

SPECIAL PANDEMIC EDITION # 21

May 28, 2021 | Archived Famulus



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

-Orlando and nation on pandemic alert-

Ring/ Assembly meetings set to resume in July at the IHOP, Kirkman Road

Virtual on-line sessions happening on the regular monthly meeting night, the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 7:30PM

President Mike Matson opened our May Zoom meeting. He announced that we will resume live, in person meetings in July, and a Zoom connection of the live meeting is also planned. He also reviewed the returning local live magic shows in the Orlando entertainment market.

Jacki Manna has booked live summer camp and daycare shows.

Sharing time included Ari Novick with some clever Rubber band moves and Thom Parkin with his work on the Aronson card stack and a special deck that he created to help you learn the order.

President Matson presented another Theory and Thaumaturgy with some ideas like packet trick holder from the dollar store and ways to do card peeks.

Thom Parkin had a jumping joker's effect and Mark Fitzgerald had a selected card mysteriously end on top of a pile.

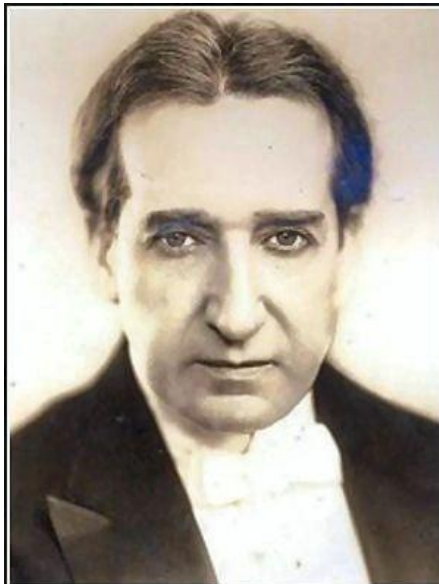
Mark Matson ended with an adaptation of Dan Harlan's Cardtoon, that he called “The Covid Trick”. The little stick magician on the card pack (like a moving flip book) produced a handkerchief and the selected card was on the hankie.

Dennis Phillips



Dennis Deliberations ... Ring # 170, Assembly #99

“The Bev and Alouise Bergeron Ring”



You can fool the eyes and minds of
the audience, but you cannot fool
their hearts.

— *Howard Thurston* —

This note from Greg Solomon, Ring Member in Ocala who misses our live meetings and has not been able to join us on Zoom.

“Dennis,

On the bright side of things I am attaching the May 2021 issue of Magic Seen magic magazine. The magazine did an article on my Medicine Show and I was given permission to send this issue to any magician so I have attached it and would appreciate it if you can forward it to our members of 170. If anything they can get a copy of Magic Seen for free! ,
Greg www.ocalacadabra.com

GET SHARP

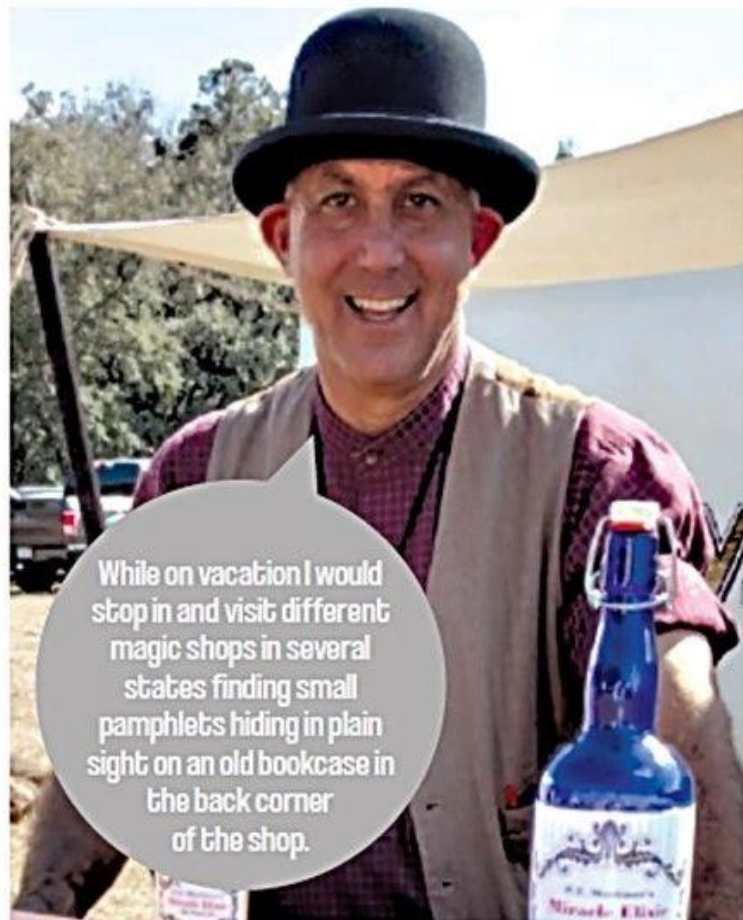
The first in a series of how magicians have used their creativity to find a niche market for their magic. To kick us off, we have the brilliant **Greg Solomon** from Florida, USA who has developed a 'Travelling Medicine Show' with a magic twist!

