

# SPECIAL PANDEMIC EDITION # 15

November 23, 2020 | Archived Famulus

## Ring Report Ring #170 “The Bev 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**

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The November 2020 meeting was a get together with 30 Zoom check-ins. President Michael Matson called the meeting to order. Most of our full time magicians remain doing little live performing work. A few are working on virtual shows. Though Orlando is not locked down, we still have social distancing and mask rules and that makes for a less accommodating entertainment situation.

Jon Racherbaumer was our Zoom Talk & guest lecture! In spite of the hardship of this pandemic, it is great that we can still speak directly to some of the living legends in magic through the medium of modern electronic technology from the comfort of our homes and discuss the intricate details of the art we all love and get expert guidance.

Jon was gracious to offer all of the current members with complimentary lecture notes in a PDF format. Jon's talk was open to asking lots of questions. Listening to Jon reminiscing and his technical talk was like sitting in or a graduate school for card magic.

He talked about some ways to dress up and baffle with the old 21 card trick that most of us learned as kids. He talked about using the “Think of a Card” plot and how to reveal the thought-of card.

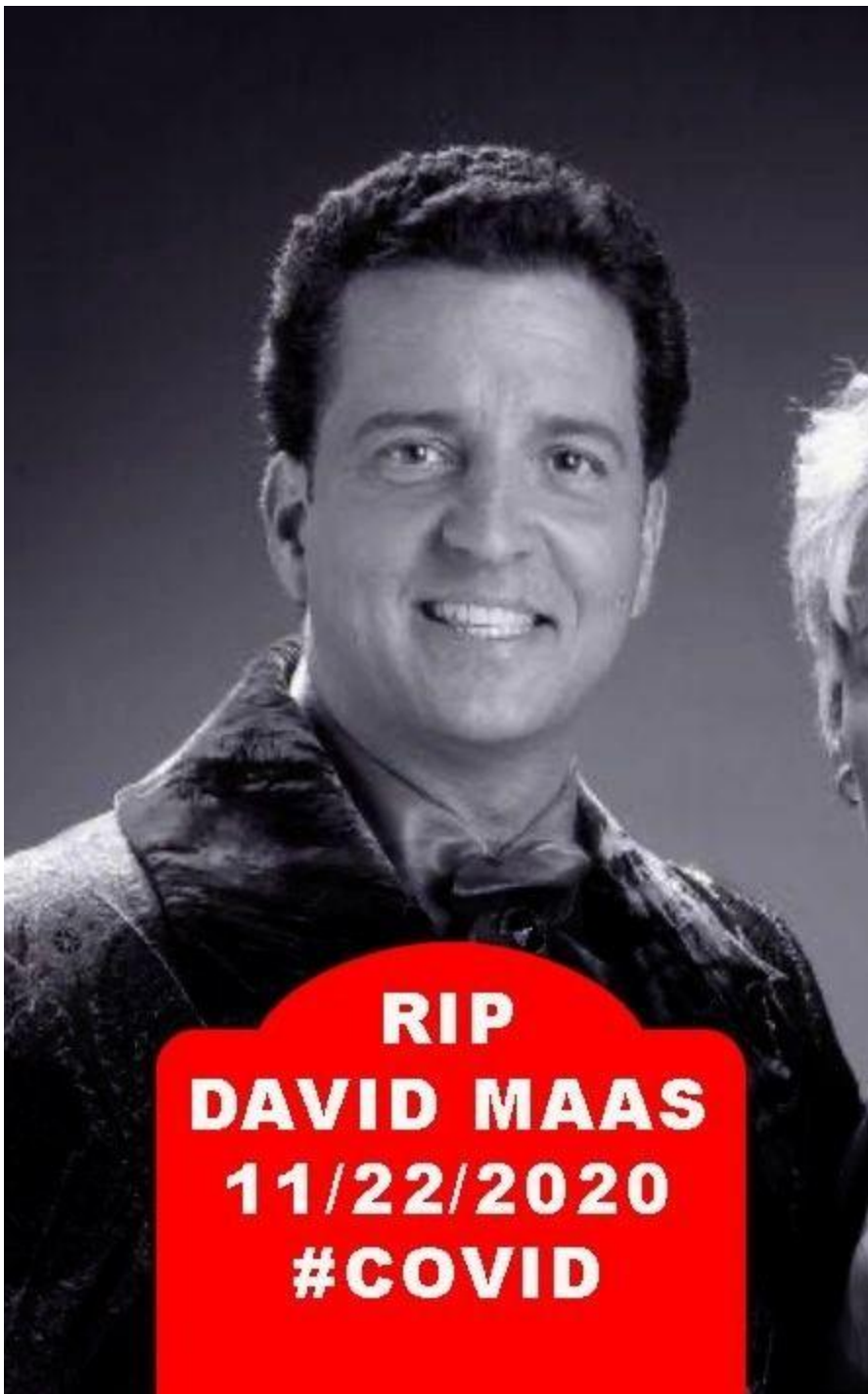
He had an effect that had a series of surprises. The joker was removed and set aside and another card which had a different color back was set aside. The volunteer freely picked a card from the remaining deck. Though they had a free choice from the rest of the deck, the card they selected matched the card with the different color back and the final baffler was that all the other cards were jokers.

