

SPECIAL PANDEMIC EDITION # 20

April 30, 2021 | Archived Famulus



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

-Orlando and nation on partial lockdown-

No Ring/ Assembly face to face meetings until future notice

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

Our April meeting featured a Zoom lecture by Kozmo.

As a student of iconic magicians Cellini and Gazzo, Ted Brainard, a former engineer, has become a legend in his own right. Under the stage name “Kozmo”, he turned a childhood passion for magic into a professional career. Exuding the perfect combination of wit, humor, charm, and amazement, he has become one of the world's most successful street magicians today. All this while launching one of the industry's leading video production companies, and *Reel Magic Magazine*.

In addition to wonderful stories about street performing in New Orleans he had ideas on how to increase your “hat tips”, Kozmo demonstrated his signature material.

Coin Matrix: A devilishly simple Coin Matrix that looks as impossible.

Two Card Transpo: A card is sealed within an ordinary jar. The first spectator signs a card and places it in a card box. A second spectator selects a card and loses it in the pack. In an instant, the selected card is now in the box and the signed card is now in the jar.

Coin Transpo: This trick starts off like any normal Coins Across routine, but it ends with a stunning penetration of a coin through the lid of the jar.

Two Coin Trick: A mesmerizing effect that starts with a coin in each hand. One by one, each coin disappears until your hands are completely empty.

Kozmo presented a fun lecture and hopefully street magic will resume as it was after the passing of this pandemic.

Dennis Phillips



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

“The Bev and Alouise Bergeron Ring”

“Use the talents you possess, for the woods would be very silent if no birds sang except the best.”

-HENRY VAN DYKE

The late Michael Giles and “Instant Babe” a Daniel Summers creation.

Giles was a dynamic and strong illusionist and died too young.

Add this to your tool kit that should contain a “left handed screwdriver” and “right handed dye tube”



This clip contains portions of Brad Zinn's illusion show done around 1990.

This cutting and restored necktie routine is very well done and totally dated (no one wears ties to plant and no one dares to use a pistol anymore)

But he had great lines and did a magnificent job of handling the "assistant", on whom he had planted the tie but probably did not rehearse anything else.

The production values of his illusion sequences are good and he has a good speaking voice and stage presence.

I wish these types of shows would come back, but I am afraid that era is over.

Brad is still around... (current info) <https://www.bradzinn.net/>

Just a note: If you need glow in the dark paint, I found this at ACE Hardware.

Years ago the old Ghost shows uses this paint on what they called "Paddles" which were like a big black hand-held stop sign.

One side had a skull painted on it. Before the last Black out scene you would flash it backstage with a flash bulb and bring it out with the black side facing the audience.

By rotating it and waving it in the total darkness of the theater, it made an eerie sight.

You could also think this paint and soak cheese cloth on it. When dry and hung on a bamboo pole, it make a great flying ghost.



I found some notes on Cindy and our trip in 1996, to Branson, MO.

These notes were made at a country music and sketch show called “The Presley’s” which is said to be the first stand-alone theater attraction on the Highway 76 strip in Branson. It is a bit more complicated.

Branson tourism was mostly a group of fish camps for fisherman who came to fish in the artificial lake, Taneycomo built as an electric power dam around 1915 . There have been other dams built and the lake expanded.

Hugo and Mary Herschend leased the Marvel Cave for 99 years in 1950 and began hosting [square dances](#) in it. The [Herschend Family](#) modernized the cave with electricity and concrete staircases, and in 1960 the Herschends opened [Silver Dollar City](#), a re-creation of a frontier town that featured five shops, a church, and a log cabin, with actors that played out the feud between [the Hatfields and the McCoys](#). Paul Osborne did work for them and that was one of the reasons that the Branson Trip was a business Trip.

The Herschends formed a partnership with Dolly Parton and are in Dollywood and last year they bought out David Fee, so they own almost all the Pigeon Forge diner and music attractions. The Herschends were much less successful with the Dixie Stampede here in Orlando and it closed after a few years. The Myrtle Beach and Pigeon Forge and Biloxi ones worked better.

In Branson, The Presley family became the first to move their show (Presleys' Country Jubilee) to [Highway 76](#) in 1967, followed a year later by the Baldknobbers. Eventually Branson would have more than 50 theaters, most of them located on Highway 76. The elder Presley was a part time musician and got the idea of building an open-side amphitheater for a country music show.

In 1983, Branson began its transformation into a major tourist attraction when the [Roy Clark Celebrity Theatre](#) opened and began to bring famous country music stars to Branson. Many of the performers who have had their own theaters in Branson first discovered Branson when they performed at this venue.

