

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

October 20, 2023 | Archived Famulus



## October 2023

President Ryan Stiner called the October meeting to order, and it was entirely a lecture by Christian Miro, from Spain. Miro is a popular cruise ship entertainer who uses magic, ventriloquism, and comedy mentalism in his acts. He is trilingual and speaks Spanish, Italian and English.

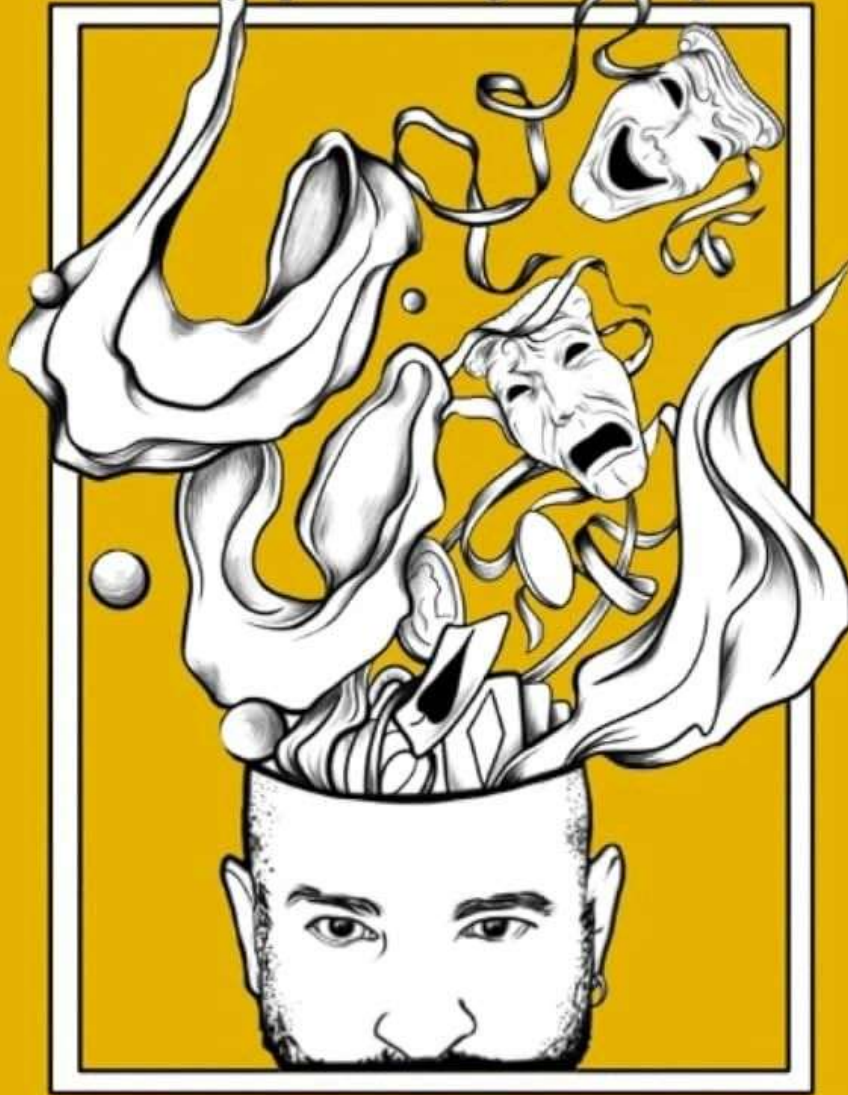
His lecture featured an in depth look at three of his signature effects and all were were taught using his line of thinking that he has detailed in his new book “Conclusions”. He explained how to handle audience volunteers and mostly to love your audience and be able to read them. He always breaks down the theatrical “fourth wall “ and communicates. His suggestions included wearing a unique wardrobe and making volunteers feel comfortable.

He opened with his standard opening, a flash appearing yellow silk, a coin appears in it. The coin appears and vanishes and then, from the silk , he produces a tall highball glass filled with a drink. He went over each part of the routine and the reason for every move and body position.

Next was his clever and funny “Russian Roulette” with 6 eggs. 5 are hardboiled and one is raw. Each time, the spectator chooses an egg ,by rolling a large dice, and they take turns cracking eggs against the other person’s forehead. Miraculously, the spectator does not choose the single raw egg, which was showed to be a real raw egg. His method was clever and solid, and it was a great 10 minutes of suspenseful entertainment.

# Conclusions

Performing tips and thoughts for magicians



Christian Miró

Finally, Miro did a polished and captivating “Cards to Pocket”. A spectator’s signed card somehow keeps coming back to his pocket and finally the entire deck ,other than the signed card, vanishes from his hand, while being held at the wrists by a volunteer,

and appears in his pocket.