**Tell us about your Medicine Show...
what does it involve?**

The show is a re-creation of a Travelling Medicine Show from the late 1800's. These shows became famous for selling "Snake Oil"! Back in the day, there were people who travelled the United States in covered wagons, peddling their patent medicine cures at distant out of the way places and small towns. Over time the Medicine Show was the only entertainment that these folks ever got to see.

The origin of the "Snake Oil Salesman" began with the Chinese immigrants who worked on building the railroads across America. These immigrants brought with them a special liniment made from a Chinese water snake which was rich in omega oils and was very effective in soothing sore and aching muscles.

American entrepreneurs quickly saw the benefits of a cure-all remedy but had to switch the main ingredient to a cheaper and abundant western rattlesnake. They soon found out that the western rattlesnake oil had no healing properties! But thanks to American ingenuity, numerous concoctions were sold which sometimes proved harmful and even deadly. And so, the term Snake Oil



While on vacation I would stop in and visit different magic shops in several states finding small pamphlets hiding in plain sight on an old bookcase in the back corner of the shop.

Salesman aka Huckster, Fraud or Flim-Flam Man who was ready to cheat people out of their hard-earned money was a well-earned moniker.

Where did you get the idea?

The idea came (after 45 years in magic) from wanting to create my own unique one-man show. Something that was not readily seen any more and would fill a niche market in magic. After much thought I realised that the Medicine Show was rarely, if ever, seen or advertised in today's entertainment venues. Since I always enjoyed watching Harry Anderson as 'Harry The Hat' and owning several books on scams, swindles and frauds it just seemed to fit my personality and performance style.

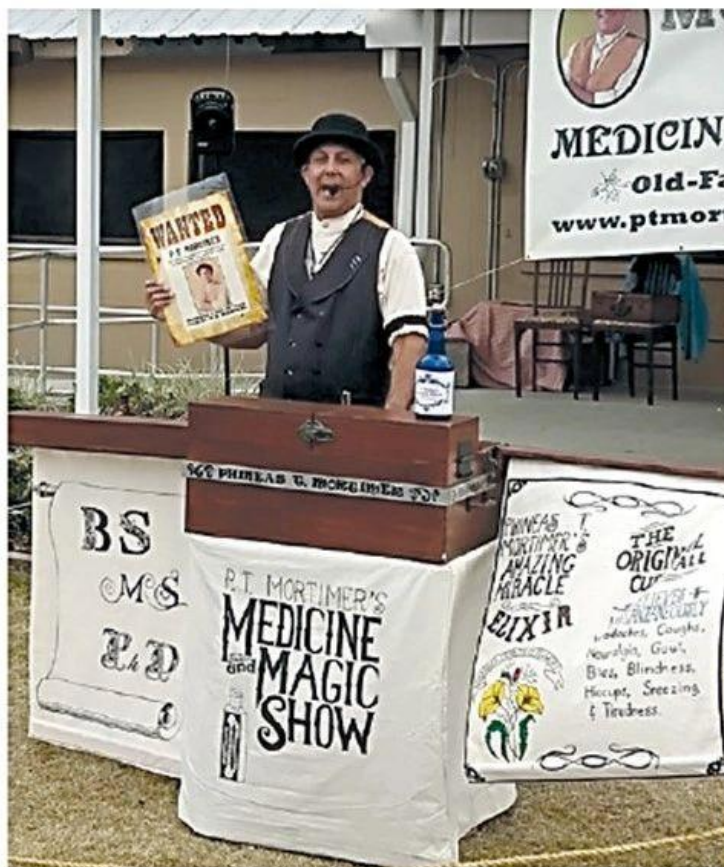
Tell us a bit about how it has developed. Any initial hurdles you had to overcome...?

