



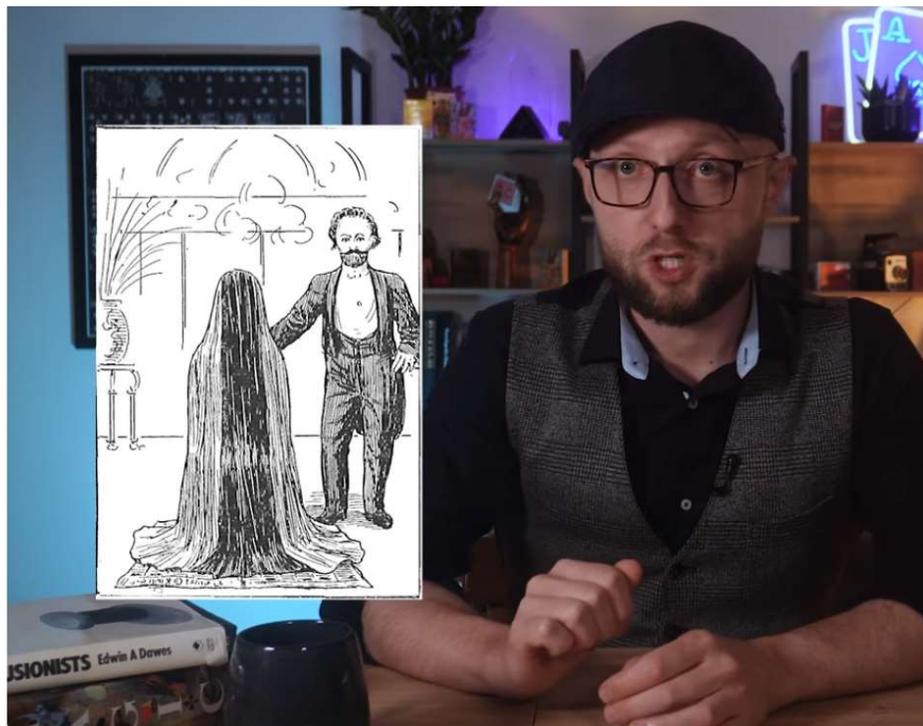
Dennis Deliberations ... Ring # 170, Assembly #99

“The Bev and Alouise Bergeron Ring”

February 2026

A great history and examples of The de Kolta Chair

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=78eSQpWxI74>



Buatier de Kolta's Vanishing Lady Explained | The Greatest Illusion That Could Never Be Repeated

An interesting idea!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=puYpVBA8dU&t=100s>



Buma's Ultra Thumb Load

Thank you, Henry Radzinsky, for your sense of humor!



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nDj-XpxmN4Q&t=4s>

Great tutorial if you want to learn the Elmsley Count! It is a classic card move to count 4 cards but only show 3 of them.



Elmsley Count Tutorial



"Sometimes I think I would enjoy things more if I had a lower I.Q."

Cartoon from The Linking Ring, January 2026

Artificial Intelligence on the Internet "sees all and tells all", apparently, but sometimes, to my thinking it also seems to negatively overstate the case about magic and magicians. Fortunately, as you'll see below, the final paragraph ends on a high note:

Magicians frequently criticize their own art form due to a deep-seated desire to elevate it from simple "cheesy" tricks to a more profound theatrical experience

. This internal criticism often stems from a high standard of performance, frustration with clichéd methods, and a desire to distance themselves from amateurish, egocentric, or outdated performances.

Here are the primary reasons why magicians criticize their own field:

Many performers are dissatisfied with magic being viewed merely as a collection of puzzles to be solved.

A common complaint is that magic has not evolved, with many performers relying on outdated personas, props, and jokes.

The "Clown" stereotype: There is a strong negative reaction to the stereotype of the magician as a cheesy, dorky, or arrogant performer, which the critics believe holds the art back.

Lack of Originality: Critics often call out the repetition of standard tricks (like card tricks) and the failure of magicians to write their own unique routines.

The magical community often clashes over how secrets should be treated, leading to internal conflict.

Ethics vs. Innovation: While many believe revealing secrets ("exposure") destroys the magic, others argue it forces creators to innovate and improve.

