfield’s early illusion sketches with themes, you can see this same class of stage talent.

One of the first of the modern “quick change” acts is from Italy. This clip was suggested for viewing by Mark O’Brien, who saw him in Venice, Italy in the 80s while Obrien was a working illusionist on cruise ships.

This hilarious couple is from Germany

Various magic news sites report that Roy Walton--the creator of "Card Warp"--has passed away.

Roy Walton took part of Jeff Busby's "Into the Fourth Dimension... and Beyond" and created a streamlined close-up card effect for the ages that has in turn been adapted by other magicians for a variety of effects where a card magically turns inside-out while passing through another card or other item folded around it.

ROY WALTON



I went into a restaurant...Picked up a fork. My first thought was, “Uri Geller has eaten here!”



Magician Dynamo has said his struggle with Crohn's disease and arthritis has made him "150% better at magic".

At the height of his illness, doctors told Dynamo, whose real name is Steven Frayne, that he may never be able to use his hands to perform magic again.

"I was like, I'm Dynamo, I've got to figure out a way to do it," he told The Travel Diaries podcast.

"I do the impossible. I'm not going to go out like this."

He decided to put the magic in the audience's hands, and "try and empower them", he told podcast host Holly Rubenstein.

"But over time I started to get the use of my hands back. I had all these new skills that I'd developed in my hospital bed - and the old skills are coming back too. So although I'm not 100% healthy yet, I am technically 150% better at magic."

Dynamo's health forced him to step back from the limelight at the height of his success, having played arena tours and starred in TV shows including *Dynamo: Magician Impossible*.

In 2018, he addressed a dramatic change in his appearance, explaining that his medication regime caused him to "put on quite a lot of body weight" and develop a rash.

He told The Travel Diaries he used the two months in hospital to conceive his forthcoming Sky One series, *Beyond Belief*.

"I was on a lot of heavy medication, which made me go a little bit crazy. But some of the ideas that came into my head were out of this world. I wrote them down in my little black book and this series brings those ideas to life."

The three-part special shines a light on Dynamo's journey towards recovery, as well as taking viewers across the globe as he performs "heart-stopping magic".

<https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-51324801>

Looking for the BIG BUCKS this summer doing magic? I can get you \$11.50 an hour. You must provide your own props and wardrobe and keep it in top show condition.

"Willing to work in extreme temperatures". Sounds like the opportunity of a lifetime until your lifetime ends from heat stroke.

Performer Position Descriptions:

- **Dancers** – Seeking intermediate/advanced dancers for in park shows and other opportunities. Background in musical theater, jazz, hip-hop, partnering and other dance techniques like tumbling a plus, great with children, willing to work in a bulky costume or full face makeup and extreme temperatures. \$11.25/hr.
- **Characters** – Seeking actors for costumed street character positions. Great people skills, especially with children, dance skills a plus, willing to work in a bulky costume and extreme temperatures, between the heights of 4'11 and 5'8, 16 years or older. \$11.25/hr. See audition requirements.
- **Specialty performer** - Jugglers, stilt walkers, magicians, etc. Any specialty talent will be considered for premiere street shows. Willing to work in extreme temperatures. \$11.25/hr.
- **Actor/ Super Hero Characters:** Male height range 6'0" - 6'3" slender build, no body builder types, must have strong jawline and chin. Female height range 5'9" - 5'11" slim to athletic build with curves. Candidates must be confident, energetic and be able to portray heroic qualities. Must be willing to work in extreme temperatures. \$15/hr.
- **Actor/ Hosts** - Need Hosts for shows throughout the park. Must be outgoing, fun, energetic, strong presence, good on a microphone. 16 years or older. Must be willing to work in bulky costume and extreme temperatures. \$11.25/hr.