Christian Miro’s performance, advice and tips and explanations on how he structured his routines was enjoyed by all.

Christian Miro’s book

Photos by Craig Fennessey



**Christian  
Miro**

**October 18, 2023**

**Ring 170 - SAM 99**

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### **Meeting policy:**

**Face masks, if you wear one, will not be ridiculed. We are understanding that some people may be immunocompromised. We also respect your personal choices.**

**"Pirola" or "BA.2.86" is one of the latest strains of COVID 19. Optional vaccine updates have just been approved and available.**

**Stay prepared, healthy, and informed about current Public Health issues and contagious outbreaks.**

**Be respectful of others and avoid group contact if you suspect you have any contagious illness.**

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

### “The Bev and Alouise Bergeron Ring”

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What a great September night at the Tangiers Showplace in Palm Bay, Florida!

I drove over from Orlando with Dan Stapleton. Also in the audience was Martin Preston, known for his uncanny and accurate impersonation of the late Liberace.

Alfie Silva Eckert opened. He is a top-notch vocal impersonator.

You can't beat Dean Martin, Elvis, Tom Jones, Johnny Cash, Willie Nelson, and Julio Iglesias warm up the crowd.

Alfie, a cruise ship performer, and his wife own the Tangier's as a land-based place for him to perform with other variety acts.

Craig Diamond with Alfie.



A magical night in Tangiers Showplace in Palm Bay, Florida

Craig Diamond working the appreciative audience.





Craig, the recent winner of the Milbourne Christopher “Lifetime Achievement in Magic” awards

(The Oscar of Magic) talking about his childhood, in rural Central Pennsylvania and discovering magic.

In the background are the tall white sticks for the Plate Spinning Act that I made for him and taught him.



Fun, fun, fun. The show had a well-tuned audience. The Human Xylophone routine.



Gillette Double Edge Razor Blades for a snack.





The “Tangiers” Night Club seating and the audience awaiting the beginning of the show.



### **Craig Diamond Full Evening of Magic and Comedy.**

The Tangiers is a one-year-old show venue on Highway 1 in Palm Bay, Florida . It is in a strip center about 20,000 square feet and set up like nightclub. It is owned by Alfie Silva and his wife. Alfie is an entertainer and plays cruise ships, conventions, and casinos.

Tangiers gives him a land-based venue for his talents.

Alfie takes the art of mimicry to a whole new level. With each song, the audience is entertained by Alfie's spot-on impressions and witty humor, as he brings to life iconic figures in a way that will have you questioning if it's really them or just Alfie's impressive skills.

Alfie opened the show with a set of classic pop songs sung in famous voices.





# CRAIG DIAMOND

MEGA MAGIC &  
LAUGH 'TIL  
YOU HURT!

SEPTEMBER 23  
8PM

"WILDLY INFECTIOUS  
HUMOR!?"  
ENTERTAINMENT TONIGHT

"A DYNAMIC ENTERTAINER!!"  
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COMMERCIAL



With Special Guest



**Tickets**

**321-327-8759**

[www.TheTangiersFlorida.com](http://www.TheTangiersFlorida.com)



**Tangiers**

**4500 DIXIE HWY**

**PALM BAY FL 32905**

Craig was brought on and he explained that, as a child, he lived in rural central Pennsylvania and watched magicians on the variety shows on his grainy black and white TV.

Then , as a kid, he saw the movie Houdini ,with Tony Curtis and Janet Leigh and decided that he did not want to follow his family heritage as a chicken farmer. He wanted to become a magician.

He opened with a routine of classic magic done to a rhythmic bossa nova beat soundtrack. He produced, with familiar overt flourishes a “dove” from a red silk. He then folded up what was a rubber dove and proudly put it in his vest pocket. He transitioned into some serious magic such as Fantasio’s color changing canes ending with a red and white silk. He followed with a Marshall Blooming Bouquet. It was a candle to silk and then to a billiard ball. The billiard ball routine ended by putting all the 4 balls in a top hat and producing a giant ball.

A champaign bottle was produced from 3 large scarves followed by a fountain of silks from the scarves. Card manipulations were performed, card fans and single cards produced, and he concluded with a well done “Diminishing Cards”. As the cards got smaller, they were placed on Thayer table and covered with a large card silk handkerchief, and he produced a giant Card Castle.

What followed was a continuation of the story of his early life . One segment was about Chicken farming in his childhood with funny events in his small town.

He then talked about getting magic tricks in the mail and that led into the classic “Banana Bandana” routine. The recorded directions refer to a yellow bandana but only a banana is in the box. That creates a lot of laughs.