From the initial idea 15 years ago, the show was about 5 years in the making. I gradually developed the idea, coming up with bits and pieces as I found time. When I finally put forth a serious effort to move forward with the show it took about 2 years to locate some of the old manuscripts and pamphlets from published material of decades ago. While on vacation I would stop in and visit different magic shops in several states finding small pamphlets hiding in plain sight on an old bookcase in the back corner of the shop. Talk about a treasure hunt! I also searched online magic shops, back issues of Genii Magazine, Ask Alexander and of course Lybrary.com. There is also the time it took to create the character Professor Phineas T. Mortimer and then write, rewrite and refine the script.

As a fun reference there are several old movies, from Burt Lancaster in The Kentuckian to my favourite with Dustin Hoffman in Little Big Man and of course Pete's Dragon that have a Travelling Medicine Man Show for all to see!

What has been the most effective improvement you've made to it?

Refining the script until everything flows without unnecessary pauses or extra movement and moves connected to the magic. Changing either a specific trick or refining the magic to better play for the audience. The best magic trick change was to switch a simple Vanishing Handkerchief for the stiff rope. I wouldn't



have believed it, but it was a brilliant idea if I say so myself. Also, I have extended the show by 6 or 7 minutes by creating a pre-show warm-up while the audience gathers. I use: Tells Bells, Shaker Cups for juggling and now I have added a Jacobs Ladder Magic Chain to the pre-show. Also, everything that I perform could have possibly been around, in one form or another, during the time frame of the show so nothing seems out of place.

The result - where do you perform your show etc.?

Our (my wife Coni, artistic director and most honest critic) focus is primarily Pioneer Day Festivals and Wild West Attractions (Six Gun Territory as an example). Secondly, we have performed or will perform for County and State Fairs if the opportunity presents itself. Variety shows also provide a wonderful opportunity for the show. The show is well received and is family friendly for all ages. Once we perform at a venue we usually get rebooked for the following year. Since we began performing the show 4 years ago, we have

been invited back to each place we have been to.

How do you feel about the whole exercise - and what have you learned from doing it?

The development of the show was difficult, highly educational and time consuming. It was by far the most enjoyable magic journey I have ever done in my 55 years of magic. I have learned that I still am working on the show and that small refinements have proven to bring tremendous outcomes in the show. Please check the quote which goes something like this "Never stop thinking about your magic," or was it "We stop thinking about our magic too soon"? I know I read it somewhere and it might even be a Dai Vernon quote. All I know is that it is a wonderful guiding force to drive your magic goals in your life.

Greg Solomon
aka: Professor Phineas T. Mortimer
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If Street magic is your game, you may be able to get some pointers from Gazzo.

Clever and funny, but most of us would be punched in the nose using his style of humor.