Jon had another effect with business cards that were inserted into a deck that matched selected cards and a card prediction that said was from Bill Goldman.

It was a great evening and the magic community remains committed to learning and getting through these challenging times.

Dennis Phillips

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David Maas ( “David and Dania” and AGT winner) died of Covid 19 in Chicago after being on a ventilator...

Maas used the Bio that I wrote (for Magic Magazine) in all his advertising materials.

<http://www.costumechange.com/about-us/bio>

We just talked a few times over the years, especially while I was writing the magazine article and I met him twice.

And here was their award winning act.

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# David Copperfield halts Vegas show after staffer gets virus

*Illusionist David Copperfield is suspending his Las Vegas stage show after a crew member tested positive for COVID-19*

By The Associated Press

November 16, 2020, 2:29 PM • 1 min read



 The Associated Press

*FILE - In this April 24, 2018, file photo, illusionist David Copperfield appears in court in Las Vegas.*[Read More](#)

David Copperfield is suspending his Las Vegas stage show after a crew member tested positive for COVID-19.

The Las Vegas Review Journal reported Monday that the legendary magician has "no idea yet" when his production at MGM Grand will resume.

According to the newspaper, an internal email from MGM Resorts International officials on Friday said one of Copperfield's illusion techs had been exposed to the virus.

Copperfield confirmed the backstage crew member's diagnosis on Sunday.

In a statement, Copperfield said his entire crew would be tested again.

His stage show was one of several residency productions across MGM Resorts that reopened November 6.

The company said on its website that affected ticketholders will be offered refunds or exchanges.

<https://abcnews.go.com/Entertainment/wireStory/david-copperfield-halts-vegas-show-staffer-virus-74238177>

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

**“The Bev Bergeron Ring”**

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Thom Parkin passed this on to me and in the emerging ZOOM age, these keyboard shortcuts can be useful.