Ethical Concerns: Criticism is often directed at those who expose methods for fame or, alternatively, at magic companies that sell unethical, "ripped-off" tricks to beginners.

A major point of internal criticism is the balance between technical skill and entertainment value. "Knuckle-busting" (highly technical sleight of hand) is often criticized if it does not translate into a better experience for the audience.

Lack of Storytelling: Performers are often criticized for focusing on the props and "explaining the obvious" rather than using magic as a medium to tell a story or connect with people.

Jealousy and Ego: Like any close-knit community, there is a degree of professional jealousy and elitism.

Sour Grapes: Some criticism stems from bitterness, where performers might criticize successful colleagues out of envy. Older or more

experienced magicians may harshly judge amateurs, which is often viewed as "elitism" rather than constructive criticism.

Ultimately, there is also a healthy criticism that often is a sign of passion—a desire to move the art forward, foster innovation, and ensure magic is seen as a legitimate, respected, and awe-inspiring form of entertainment.

From Larry Thornton, Calgary, Canada

https://thedrawingsofsteranko.com/festival_steranko.html

Still trim and doing escapes in his 80s! Look at the photos. I still have that 1964 Genii Steranko Escape Issue. Great artwork! It thrilled me to no end at the time. He was bright and had a great escape act. He was just 50 years too late.

He is a remarkable man. He is most famous for his comic book artwork.





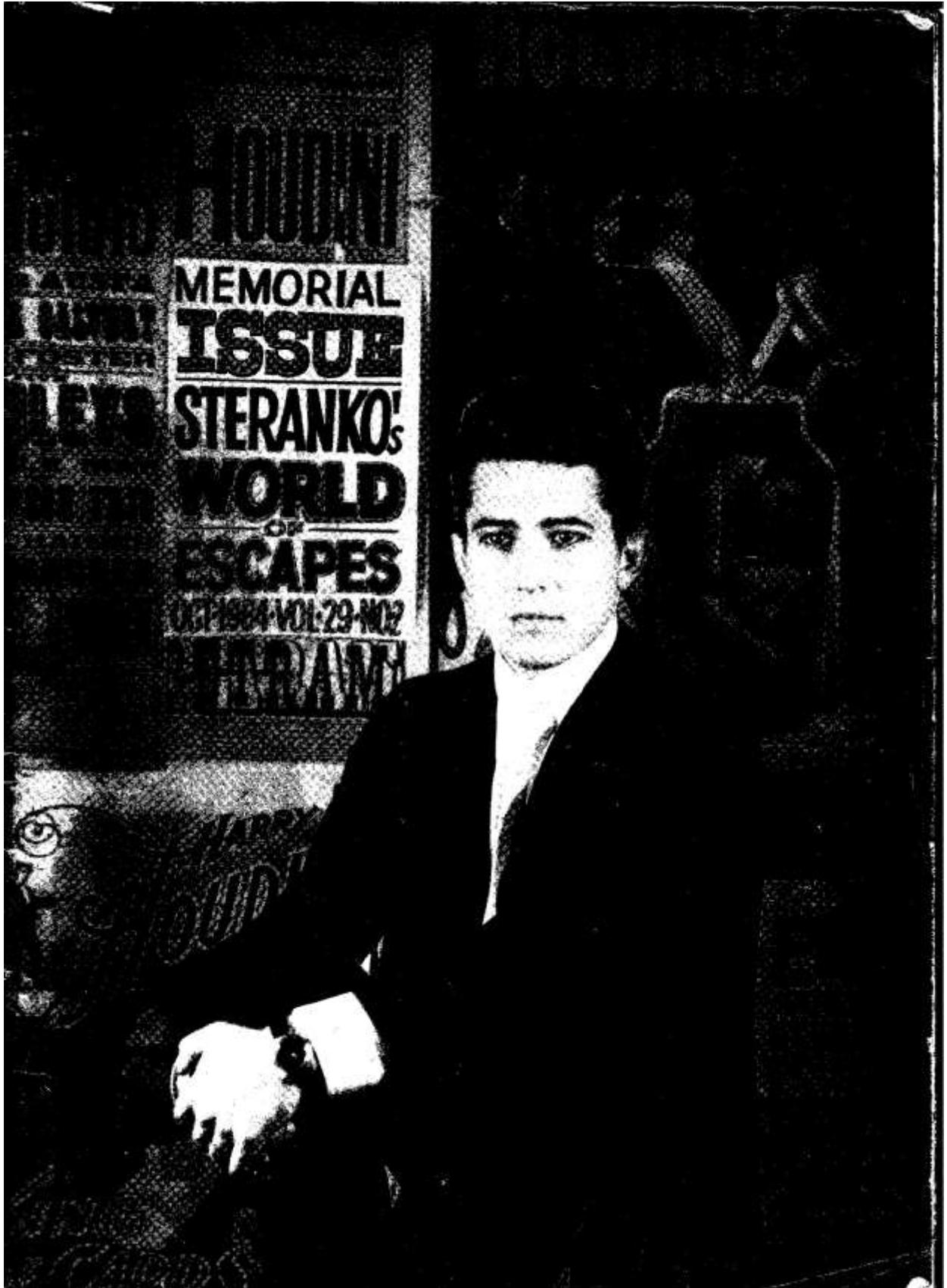
My High School girlfriend and magic assistant at the time (1964) looked at his pictures in the magazine and said , “Oh my, he is really nice looking!”