The Alcorn Substitution Trunk

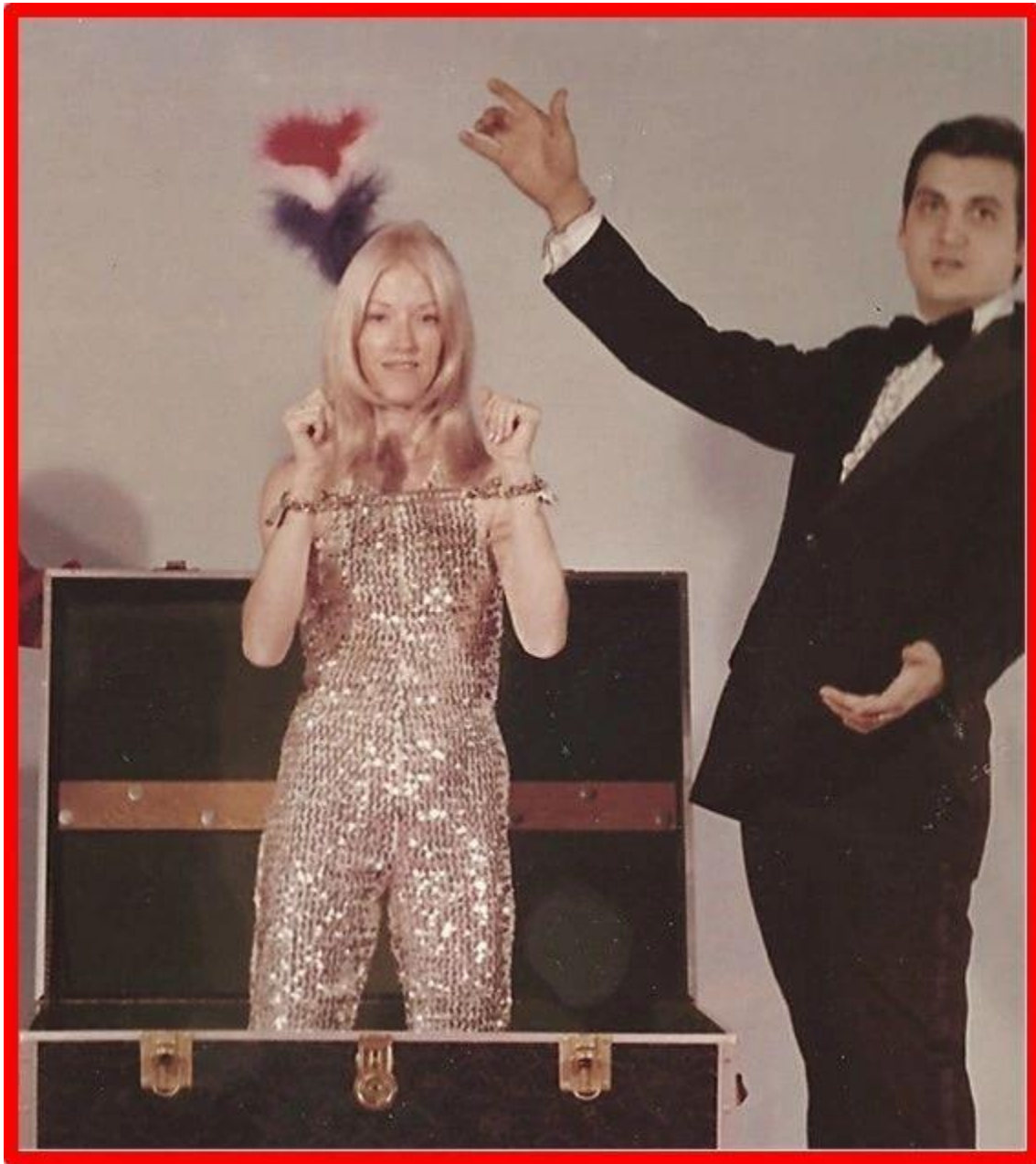
“Colonel” Alcorn was a magic builder located in Albion, New York and was a popular East Coast illusion builder in the 1950s-60’s and 70s. Recently, his family has resumed building his designs.

The late Phil Morris, of Charlotte, North Carolina, toured a “boiler room” funded illusion show in the 60s and 70s and mostly relied on Abbotts and Alcorn illusions.

In 1974, I made an exact copy of his Alcorn “top loading” substitution trunk. Rather than make a release for the lid that needed a hidden putty-knife to shim the latch, I simplified the lease by using a single bolt that is simply held by half a turn. If you want to display the trunk, in the lobby, you can then tighten down the center and two side bolts and it is impossible to open without a ratchet wrench.



You can see my wife Cindy, in this 1976 photo, wearing the chain handcuffs.



The gray bag was extra-long and used Velcro at the bottom. I made the frame to hold the curtain from half inch EMT pipe and it has a plug to open for the curtain rings.



The keys to open the cuffs and the trunk key are on long colored shoelaces.

I realize that Doug Henning popularized the wooden crate, which seems to have been from the Abbotts Canvas Covered Box effect. Henning's performance greatly speeded up the effect. Of course, the Pendragons with their lightning fast switch transformed it from a mere substitution to an instant transformation. Other schemes have been done such as Plexiglas boxes and water filled tanks. The original concept based on Houdini's "Metamorphosis" still plays well.

A seemingly impromptu mental trick for you!

It is great to carry around in your wallet.

Someone asks you to show them a trick. You explain that , as a magician, you are always trying to improve on your perceptive powers and ability to read thoughts and impressions and you would like to try an experiment in thought transference with them.

You reach into your billfold and say, *"I have a list of errands to run today (or tomorrow) and I want to see if we can get on the same wave length. I am going to be all over town and in different places and I made this list to follow the route that I will be taking and will be stopping along the way. Pick a number between one and ten and don't tell me...good... think of that number. I am going to show you my errand list and I want you to look at that number and place and remember it."*

Quickly flash the list and say, *"Take a quick look"*.