<https://www.howtogeek.com/669467/zoom-keyboard-shortcut-and-how-to-use-them/>

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**Sad News.**

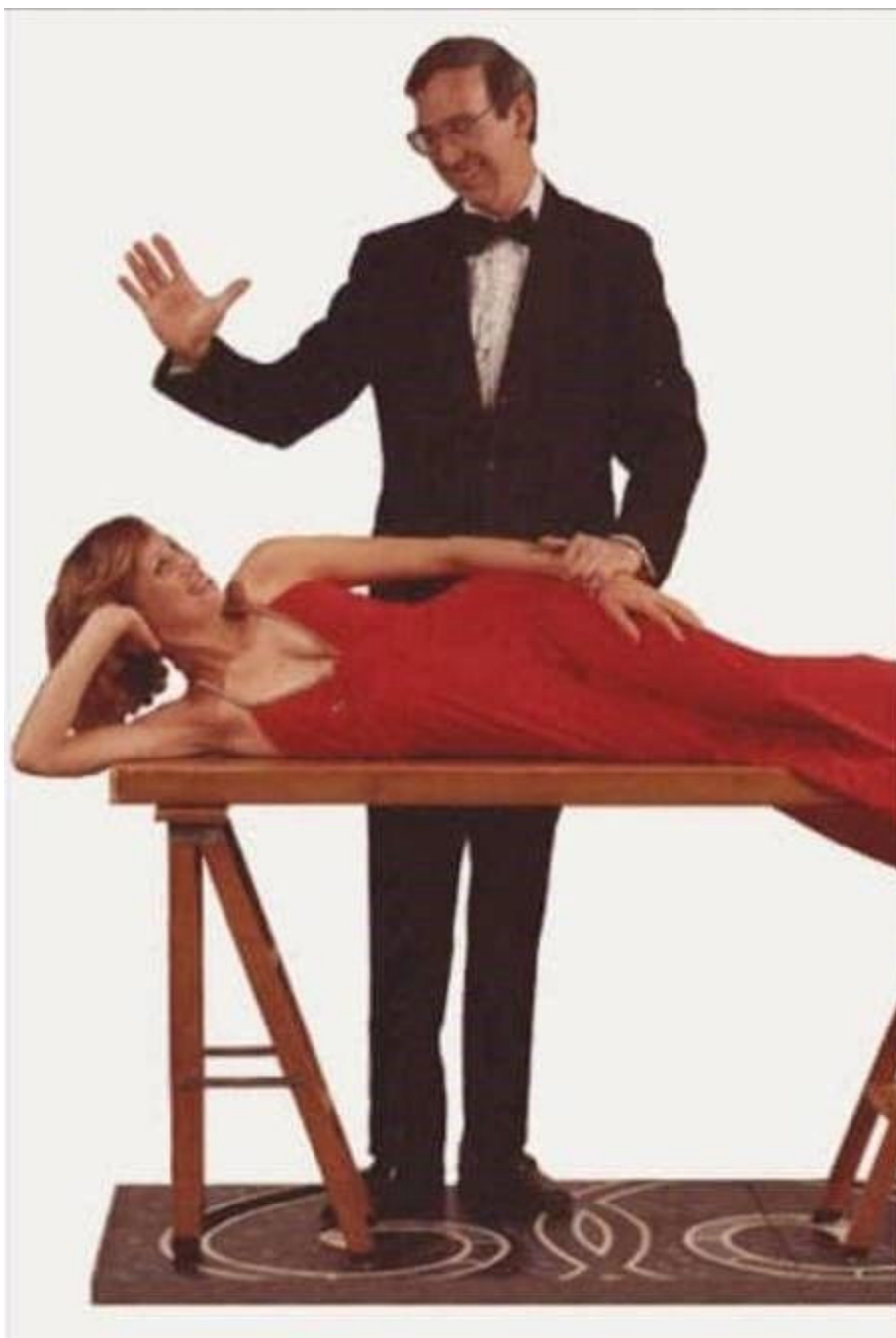
Walter “Zaney Blaney”, of Texas, has passed. He was a legend in the magic industry. He invented & improved many famous magical effects.



Walter “Zaney” Blaney  
1928 - 2020

His Ladder Suspension and gimmicked hoops were used by Copperfield and many of the greats in the Second Golden Age of Illusion.

He appeared on the Johnny Carson Show and many other TV shows and created many routines and magic effects.



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**Brandy Lee & Jason Byrne**

**Jason is a Canadian friend of Greg Frewin and a fine magician in his own right. He has been around Vegas and Cruise ships.**

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Tired of always using the 1089 math trick to force that number on people?

It is a great method but if you have to repeat the force you may want to change it.

One example of 1089 that I use if I am at a friends house is to pick up one of their magazines or coffee table books and look at the


10th word on page 89 at some point earlier and remember the word. They you can announce that you want to see if you can predict something.

Work out them getting 1089 and then have them open the book to page 89 and look at the 10th word.

You need another number force method so put this one in your mentalism tool box. Try this method for a different number.