He continued talking about hilarious incidences working on cruise ship and being booked on a “Nude Cruise” with old people. The stories were “G” rated with lots of funny double meanings and burlesque suggestiveness.

He said he had been working so long on cruise ships that Noah was his first cruise director.

He did the Mother of All Book Tests with a volunteer and read the word that the volunteer selected from a book.

He concluded the first act by talking about watching the plate spinners on the Ed Sullivan show. He then did a comedic plate spinning routine with 8 plates. It was a routine that I taught him right after the COVID shutdown and I provided the soundtrack and props. He had the audience in the edge of their seats. The first act was an hour.



After an Intermission, the second act began with a “Borrowed wristwatch from a lady” routine. It was classic. The watch falls out of the folded handkerchief two times. He tries to pound the glass back into the frame with a hammer. He had all the comedy lines. He looks at the broken watch and to the lady who gave it to him and says with a tone of satire, “You don’t happen to know what time it is?” and “I used to work in watch factory, making faces”.

He failed to restore the watch and apologized. This became a running gag throughout the second act. He would pause several times and tell the woman, “I am sorry about your watch”.

He got eight people up and did the classic cruise ship routine “Human Xylophone”. Each volunteer is given a single wind chime that is tuned to a note and a wooden mixing spoon. Craig cued them from behind to tap the chimes and played “Happy Birthday”. The humor was in all the miscues. One of the chimes sounded muted and he blew out two cotton wads. It was a clever and funny routine.

The razor blades in the mouth were next. He demonstrated the sharpness of the blades and put them in his mouth along with a length of black thread and the blades came out of his mouth strung on the thread.

He called a woman up for “Audience Acupuncture” A woman is laid on the table and under her is a mechanism of 20 sharp spikes. Her torso is covered with a box and the spikes pulled up through her in one unit with a lever.

He kept the routine funny with comedy lines. When the woman laid on the table he said, “Okay honey, put your feet in the stirrups.” The audience cackled. He quipped back, “Hey, it’s my day job”.

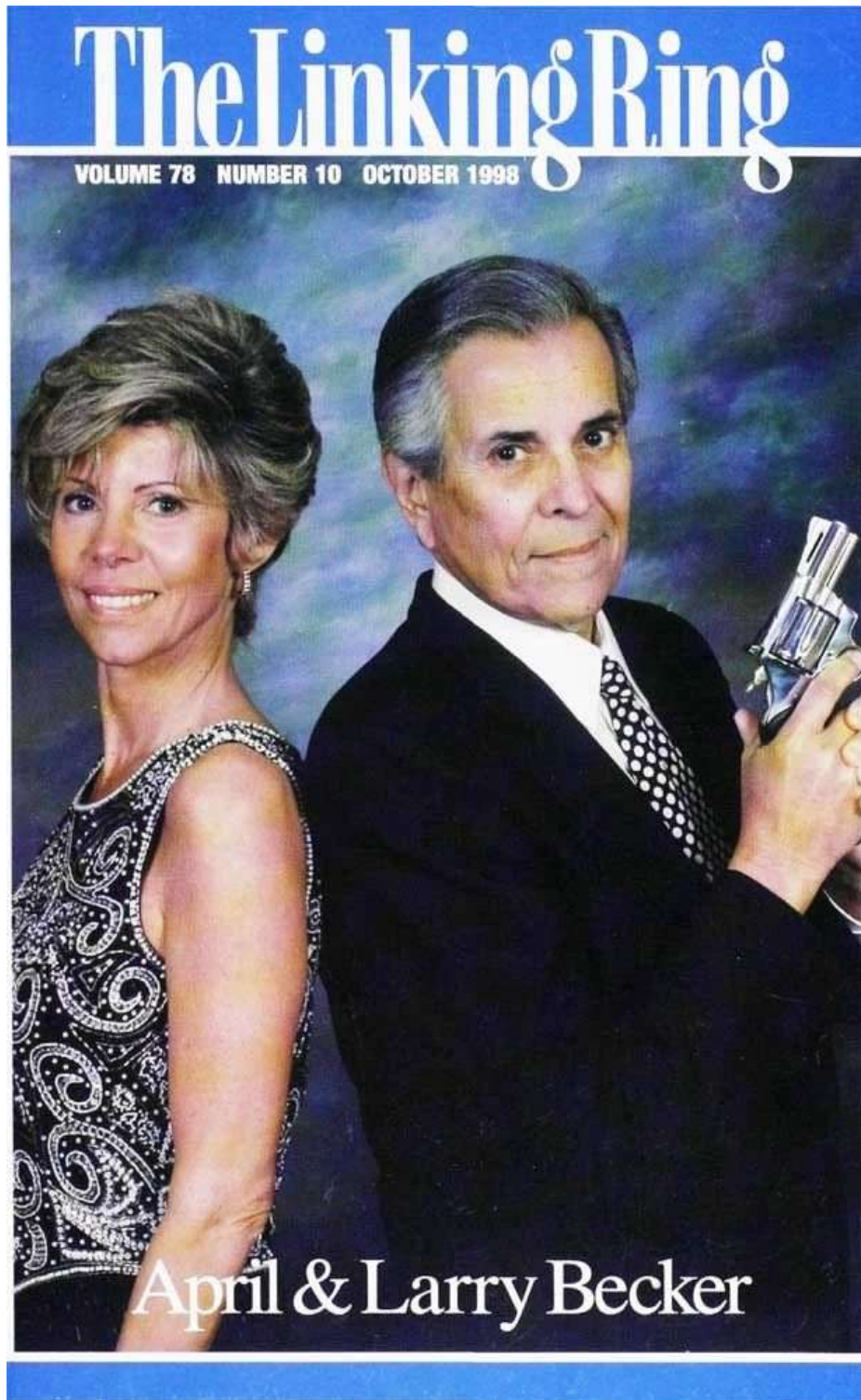
After the long running cage with the lost watch, he promised to make it up to the woman. A chest has been sitting on the side of the stage for the whole show and he called her up for a consolation gift. Inside the chest was a tied cloth bag with gag gifts, like a shower cap from the cruise line. Finally, he brought from a small, locked walnut wood box and inside was a bag that has a small gold bird cage inside. The cage was locked and hanging inside was the woman’s watch in perfect condition.