These are lines I copied from the audience warm-up at Presleys:

Where are you from...? (Spectator mentions small southern town) Have you ever seen this many lights before...? (Gesture to the ceiling)

The town I grew up in was so small the "Leaving" sign was on the other side of the "Entering" sign.....

My home town was so small...it didn't even have a zip code....

They didn't have a McDonalds. They could only fit one arch.

The town was so small they didn't have to roll up the sidewalks every night at 9....they didn't have any.

The town was so small they closed the zoo.... yeh.. the duck died.

Where are you from? (volunteer mentions small town) Tell us. What does nowhere look like?

You know the old rule that jokes that end with the letter "K" are the best jokes....

Many vaguely remember the Russian Comedian, Yakov Smirnoff. He was very big in the late 70's on the Sullivan Show and other talk shows.

He has a long running show at Branson! His comic persona was of a naive immigrant from the [Soviet Union](#) who was perpetually confused and delighted by life in the United States. His humor combined a mockery of life under [communism](#) and of [consumerism](#) in the United States, as well as [word play](#) caused by misunderstanding of American phrases and culture, all punctuated by the catchphrase, "And I thought, 'What a country!'"

He is still in Branson.



Some of Smirnoff's jokes involved [word play](#) based on a limited understanding of American idioms and culture:

- "I go to New York and I saw a big sign saying 'America Loves [Smirnoff](#)' and I said to myself, what a country!"
- Upon being offered work as a barman on a "[graveyard shift](#)", he remarks, 'A bar in a cemetery! What a country! Last call? During Happy Hour the place must be dead.'
- At the grocery store: "[Powdered milk](#), [powdered eggs](#), [baby powder](#) ... what a country!"
- At the grocery store after finding "New Freedom" [Maxi Pads](#): "Freedom in a box! What a country!"
- "The first time I went to a restaurant, they asked me, 'How many in your party?' and I said, 'Six hundred million!'"

Other jokes involved comparisons between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R:

- "I like parades without missiles in them. I'll take [Bullwinkle](#) in a parade, to a tank any day"
- "In every country, they make fun of a city. In U.S. you make fun of Cleveland. In Russia, we make fun of Cleveland."
- "Why don't they have baseball in Soviet Union? In Soviet Union, no one is safe."
- Here you have American Express Card: "Don't Leave Home Without It." In Russia, we have Russian Express Card: "Don't Leave Home!"
- In a TV spot for [Miller Lite](#): "In America, you can always find a party! In Russia, [party](#) always finds you!"

He once told [Johnny Carson](#), "I enjoy being in America: it's fun, you know, because you have, you have so many things we never had in Russia—like warning shots".

This is probably typical of Chicagoland Magic in the last of the 1980s... Paul Lee.

Hey, he gets a better than C+ for trying. This was the last of the local effects of “The Second Golden Age of Magic” where

many magic enthusiasts were armed with Paul Osborne’s plans, some Abbott’s props, Wellington or West Coast builders things. They typically needed additional

stage direction, professional choreography and scripting and blocking, but we should be complimentary. Steve Chezaday, a local Chicago area magic legend, contacted me and said that sadly Paul passed away and was Steve's good friend and after this clip went on the have a nice polished act and successful career. Steve has done well for himself also in illusion magic.

This is from 1985...smack dab in the middle of “The Second Golden Age of Magic”.

Dan Stapleton said Mark also performed at Circus World.

(This was at Magic Mountain Park in California)

This is an old science demonstration that has possibilities , using a great patter line, for an intriguing effect.

The physics mathematical analysis on this requires a differential Lagrange equation with vectors and scalars as inputs, but I will spare you of all that.

Just experiment and wing it. You don't have to be an engineer to do this.

Consider using this great comedy bit. It is a variation of the old Burlesque “Lie Detector” sketch. Robert Baxt has some excellent material and props if you really want great stuff or you can make your own. Patrick Hanna, a Ring member turned me on to this idea and how to make it inexpensively. I believe that Jim Kleefield always has some material on this in his Magic Nook series.

https://www.robertbaxt.com/liar-comedy-lie-detector/?fbclid=IwAR3FofmVxFupsayzTE8DM-kg_0BWTbiDS3v2LNtqlwW7wu2z_XDlILF-s2c

You don't need a lantern. Use a \$1 door alarm from The Dollar Tree. It is battery operated and uses a magnet and a proximity reed switch. Attach it to the back of the clip board and use a clothes pin with a popsicle stick extension to move the magnet in and out.