# peculiar is as peculiar does

**HI!**  
I'VE ALWAYS FELT A LITTLE PECULIAR. I APPEAR AT THE STRANGEST TIMES AND NO ONE KNOWS WHY.



I'M THE ONLY NUMBER THAT SHOWS UP LIKE THIS.  
HERE'S HOW YOU CAN MAKE ME HAPPEN

→ PICK 4 DIFFERENT NUMBERS FROM 0 TO 9 ..... 7 8 2 3

- ARRANGE THEM TO MAKE THE LARGEST NUMBER POSSIBLE. .... 8732
- NOW ARRANGE THEM TO MAKE THE SMALLEST NUMBER POSSIBLE. .... 2378
- SUBTRACT THE SMALL NUMBER FROM THE LARGE ONE. ....  
$$\begin{array}{r} 8732 \\ -2378 \\ \hline 6354 \end{array}$$
- GOOD! 
- NOW, TAKE THE ANSWER AND ARRANGE THOSE NUMBERS TO MAKE THE LARGEST NUMBER POSSIBLE. .... 6543
- AND THE SMALLEST .....  
$$\begin{array}{r} 6543 \\ -3456 \\ \hline 3087 \end{array}$$
- SUBTRACT .....  
$$\begin{array}{r} 8730 \\ -0378 \\ \hline 8352 \end{array}$$
  
$$\begin{array}{r} 8532 \\ -2358 \\ \hline 6174 \end{array}$$

AND THERE I AM!  
TRY IT. I'LL ALWAYS TURN UP, EVENTUALLY. I MAY BE PECULIAR, BUT I'M DEPENDABLE.

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This guy's thinking blows me away! Clever and simple as heck! He is kind of the UF Grant of our time.

I liked how the sword hides the upright part of the gimmick and how he carried it away with the cape.

Asrah

The form could have a little breast development to look more real.

This one blows me away. He has to use a body harness with a form built into the cloth.



<https://antoncorradin.com/corradins-levitation/>

Here is Yagano's approach to a small Suspension.

I really like this variation of the Yagano method! Fake toes would make it a miracle. I have no idea why they do not use them?

This suspension by Jimmy Fingers is also interesting.

All these kinds of suspensions are a tradeoff like Jimmy Fingers' "Magellan". It seems very precarious.

This is an interesting method that reminds me of the Bill Siros method. Watch it starting at 3:00 into this clip.

### The Siros Gimmick



After 150 years you still can't beat the "Broom". Blaney tried to top the Super X, but the expense is probably not worth it, if the Super X is a part of produced scene. Jack Gwynne's ideas may be just as good. The Blaney Hoop is vital to his Ladder suspension.

Copperfield did use the Blaney Suspension to great effect and the Sinatra song and the comedic bits enhanced what was really just a complicated guessing game of what was holding up the woman.

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**Here is a simple floating bit. It can be a gag. UF Grant had a better idea!**

**Bev used this gag on the old Alakazam show.**

**\*\*\*\*\***

**UF Grant had a version of it , in his plans, with an upright flat “Buddha cutout stand”. It only came up to your neck, so you could stand in back of it and do the gag. I believe it is in his booklet on Levitations.**

**You started by standing in front of the cutout and self-hypnotizing. Two assistants held up the large cloth and you scooted around back to get the gimmick. It was made out of thin plywood and wire, like a partial Asrah form and more convincing than two sticks. Slowly your legs floated up until you were horizontal. Then they floated back down and before they removed the cloth , you scooted your body around to resume your position in front of the cutout.**

**When I was in high school, the effect in the Grant booklet ,seemed clever but I was doubtful that it would fool anyone. It wasn’t as good as anything Kalanag had on “International Showtime”, which was on the air at that time.**

**I put the whole thing on a 30 inch by 30 inch platform with casters. I also added some back side-masking, a strip of 15 inch plywood on both sides, to the Buddha cutout to hide my body. This way, your assistants could rotate the small platform about 45 degrees to show part of both sides.**

**I later switched to using my assistant, Sherry, a childhood and adolescent girlfriend. At that time she was about my height, about 5 feet 4 inches, and my final male growth phase has not happened yet. Girls typically physically mature and gain height sooner than males. But by age 17, I was 6 feet and her stiletto heels made our height ratios look good on stage because she was 5 feet 5 inches.**