His finale began with the classic comedy legs table and his own well-polished Multiplying Bottles Routine. “I’d rather have a bottle in front of me than a frontal lobotomy!” There were references to needing the bottles for the party afterwards.

The show ended with a standing ovation for Craig Diamond.

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Larry Becker, the world-renowned mentalist whose extraordinary talents captivated audiences worldwide, has sadly passed away at age 94. He us on October 7, 2023, leaving behind a legacy of creativity, wonder, and amazement.



Born on August 13, 1929, in Baltimore, Maryland, to Louis and Rose Becker, Larry was the middle child of sister Marilyn and younger brother Gordon Becker. His journey into the realm of mentalism began at a young age, inspired by a performance of the renowned magician Dante in 1943.

Over the years, he honed his skills to become one of the most celebrated figures in the field. His performances were nothing short of mesmerizing, as he astounded crowds with his ability to read minds, predict outcomes, and unearth hidden thoughts.

Larry Becker's impact on the world of mentalism extended far beyond his own stage presence. He authored numerous books and invented many magic tricks, sharing his insights and techniques with aspiring mentalists and magicians, ensuring that his knowledge would continue to inspire generations to come. His book, "Stunners: The Mental Magic of Larry Becker" first published in 1992, sold out in only 90 days. In the second edition, "Stunner Plus" Larry presented his death-defying "Russian Roulette" trick, a testament to his daring spirit. Often called a visionary, he lectured on the art of mentalism across the globe.

In addition to his remarkable achievements in the world of mentalism, Larry Becker was a prominent figure in the field of advertising. He co-founded Becker-Kanter Advertising in Cherry Hill, NJ, with his partner Richard Kanter. The firm became one of the largest advertising agencies specializing in shopping malls, thanks in no small part to Larry's creative abilities. Richard Kanter called Larry a "multi-faceted genius."

for his graphical and copywriting creative abilities.

Larry Becker's knack for crafting memorable slogans and his impeccable artwork set him apart as a recognized leader in the advertising field.

He had an innate ability to capture the essence of a brand and translate it into a compelling visual and textual narrative.

Larry received numerous awards throughout his career, including the prestigious "Mentalist of the Year Award" and several accolades for his contributions to the art of advertising and mentalism. His legacy, both in the realms of magic and advertising, will continue to inspire and amaze, reminding us of all of the boundless possibilities of the human mind and the power of creative expression.

Larry Becker is survived by his loving and devoted wife, April. Their 48-year marriage was a true love story, with each describing the other as their perfect match in every way. He is also survived by his three daughters, Gayle Glade, Carol Irvine, and Terry Wolkowicz; his six grandchildren, Joanne Tegethoff, Joshua Horowitz, Emilie Grossman, Ben Grossman, Aria



Wolkowicz, and Justin Wolkowicz; and two great-grandsons, Tyler and Kaden Tegethoff, as well as friends and countless admirers who will forever cherish the moments of wonder he brought into their lives.

He will be greatly missed but never forgotten.

Larry Becker, the master of mentalism and a creative genius, and may your magic and advertising prowess live on in our hearts and minds.