The sound originates from the back of the clipboard and , like ventriloquism, the mind will create the illusion that it comes from somewhere else. In the past, I have used a plastic colander (such as used to drain salads and available for \$1 at the Dollar Store. It can be decorated up with cheap lights and doo-dads and controlled by a pair of small wires going to a button on the back of the clipboard. I tend to not like radio or IR links. If they fail, you have to do a massive work around. If you are worried about COVID , first make a tin foil hat for the kid to wear between it and the colander. That itself is a cute gag. This can be a funny bit. Improvise.



If you don't like the helmet idea, the kid can hold anything dressed up to look like a lie detector device. A paddle with a light connected to a button you operate. I also turned a plastic lunch box into a lit "lie detector" and added the whole category of food the kids liked and disliked. No one questions the wire link to the button on your clipboard or fake i-pad,

Here is a sample routine. You can use a light to go off or just the buzzer:

This is a lie detector so be careful with it, it is a very expensive piece of apparatus. It cost \$25,000 (Light goes off)

Uh \$10,000 (light goes off)

Okay \$5,000 (light goes off)

A thousand dollars (light goes off)

Okay, I bought it used on E-Bay for 40 bucks.

Now I am going to ask you some questions and all you have to do is answer the questions clearly with a loud, “Yes” or “No”

Can you do that. Kid says “Yes” (light goes off)

The questions you are going to answer truthfully, right?

Kid says “Yes” (light goes off)

Let’s get started. Are you a good boy? If kid says “yes” (light goes off)

So, you are telling the truth, right? “Kid says “yes” (light goes off)

So, you didn’t lie? “Kid says “yes” (light goes off)

You go to school. What grade are you in? Do you like school. “Kid says “yes” (light goes off)

Do you do your homework? “Kid says “yes” (light goes off)

Do you clean your room? “Kid says “yes” (light goes off)

Do you make up your bed? “Kid says “yes” (light goes off)

Did you brush your teeth today? “Kid says “yes” (light goes off)

Ehler-Danlos Syndromes, Distichiasis and female magic assistants...

All illusionists want agile female assistants for magic box jumping. I may have mentioned before about the best female box jumper that I ever had. She could fit in box bases and load areas that were unbelievable small and she was 5 feet 7 inches.

Unfortunately she suffered from one of the forms within the Ehlers–Danlos syndromes. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ehlers%E2%80%93Danlos_syndromes Symptom s may include loose joints, joint pain, stretchy velvety skin, and abnormal scar formation. She eventually retired from joint problems. Her daughter also carried the gene and had heart valve issues.

There are genetic mutations which can make ladies look very attractive. I used to give this example when I was an adjunct professor in the theater department at Valencia College, teaching theatrical makeup. My wife has a mild case of this and I have gotten good with tweezers and wearing a magnifying headband.