You then put the list away and begin,

"I can see you driving in the car. I don't get a feeling that it is to the car repair shop or to get groceries. I see shelves, but they don't have tools on them so it's not the hardware store. That was on the list. This place is really clean and people seem to have a uniform. No, it's not the vet. If we are in a big box store it is the specialty area. Wait, I get a feeling of sickness. Wow. You are having to show a card or ID. No. It's not a doctor's office. It's the Drug Store."

Immediately pull out the list and ask for their number. Flash the list and say, "Yep, I got it!"

The trick is a force...Numbers 2 through 9 are all drug stores, pharmacies, prescriptions! (You asked for a number *between* 1 through 9)

The names on the list are written in different handwriting and phrased differently and it is difficult to see that all are the same when they just

take a quick glance.

Make up your own like mine below... Print this out about the size of a sheet from a notepad.

It will blow them away!

1. **[GYM!]**
2. Pick up prescription
3. Drug store @ 4:30
4. Go To C.V.S
5. Pharmacy - 6 pm
6. Pick up prescription
7. Drug store
8. Go To C.V.S
9. Pharmacy 7:30
10. **LAundry** ~~tr~~

This is one of those jewels of a bit that you can get 5 minutes on stage with audience volunteers and completely entertain the audience. It is kind of a rope version of "Tricky Bottles".

I show how to tie a knot in a rope without letting go of the ends.

Then I ask for a volunteer to come up on stage and learn the trick.

I give them my rope and use another identical one.

I go step by step through how to make the knot and they follow but it never works for them.

We swap ropes and still no luck for them.

Finally they tie the rope and I take it from one of them before they toss it out and it is tied.

Packs Flat. Plays big. Audiences do not forget it.

Duck Dynasty with your Card Duck!



I want to share with you a routine that I have been doing for the past few months. My Card Duck has mostly sat of the shelf for years, only to be used at an occasional birthday party or event where I want to make a person's name magically appear. Harry Blackstone Sr. was said to have loved the trick . I first saw it on an old Magic Land of Allakazam show performed by Mark Wilson.

I want to share my routine with you and if you have a duck, I hope you can use my routine and improve on it.

Just stick a little black fake fur on the side of the bill of the duck with some double sided tape. Make it look like a wide beard. Use the toe-end of an old black sock for the toboggan hat. I guess that you could also wear a beard and a toboggan hat!

Use a Kazoo instead of a Duck call and build the skit around training the duck by using your "duck call".

Force a 3 of Hearts and have them whisper it into your ear and show the audience. Hold your hand over the ducks ears.

“No Peeking Duck!” (To the audience) “I am telling him that so he does not think that he is headed for a Chinese restaurant.”

Hum the Kazoo to the beat of the sound of “3 of hearts”.

Duck pulls out a blank card... (To audience) “What do you expect, he’s a duck!”

“Listen better, Willie! Don’t be in such a ,huh, fowl mood.” Duck pulls out a Tree of Hearts Card.

“Come on, this should be duck soup! Oh sorry! Try again.”

Hum the Kazoo to the beat of “3 of hearts”.

“Come on ,duck.... ‘duck’! Ha, he just quacks me up!”

“Let’s see. Do I have my ducks in a row?”

“This one is a sitting duck”

The duck comes up with a three of hearts!

I have drawn a Z-Z-Top type beard on each of the hearts with a Sharpie. I manipulate this card with the “Tree” and the black card to the bottom of the deck before it is put in the holder. Give it to the volunteer as a souvenir.

I am sure you can come up with funnier and better lines... The premise is absurd and audiences love it.

Wanna you think?