**Yes, it was the early 60s (1962) and big hair, the bright red lipstick and she was cute. We were about 14 in the photos. She took dance lessons and tried to dress, move and look like Carol Roy and Nani Darnel; very flashy. My style of movement was more like Joe Smiley, a popular East Coast Fair and amusement park act.**

**School had just started in September of 1962 and the current Top 40 record was “Sherry” was the Four Seasons, so I put it on reel to reel tape and made it a part of my opening show track. We worked up a rather adult looking routine . Sherry was not shy and added lots of hip bumps and bold moves . We did win the Jr. High Talent show. We were lucky that we did not get disqualified. Maybe the audience just thought that we were doing a good satirical impression. Looking back at the variety shows in the early 60s, they did have a fair number of clubs acts like Al Delage and Margaret and Fantasio and Monica. Sherry copied the moves of the woman assistants.**

**Both her parents and my parents realized that we were not children anymore. That can be painful and frightening for parents. Parents are thrilled you are maturing but don’t want you to lose your childhood innocence.**

**My "UF Grant style" levitation worked and it worked very well, believe it or not. I still think about updating the concept. I performed it until I built a Super X in college and even then performed it a few times though college and I think that I gave it to Vince Carmen when I lived in Charlotte.**

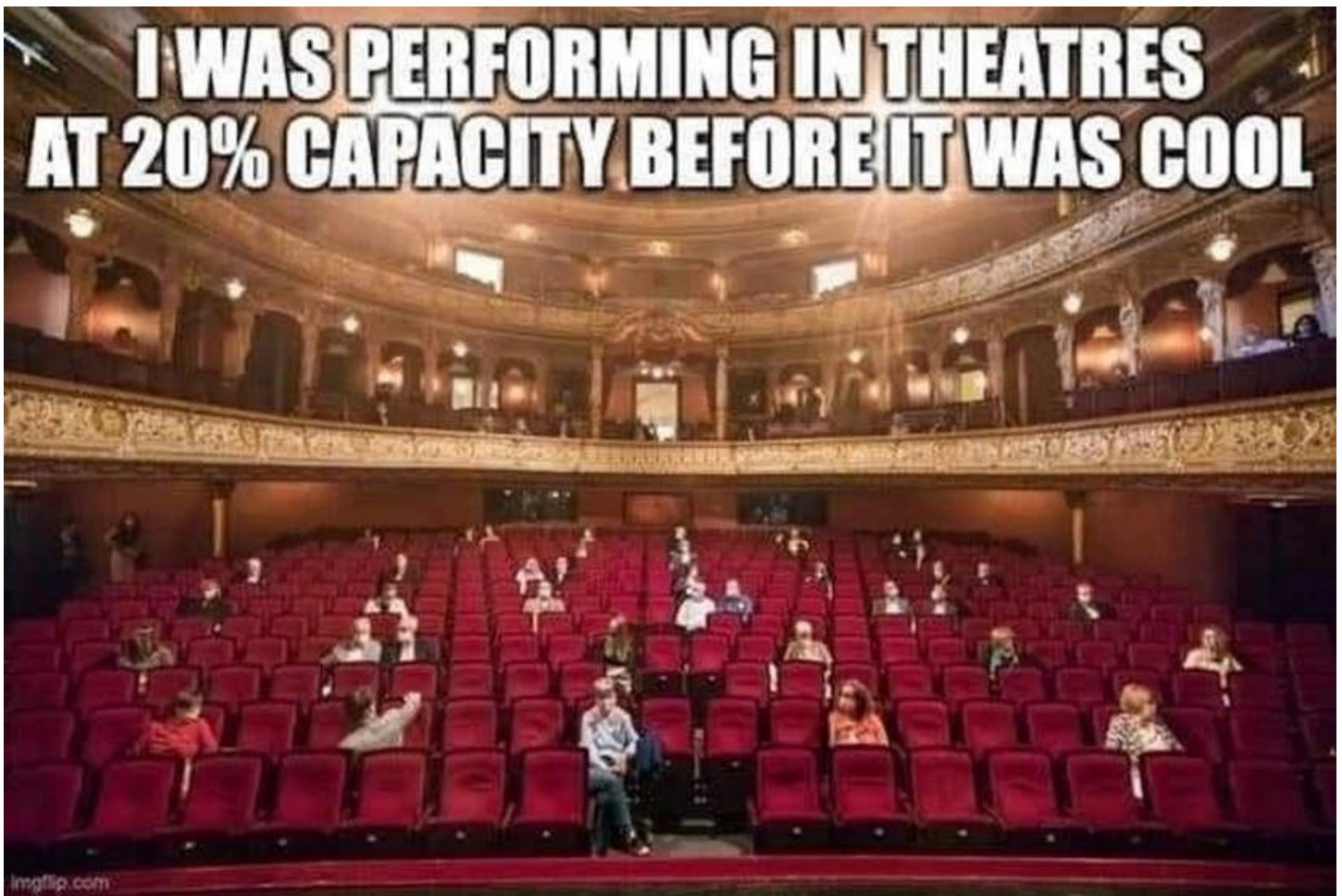
**Grant was a genius of simplicity.**

**Dennis and Sherry at age 14**



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**Okay, I am not afraid to admit it.**



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I like quick and interesting girl appearances like Dan Summer's "Instant Babe".