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**Darwin Ortiz** had passed. Darwin (1948-2023) was a magician, who was an authority on gambling and card manipulation.



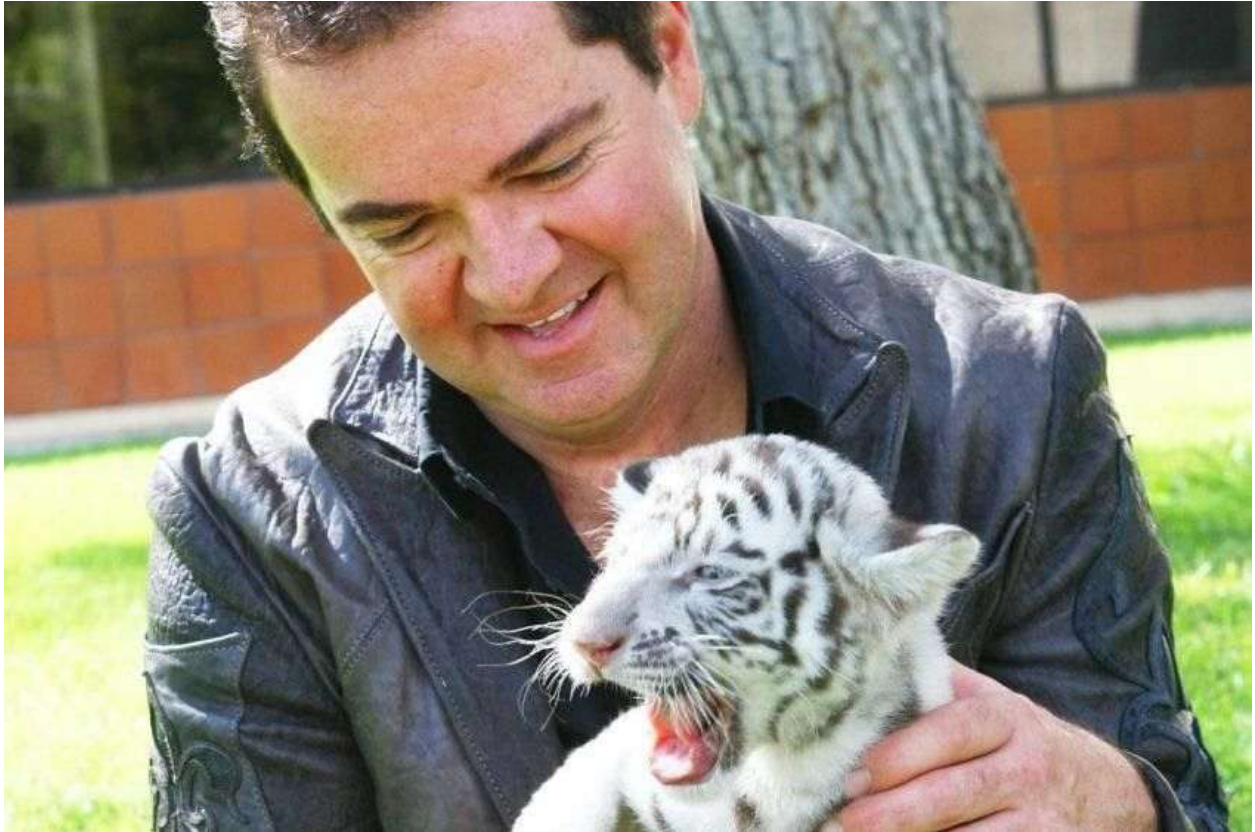
Ortiz was from New York City, where he had a keen interest in card tricks since childhood. In 1974, he dropped out of NYU Law School and pursued card magic full-time. He was an instructor at Harry Lorayne's memory school in New York City. Ortiz was a close friend of the influential US coin magician, David Roth, and was mentored by British/US close-up performer, Derek Dingle.

Ortiz is the author of books on gambling and magic. He is particularly respected for his written contributions on the theory of magic. According to Vanishing Inc Magic, the site of magicians Joshua Jay and Andy Gladwin, "Darwin Ortiz is unparalleled in his theoretical writings. His two theory books, *Designing Miracles* and *Strong Magic* are, in our

estimation, some of the most important writings on magic written in the last two decades.". Ortiz died on October 13, 2023.

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**Dirk Arthur**, the last Las Vegas magician to perform with wild animals, passed away . He passed away on Oct. 13, 2023, at age 63.



Arthur and his big cats were remembered by friends and fellow employees at the Westgate, where the magician had a nearly 20-year run performing in the Las Vegas showrooms.

He performed in a number of Las Vegas casinos, including the aforementioned Westgate, Riviera, Trop, Silverton and Plaza. He started his Vegas journey in “Jubilee” at what was then Bally’s.

