

July 2016 Ring Meeting, “The Bob Sheets Lecture”

Posted on [July 28, 2016](#) by [Dennis Phillips](#)

Ring Report Ring #170 “The Bev Bergeron Ring” SAM Assembly #99 July 2016 Meeting

President Craig Schwarz brought the meeting to order. Tonight the entire meeting was a lecture by the great Bob Sheets who happened to arrange his schedule to be in Orlando on his way to an International show.

Bob is a zany, stream-of-consciousness funny guy who baffles you at the same time. If you can imagine the relentlessly funny Robin Williams as a magician, you have Bob Sheets. He opened with a recurring queens card trick and went into his own version of Silent Mora’s classic ball trick. Bob did away with the Mora net. He presented the amazing Linking Safety Pins, then went into a great matrix effect with assay weights and a trick with dice where the spots kept changing.

Of course he did his unique and popular Rope Through the Body known as “Hang ‘em High” and showed several variations.

He concluded with the classic shell game with moves that fooled most of us.

Thoroughly professional, we enjoyed the comedy and magic of Bob Sheets.

Dennis Phillips

Dennis Deliberations ... Ring # 170

“The Bev Bergeron Ring”

August 2016

“Every time you bring out a prop, your fee goes down”

-Annemann said of Mentalists-

Local Orlando Magician Nathan Coe Marsh appeared on Penn and Teller’s “Fool Us”. He is a part of our Ring. I am happy for him that he got the slot on P&T. He comes across the TV screen as a likable guy. He is a guy with a lot of potential. If it was his intention, is tough to establish the image and manner of a mentalist or psychic entertainer. The time allotted on that show is too short to fully establish an image in the minds of the audience. Wardrobe helps. Max Maven walks out and instantly, you know his character. Dan Stapleton and I think that it would be great to have all the Orlando magicians who have been on the recent National TV talent show to do a round table discussion of what is it’s like to be on a national TV show . We have mystery entertainers like Nathan, Jon Armstrong, Kostya Kimlat and Dan.

One bit of advice to anyone wanting to do only a mentalism type effect in a short TV bit, “Never allow them to show you doing *magic tricks* on a promo reel if all you are doing is mentalism or psychic effects!”

Again, that is probably not Nathan's fault but the producers. The "package" is to make the show visually interesting or exciting and mentalism and psychic magic are not visually stimulating unless it is something like a blindfold drive or fire walk.

The discontinuity in the viewer's mind is that "If you can make matchboxes open and close, cards flip and rings float ,then materializing a golf ball in a jar comes off as just another magic trick."

Sure, you can do a Mental Magic Trick within a magic show and Copperfield (and many others) are quite successful in doing it (and I sure that Nathan does) but it is all a part of their total magical image.

Nathan's bit was edited. Some edits made no sense in continuity other than time shortening. Again, that was not his fault.

Penn's response to the secret was very inside... making references to the Devil's Tie and Shirt and Handkerchief and the Harbin Ditch. No one but a magician would get those inside lines.

There is usually more verbiage in any typical mentalism act than there is in any ten magic acts. I think all mentalists should be required to "earn their legitimacy" by performing first for the deaf. That would be as much of a show-stopper as a magician performing for the blind, but then again, stranger things have happened: Joseph Dunninger made his reputation by performing the impossible . — Not his mentalism, per se, but his having done it successfully ON THE RADIO. It made about as much sense as Edgar Bergen doing ventriloquism over the audio airwaves, but there you go... I think it says as much about the power of the audience to fool themselves with their own imaginations, as it does about mentalism itself.

I think it's sad that Annemann, with respect to his committing suicide at a relatively young age, wasn't given a thorough grilling on the psychiatrist's couch, like, for at least six weeks. Was he distraught over his fees going down in spite of his using little more than a pencil-stub and a note pad? Had he been depressed? Was it some other disgruntled mentalist driving him crazy by insisting that he scrap *even the pencil and pad* in an effort see if his platitude about high-fees-and-NO-props could be true? There are "Mentalists" who try to appeal to the public (who wouldn't know a Mentalist from a Psychic) with such labels as Mind Readers and Psychic Entertainers. (I once knew a veteran conjurer who hated the term "magician" so much, that he tried to popularize his own invented term "Magitainer". To no avail: He was under the misguided impression that the public couldn't tell a simple trickster from the alleged real McCoy...)