It is difficult to get the timing correct. In this clip at this time of :36 into the effect, the video shows the girl moving around behind him to get into position for

her appearance. I circled her arm and the top of her head.

The effect requires her to piggy back on him so he can raise the curtain up to show only his legs and feet. But it is a pretty effect and we can

curse this public video for being able to show this to you.



Daniel Summers Instant Babe Illusion

This similar production is not quite as dramatic but much easier to work.

I like the fact that the clothes bar at the top is actually the hand hold for the girl to use when she is “chinning” up

and hiding her legs after emerging from the base. This is a nice addition to girl appearances.

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The great Harry Blackstone Jr. and the Brainwave Deck

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Take a look at this... His 1985 show. Its the great Richiardi Jr. and he does the old rice bowls but oh my! *It is how he does it.*



Click and watch the whole show

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Mark O'Brien is a former Orlando resident and Orlando was his base for years for his illusion show. He worked two seasons In the Stanleyville Theater at Busch Gardens and sailed his magic on cruise ships out of Miami.

The Nickelodeon Network and his frequent appears led him to relocate from New Jersey to Orlando.

The ring that Mark O'Brien wears on his middle finger was given to him by the CBS Television Production Prop department to wear in

David Copperfield's third Network special for his "Ring Finger" James Bond spoof. He is the one David borrows the ring from and is in the plaid jacket next to David.