Clark County officials reported Wednesday morning that Arthur, legal name of Dirk A. Gingell.

Arthur’s friend and fellow magician Jay Owenhouse confirmed Tuesday that a housemate of Arthur’s found him unresponsive in his bedroom on Sunday.

Owenhouse is purchasing Arthur’s property, as he is opening a show (without exotic animals) in a tent across from Mandalay Bay on the Strip (in January 2022, Owenhouse attempted to run a show with three Bengal tigers).

Arthur, in turn, had been planning to take over a theater in Branson, Mo. to open a new show himself. That show was reportedly to include Arthur's 10 famous cats. He also planned to live at the theater.

Owenhouse was working on landscaping at the property on Friday and Saturday. He last saw Arthur on Friday. The magician Sunday, when Arthur was discovered in his bedroom.

"When I didn't see him or hear from him on Sunday, I knew something was wrong," Owenhouse said Tuesday, noting that he will care for Arthur's collection of exotic animals until they can be released to a reputable sanctuary. "I just want to find them the a really good home to honor Dirk." Owenhouse is delaying the opening of his show to Nov. 5 to care for the animals.

Arthur had most recently worked as an usher at Westgate's International Theater and Westgate Cabaret. Over the past two years, Arthur also performed magic for kids on Saturday afternoons at Lost Worlds Myths & Magic Fun World in Henderson.

At his peak, Arthur used such big effects as a 45-foot-long Amtrak locomotive and 26-foot-long helicopter in his production.

Arthur zigzagged the city in numerous production shows. Following his debut in "Jubilee," he went on to perform at the Silverton, Plaza, Tropicana, O'Sheas, Riviera and the Westgate.

Arthur also performed for a time at Harrah's in Reno and Laughlin, being called upon by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to clear up safety infractions.

Westgate was the location of Arthur's final production, a 5½-month run in that was magic only with no animals in 2018. Arthur's final show with the exotic cats was a run at Westgate from September 2015 through March 2016. Titled "Wild Illusions," that show remains the last Las Vegas production to use exotic animals.

Arthur was known as a friendly, beguiling entertainer who was quick to joke around and made considerable effort to care for his animals. But animal-rights activists aggressively protested his performances, cutting short his last attempt to return to the stage

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**The Windmill Theatre in London** was a variety arts and revue theatre best known for its nude female tableaux vivants.

It began in 1932 and lasted until its reversion to a cinema in 1964. Many prominent British comedians, like magician **Tommy Cooper**, of the post-war years started their careers at the theatre.







London's Windmill Theatre was rightly proud of its motto: 'We never closed.' Throughout the Second World War, even at the height of the Blitz, it remained defiantly open while bombs rained down on the capital.

But it was equally proud when that motto was jokingly modified to: 'We never clothed!', for The Windmill had introduced nudity on stage for the first time in British theatre history in 1932. The Victorian Age was over.

It presented its (tableaux vivants ) naked starlets in motionless poses as living statues in revues based on themes such as mermaids or native Americans, and the Windmill girls became known the world over, much like

Las Vegas showgirls.

A very British institution, the theatre near Piccadilly Circus had a long-term legacy, giving countless future stars the chance to try out their comedy routines.

The Windmill Girls



The line, composed mainly of American servicemen, waiting to enter the Windmill Theatre in London for a performance in, September 1944.

The Windmill today in London





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One of my mentors in the early 1960s was **Frank Scalzo**, the Dry-Cleaning magnate from Easton, Pa. That was his family business and allowed him to spend a lot of time doing magic.

Frank used to play Ocean View in Norfolk and Seaside Park at Virginia Beach and that was where I first met him. He had been tutored by some of the greats from nearby New York City and

many of his props were Tannen's . The photos on the right are from one of the old cruise ships ( which did not have auditoriums) that sailed from New York to Bermuda.

**Scalzo Brochure Front and Back (1962)**





## Super-Duper Balloon

The late Frank Scalzo was noted for doing this effect in his dove act.

He would inflate and float the balloon and then do a “Balloon to Dove” as the conclusion of the floating sequence. **NOTHING** was attached to the balloon. The Abbotts catalog description is correct! A miracle?

The scientific secret of Abbott's "Super-Duper Balloon." (Often seen in the 1950s in department stores, such as Sears, keeping a beach ball in the air in a vacuum cleaner sales display where the vacuum cleaner is blowing air out)

The trick uses a centrifugal blower fan (also known as a squirrel cage fan). It is mounted so a small, geared motor can move the fan's aim is from side to side. Kevin James made good use of these motors for his Snowstorms. Leaf Blowers work also but are very noisy.