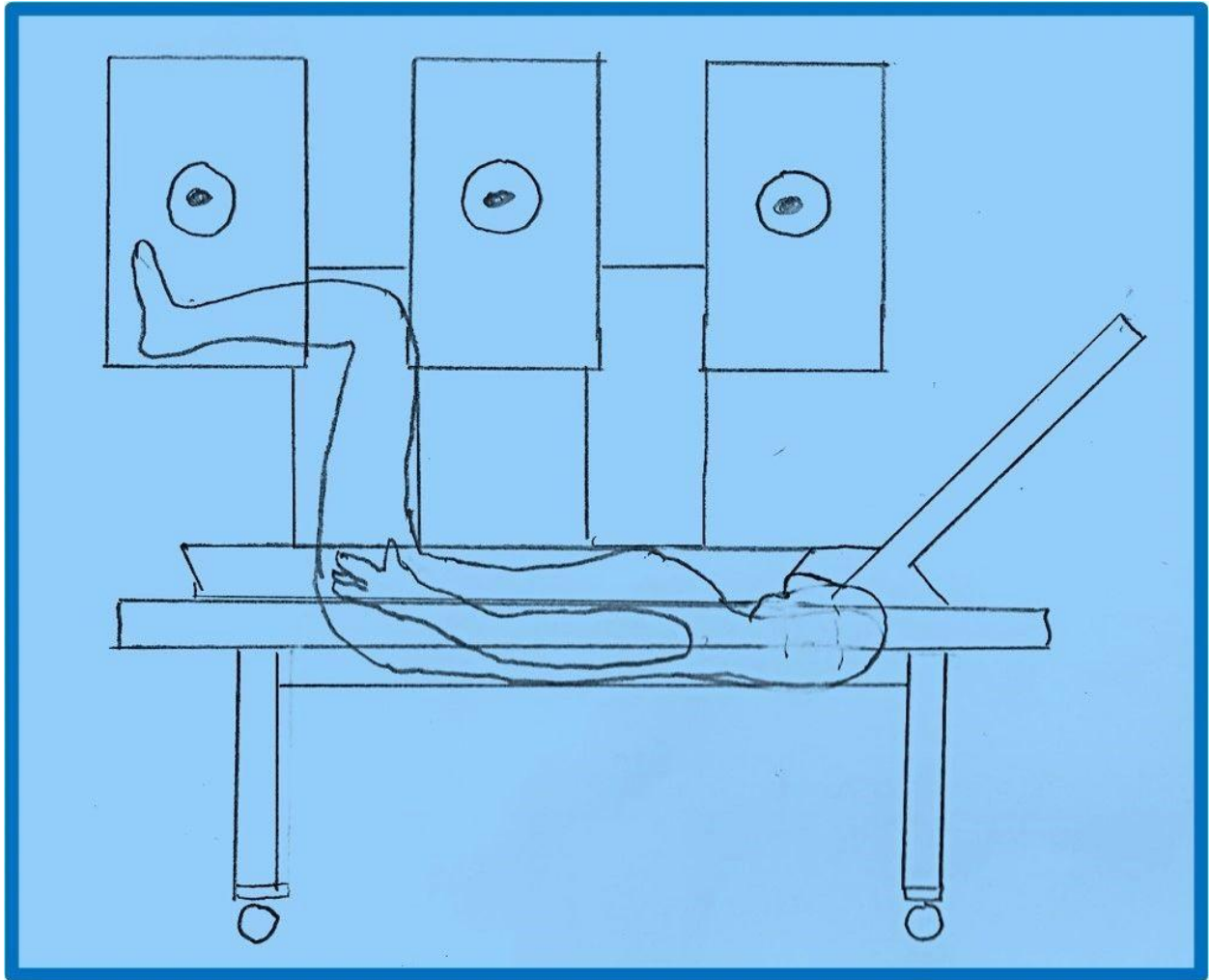
My gut feeling is that all of these acts are “spectacle” and most would get a, Jeff Eaton. “So what?”.... Quick and Flashy but how are they remembered?

Some of the ideas are good but could use an infusion of personality and a name and image that you can carry with you..

Another, “How do we hide her” puzzle illusion. Jim Steinmeyer, Rand Woodburg and Robert Harbin (and others) created many puzzles.

Interesting... Watch it

Here is my guess... If so, it is very clever, A kind of Origami method.



Belmont - A Special Kind of Magic! 2021 Demo Reel

I liked this act... Great novelty dove productions without the typical body steals.

Nice bit from German TV with Chair Appearance and Losander Mirage Table

This clip has much more contrast and is better quality than the old authorized original VHS tapes from Bev's estate.

This "Card in Orange" is clever.

There is a set up card in each orange. 3 different ones. So the kid has a free choice of oranges.

After Mark tosses off the two oranges, that the kid did not pick, the assistants know which corner to feed to Mark!

Notice that Nani brings out the white Devil Handkerchief and has the corner, in the folds, for Mark, which he then gives to the kid.

Very clever!



Until next month,

Dennis