Emmogene Miller

So, I quickly bought a strait jacket from Abbotts and started doing some escapes... It wasn't as dramatic as being chained to a railroad track. I probably looked silly, but I was an opportunist.

Notice that Steranko did a rail escape like Dan Stapleton did at Circus World.



DANGER IS MY BUSINESS



The content of this section in our essay on escapology deals with effects which have added in great proportion the essence of danger. Many of these were ideas, simply thoughts that were yet untried. Others were, however, given a baptism of fire and worked with great success. They all make interesting reading and add fuel to the fire of imagination.

THE DEATH DEFYING RAILROAD ESCAPE is described in an old catalogue thusly, "effect . . . the performer is handcuffed, shackled and spiked down to a railroad track as a fast passenger train approaches from a distance. He makes his escape and jumps up from his bondage just as the train is a few hundred feet from him. If this sensational escape will not get a column write-up and send the shivers thru an anxious crowd, nothing will."

Obviously, the performer must employ "JUMP" cuffs for this stunt. The first step is to clock the speed of the oncoming train several days beforehand and note exactly how much time elapses before it reaches a predetermined point.

Using his own cuffs and irons, the escape king is shackled hand and foot and spiked in **SPREAD EAGLE POSITION** on the tracks. The spikes are driven into the railroad ties in a position so there is no possibility of the train running over a cuff or iron.

For this stunt, we devised a special kind of "jump" cuff. Using a ratchet cuff, we filed slightly round only the teeth which entered the lock last. **TO ESCAPE, THE CUFF WAS PULLED OPEN UNTIL THE UNFILED TEETH TOOK HOLD, GIVING US JUST ENOUGH SPACE TO SLIP OUR HANDS THROUGH.** Upon immediate examination, the cuff was still locked and resisted any further attempt to force it open.

Bear in mind that, though the spectators may be 10 or 20 yards away, you are still in full view. Make arrangements to have them placed on one side of the track only. The leg irons can be shimmed open just as well as being gaffed. We've **SWITCHED A CHALLENGER'S CUFF** for our own on this stunt, without anyone being the wiser. You see, his key worked in both cuffs. Of course, we knew beforehand what make the cuff was and its condition.

Play up a lot of straining and struggling, but when that train reaches a pre-determined point, **WASTE NO TIME.** Know **EXACTLY** how long it will take to free yourself. Incidentally, **USE THE SPIKE** to help pull off the first cuff. Our notes mentioned also a **STRAITJACKET ESCAPE** using leg irons that were spiked to the middle of the track.

This is a clever illusion!

Watch the presentation on stage in this clip.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-BudexgzJxE>



Tony Laffan Empty Spaces Illusion and Opening Dance Routine



TonyLaffan
245 subscribers

Subscribe



32



Share

Save

Clip

Download



PHILLIPS
2026

TONY LAFFAN'S
"EMPTY SPACES"