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Centrifugal\\_fan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Centrifugal_fan)

So, what you have is a stream of upward air flowing at a moderate “laminar” velocity.

This then flows past the round balloon, which is caught in the “Bernoulli Effect”.

I will spare you a full Physics lecture on Fluid Dynamics.

Simply, an increase in the speed of the air fluid flow occurs (over the curved surface) simultaneously with a decrease in static pressure or a decrease in the fluid's potential energy. The air fluid follows the curve of the balloon, and that curved streamline develops a pressure gradient perpendicular to the direction of flow, with the lower pressure on the inside of the curve. That lower air pressure is like a vacuum that holds up the balloon.

If you are interested in trying this on your own, all you need is a lightweight, hollow ball like a ping pong ball and a hair dryer. Aim the hair dryer straight up and place the ball in the air flow. It's that simple! You can also slowly turn the hair dryer to an angle once you have it going and make the ball float with nothing underneath.

Here you can see it here in a science experiment. His air compressor is too noisy for a show, so magicians use the much quieter centrifugal blower.

Here it is being performed .

Greg Bordner performing the effect in the Colon, Michigan Abbott's showroom.

The blower is hidden behind the flat rabbit!

Now that I have explained this rather complex method of floating a balloon, let me explain what it is like in the trenches, or should I say, "on stage". I came up with an alternate method.

The effect was great, only if you had a stage and no breeze. In fact, even a strong air-conditioner could break the air flow. Obviously, an outside performance was almost impossible unless the air was very still. The motor, if oiled, was quiet enough, but music helped cover up any noise.

I was set to perform the effect at a high school auditorium. I noticed that there was a strong draft from the vents on stage and during a quick pre-show run though, I could not make the balloon stay in the air stream.

Then I recalled the Blackstone Dancing Handkerchief and the black thread across the stage. That was my solution. I had an extra assistant with me, and I rigged several rubber bands in a one-foot chain and attached it to one side of the stage and tied on the thread and strung it across the stage. I simply used a strip of Scotch Tape to hold it to the balloon. My off-stage assistant worked it like she would a dancing hank but with less animation. The method worked well. The balloon could float higher and lower and more to the sides, and it did not have that odd wobble that it did when in the air stream. Oh, and the hoop was brought out already on the thread by my other assistant so I could still pass the hoop over the balloon.

After this discovery, I used the fan method less and the thread method more, depending on the show and lighting and ventilation conditions. Both are great effects.

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The major film and television studios and striking writers reached an agreement after days of marathon negotiating sessions with the Writers Guild of America.





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Remembering Meyer Kessler (September 27, 1917 – November 3, 2009) "The Great Ballantine"



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So many great women in magic.

Solo performers and great assistants.



When I was a 15-year-old kid magician, I wanted an assistant like Nani Darnell , Carol Roy, Margaret from Al Delage fame or Gloria DeVos (as per Kalanag).

Here was June Merlin, Billy McComb's wife.