**This bit can be seen at 11:38 into the program.**

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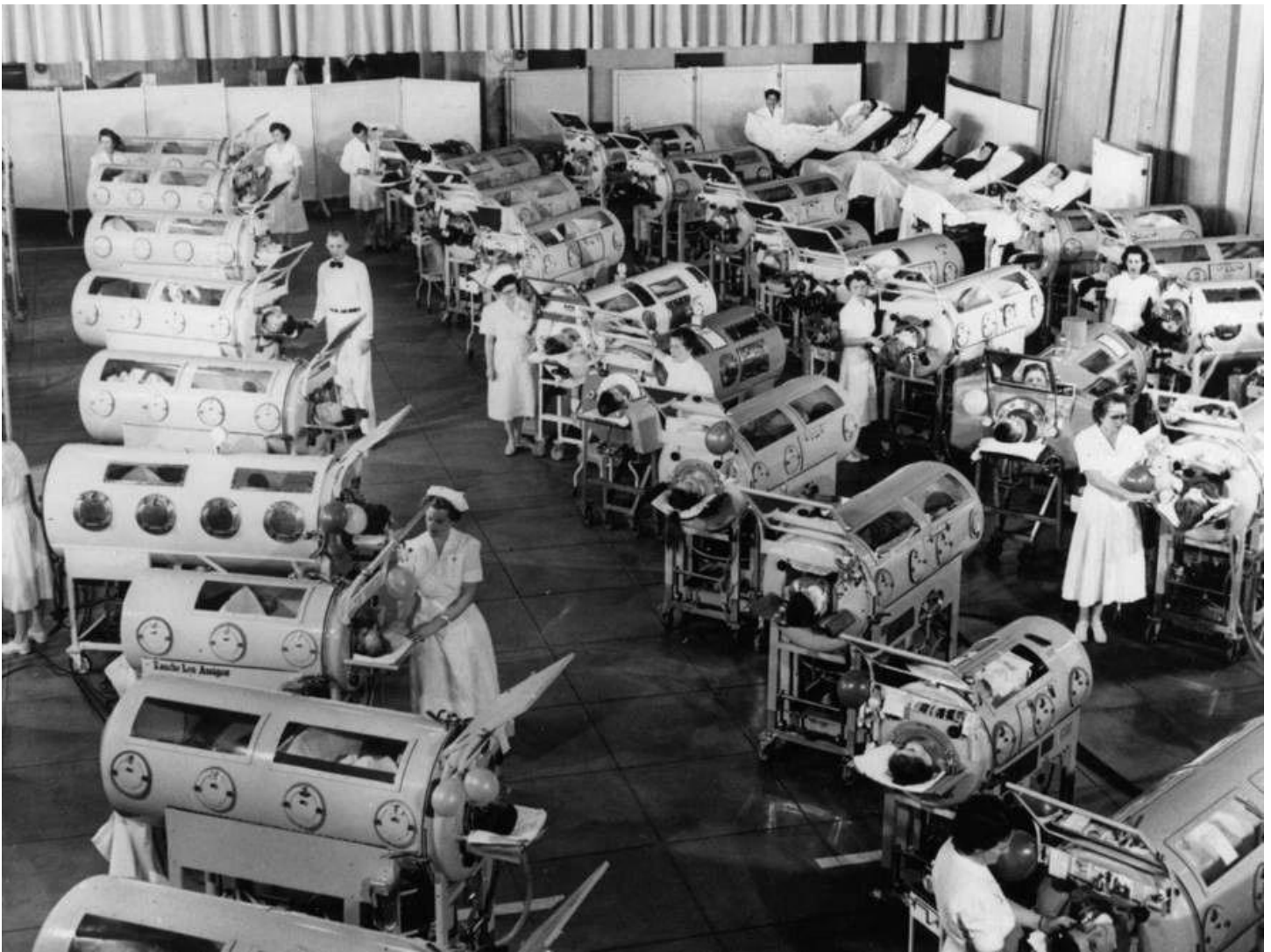
**Pause here for a little side art, Ventriloquism. This is Lou Dupont. His show was not for kids. It was only suggestive but hilarious like old Burlesque shows.**

**LEWIS WARREN Lewis B. Warren, a.k.a. Lou Dupont, 84, died on Oct. 21, 2012, in Las Vegas. He was a world-renowned entertainer and ventriloquist who performed his act with his three star dummies. He traveled across the globe with his act from Asia, to Europe, and into Africa, plus he performed in Bob Hopes USO Tours in the 1950's and 1960's. All of his dummies were hand-made. Lou got into live theater in San Francisco. For many years, Lou resided in Las Vegas and his own show, "Burlesque Burlesque Burlesque," at the Royal Las Vegas Hotel and Casino.**

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**Here are my ideas on the epidemic and fear that all of us early baby-boomers lived through and what we learned.**

**We will get through COVID -19 and learn.**



**Poliomyelitis (Polio) was a relatively unremarkable disease, for most of human history – it caused paralysis and occasionally death, but only in a tiny fraction of those infected. It was essentially unknown in infants and adults, and usually only caused mild symptoms in children.**

**This all changed in the early 1900s, when the disease mysteriously transformed into a deadly epidemic, killing many and maiming many more.**

**That pandemic was my generation's COVID-19 scourge back in the early 1950s.**

**Deadly recurrences of polio became a fact of life in developed modern countries, particularly in cities during the summer.**

**Movie theaters, beaches and swimming pools were closed, due to fear; families fled to the countryside when the weather got warm.**

**Clearly something had changed, but what could cause a mild disease to turn into a killer all but overnight?**

**The secret lies, paradoxically, in the 19th century's better understanding of sanitation! The germ theory of disease was developed, and antiseptic surgery (Joseph Lister, Ignaz Semmelweis) and**

sanitary and germ-free environments were seen as healthful. Wealthy parents dressed their children in white clothes and extreme cleanliness was desired.