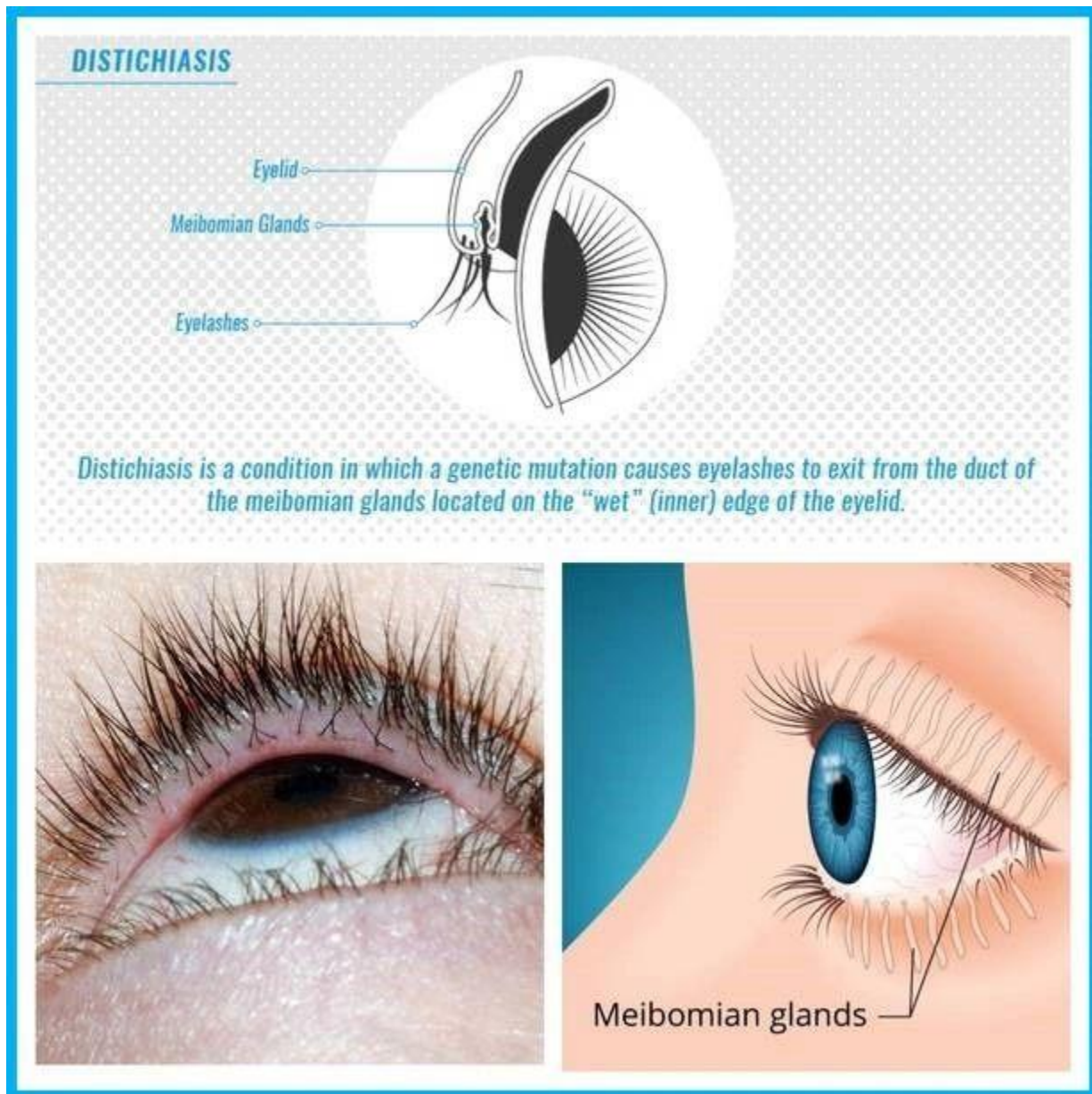
The British-American cinema icon, Elizabeth Taylor, who was deemed as one of the most beautiful women of her time had the rare genetic condition called **Distichiasis**.

It is a type of mutation which caused her to have **two rows of eyelashes** instead of one. This thick, dark fringe of extra eyelashes made her eyes look all the more dreamy and dazzling and along with her striking blue eyes, they certainly enhanced her already exquisite face. This was caused by a mutation in the **FOXC2** gene.

Although, having natural double eyelashes may seem like an entrancing feature, it can be far from easy to live with. Congenital distichiasis is often accompanied by lymphedema - a condition characterized by swelling of the limbs, typically the legs and feet due to buildup of body fluids, and therefore known as **lymphedema-distichiasis** (LD) syndrome. <https://rarediseases.info.nih.gov/diseases/333/lymphedema-distichiasis-syndrome>

The FOXC2 gene is a transcription factor/protein involved in numerous developmental pathways of the body, two of which are those of the lymphatic vessels and the associated regions of the eye, hence the association.

In distichiasis, the extra row of eyelashes grow from tiny oil glands (meibomian glands) on the thin ledge of skin nearer to the eye, instead of growing out of hair follicles present on the outer edge of the eyelid.



Distichiasis in some individuals can remain harmless and less detectable if the growing eyelashes curl outwards. The lashes can be removed by epilation (plucking), cryotherapy, electrolysis, lid splitting operations, laser treatment, or, if you just have a few, a loving

husband with tweezers. The condition can vary from a few sparse hairs on one lid, to full sets of lashes on both lids.

But for some individuals, distichiasis with lymphedema syndrome can take a more severe form. One could have more acute symptoms of eye irritation, redness as well as more frequent tearing in the eye. The mutations in FOXC2 may also give rise to multiple disorders, such heart diseases, scoliosis, cellulitis, webbed neck, respiratory problems due to abnormal lymph flow into the lungs etc.

Which could explain why some of Taylor's myriad of health problems may have been attributed to her inherited lymphoedema-distichiasis syndrome due to mutations in the FOXC2 gene.

Taylor was known to have had more than 100 operations during her lifetime, including having both hips replaced. She also suffered from scoliosis and respiratory infections. In 2004, she was diagnosed with congestive heart failure which later caused her death in 2011

Dennis