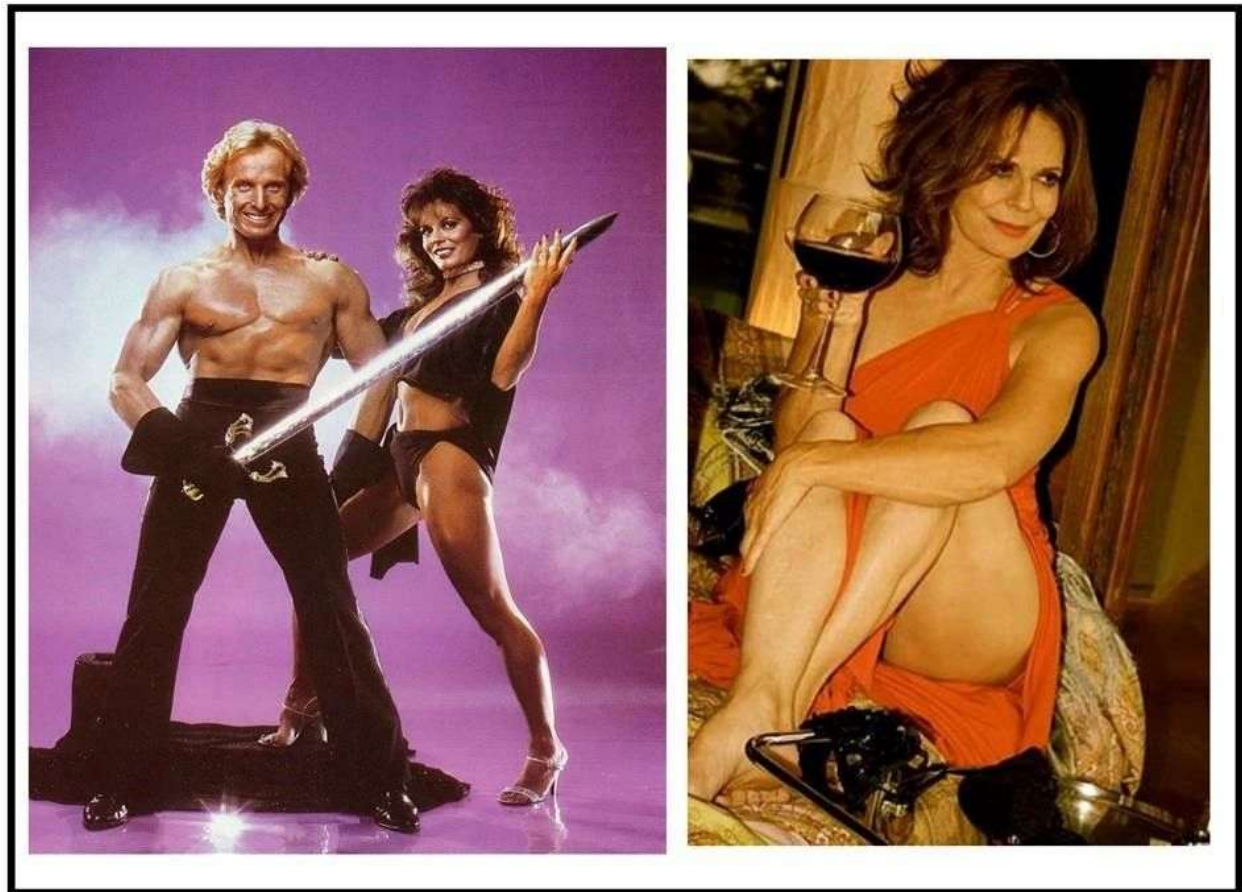




Recently **Charlotte Pendragon**, was a partner in a very energetic act with her former husband, **Jon**.

Together they brought the classic Substitution Trunk to pure startling magic.

Sadly, they are no longer together, and age has changed things.



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## **Illusionists Perform the Same Dozen Illusions. This is a sad fact.**

Spend one hour on YouTube and view videos and you will find this to be true: Same illusions, same choreography, same movements, and same presentations.

Here are **12 illusions** that are too commonly seen in programs of illusionists worldwide:

**Origami**

**Interlude**

**Packing Crate Sub Trunk**

**Fire Spiker**

**Suspended Animation**

**Fire Cage**

**Modern Art**

**Wakeling Sawing**

**Mini Kub Zag**

**Chair or Broom Suspension**

**Snowstorm/ Snow Animator**

**Floating Table**

The last two are not illusions but they are larger stage effects and almost everyone performs them.

So, what drives this uniformity?

1) Convenience. It is easier to buy a stock illusion prop rather than to create, prototype and fabricate an original illusion.

2) Illusionists want no risk. They would rather invest in illusions that are proven. Seeing another illusionist's success with an illusion makes it easy to feel assured of the same reactions from the audience.

3) Illusionists feel confident with the illusions. Their judgment is compromised because they believe they will succeed with that illusion.

4) More than a handful of illusionists do not care that they are performing the same (and pirated) illusions because they feel their audience reacts well to those illusions.

5) Technology has made the world flat, and the Internet & YouTube allow media to be shared worldwide at the click of a mouse. Illusions are also more accessible to illusionists from different parts of the world because of the Internet.

Illusionists say: "it is not what you do but how you do it!" That is true, but only if you do something different. Just because you use a different piece of music or smile instead of act dramatic or add a costume change at the illusion does not warrant enough of a difference. The people who do matter, educated clients, agents, show bookers, the media know the difference. If you want to make it to the top, you need to not be the "best" but be "the only" and that means a lot of originality.

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My wife keeps telling me about "Chicken Soup for the Soul" articles. Reader's Digest Warm and Fuzzies, I call them.

I think she subscribes to online "Chicken Soup for the Soul" articles.

I always considered them, as good as they may be, stories that appeal mostly to women. In fact, I'd hazard the guess that if there were only men in the world (hah!) that the multi-million-dollar "Chicken Soup" industry would have been dead in the water from the get-go. Yes, we men are sentimental, but not THAT sentimental! -- Not enough to build an "emotional empire" on it, anyway. Oprah was built on female appeal. Nothing wrong with that. I am just taking a realistic look at marketing and audience demographics.

Here is a limited market but it would probably be a loyal one:

"CHICKEN SOUP for the STARVING MAGICIAN" Byline: For the magician who is having trouble putting FOOD on the table -- they'll always have CHICKEN SOUP!"

Dennis