In young babies, polio can be mistaken for a mild cold – if there are symptoms at all – because they still have protective antibodies left over from their mothers. This early exposure was enough to make the infant immune to that particular serotype of the disease for the rest of his or her life.

It's only when children grow older and lose those maternal antibodies that a polio infection can present in its devastating, paralytic form.

Clearly there was something new to prevent the early exposure of infants to the polio virus. One major clue was the fact that the disease primarily affected , wealthy urban families. The cleaner your surroundings were, the more likely you were to get the worst form of polio.

Perhaps there was something in the water? We now know that polio is spread through a fecal-oral contact route, and almost always through contaminated water.

The adoption of modern plumbing, sewer systems and water treatment facilities in the late 1800s and early 1900s meant that infants were far less likely to be exposed to polio during the early 'safe' phase. Without that immunity gained in infancy, a chance infection later in life could be deadly.

If your mother had herself never been exposed to polio, you didn't even have the blessing of a safe period in infancy. You, and your young immune system, were just as much at risk as older children and adults.

As with all new technologies, improved sanitation had some utterly unforeseeable ramifications. Clean water upset a millennia-old balance between poliomyelitis and our immune systems.

In some ways this also explains why younger children today have immune systems to fight off the current Covid-19 Pandemic but unlike a virus that had been around for a long time, Covid-19 seems to be a novel mutation. Unseen before.

Once one of the world's most feared diseases, however, polio is now all but nonexistent.

The haunting pictures of children in “Iron Lungs” still remains from my youth in the early 1950s.

After the epidemic peaked in the 1940s and mid-1950s, polio went into a swift decline thanks to two successful vaccines, the Salk killed virus and the Sabin oral live attenuated virus. They worked in different ways to build immunity, but that is another story.

Keeping polio at bay, of course, depends on everyone getting their kids vaccinated – or going back to pre-modern standards of less stringent cleanliness for young children.

I was really lucky that my Grandmother, of Dutch decent, was from rural Arkansas and I lived in the country. She used to try to explain to my mother, a spotlessly clean Italian woman, that toddlers needed to get dirty during the day and then cleaned up only at night. She believed that as children got older , they needed to be more clean, but not before age two. She used to tell my mother that there was a reason that babies and toddler crawled in the dirt and that was to make them healthy later. It was part of her folk medicine and folk culture, as was the idea that diet fiber ( lacking in

modern refined foods) helped you fight off illness. Today, we know that your gut microbiome is important to your immune function. My grandma uses to talk about the “Great White Death Foods” : White flour, White Sugar, White Salt, White Alcohol and others.

Metformin (Glucophage- literally “sugar eater”) is the most widely prescribed drug to treat type II diabetes. Among other actions, it boosts a beneficial intestinal bacterium called *Akkermansia muciniphila*.

Studies show that this bacterium has specific actions that combat diabetes and obesity.

A study from *Johns Hopkins* shed new light on metformin’s role as a microbiome-modifying, anti-diabetic drug.

Exposing people with multiple sclerosis to parasitic worms (helminths) can reduce their levels of inflammation and reduce their MS disease activity. My guess is that the immune system is too busy fighting the worms to waste time on fighting your good tissues and organs.

This research arose after it was observed that some conditions, including MS, are less prevalent in countries where parasitic worm infections are common. This gave rise to the 'hygiene hypothesis' or the 'old friends' theory' that a cleaner modern lifestyle means that children are no longer exposed to infections, parasites and other environmental factors to the same degree as previously, and that this has led to an increase in susceptibility to conditions such as asthma, inflammatory bowel disease and MS.

My guess is that even after we get the COVID-19 Pandemic solved, there will be a push to boost all our immune systems against pathogens still unknown. Immunology will become an increasingly important medical specialty.

Dennis