Now in the general public's thinking , it probably makes about as much sense to say, "I'm NOT a magician, I'm a mentalist!" as it does to assert lamely, "I'm NOT magician, I'm an Illusionist!"

But to the subject at hand: I think the only mystery to magicians (and the only one that Penn & Teller showed some small measure of perplexity over) was how the heck he got a solid golf ball into a jar with too narrow a neck.

I'm reminded, in watching almost every P&T show, how amusing and possibly even downright silly it is, for Penn to constantly be trying to "telegraph" to the challenger how he knows how a routine is done, by being deliberately so cryptic about it. The idea here, of course, is to prove to the rube that they know how he did it, without at the same time, revealing the exact modes operandi to the audience and the viewers at home. ...When I see Penn do that, I'm always reminded of the time Dick Cavett got on *The Tonight Show*, and he and ex-magic hobbyist Johnny Carson started enthusiastically blabbering obscure comments about "double lifts" and "forces" and such. The punchline was that the studio audience and millions of home viewers would be scratching their heads and muttering to themselves, "What the heck are they going on about!?" — while two old geezers up in the library of the Magic Castle were raving, "Hey, I learned a new move! What a great show tonight!"

People don't really give care how your tricks are done. It is not fun to be fooled. In fact, it is rather irritating. I was discussing this with old timer, Charles Windley, a retired professional magician. Here are some of the things that he said:
A good magical experience — full show or a little pocket trick — is a sense of wonder. It is a good time playing in a fantasy world.
There is no card trick more fun to experience than the two card Monte.
A magician that can float a person in the air doesn't need a hoop. A hoop is for the non-believers and if you have a non-believer then you haven't done your job as a magician.

20yrs. ago at the Dessert Seminar... Finn Jon and Steve Fearson argued about whether something should "float in midair" (because instantly you think thread) or just "balance" (using thread or loops). That is an interesting discussion. If a spoon moves. No thread. If something floats in the air... The first thought is thread!

Puppetry is the ultimate form of magic. Everyone knows the secret and it sucks them in anyway. People watching a marionette show never see the strings even though they are quite visible.

Turned Up by a Plough... The Editor

When a man in the audience called to Blackstone he could see the wires on the levitation, Harry went into the audience and, looking at the stage, said in a loud voice heard throughout the theater, "No, you cannot see the wires." We have his own word on our tape for recording proof.

Linking Ring, January 1962, page 47



When someone steals your audience, you have to get them back. Blackstone was doing his job. Harry also used this line several times when people made a comment about his floating light bulb.

One night when Birch vanished his pony, Princess, the black cloth fell wrong and covered everything but the tail which appeared to be floating in the air.

Birch looked at the audience, smiled and said, "Any magician can vanish the entire horse."

Thanks for the stories, Charles.

Dennis Phillips

TV Ratings for "Masters of Illusion" and "Fool Us" on the CW Network

Posted on [July 7, 2016](#) by [Dennis Phillips](#)

In case some of you Magic enthusiasts wonder how "Masters of Illusion" and re-runs of

Penn and Teller's "Fool Us" are doing in ratings on Friday Nights on the CW TV Network,

I downloaded the Nielsen Ratings.

Friday, June 24, 2016

Time	Show	Adults 18-49 Rating/Share	Viewers (millions)
8 p.m.	Shark Tank (ABC) – R	0.8/4	3.84

	NCIS: Los Angeles (CBS) – R	0.6/3	4.32
	The Ranch: Home of an American Sports Dynasty (NBC) – S	0.6/3	2.65
	Rosewood (FOX) – R	0.4/2	1.48
	Masters of Illusion (The CW)	0.3/1	1.12
8:30 p.m.	Masters of Illusion (The CW) – R	0.2/1	1.09
9 p.m.	What Would You Do? (ABC)	0.8/4	3.71
	Gymnastics: P&G Championships (NBC) (9-11 p.m.)	0.9/4	3.57
	Hawaii Five-0 (CBS) – R	0.7/3	5.00
	Masterchef (FOX) – R	0.4/2	1.15
	Penn & Teller: Fool Us (The CW) – R	0.3/1	1.19
10 p.m.	20/20 (ABC)	1.0/4	5.23
	Blue Bloods (CBS) – R	0.7/3	5.80

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