

SPECIAL PANDEMIC EDITION # 23

July 27, 2021 | Archived Famulus



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

-Orlando and nation still on a slowly relaxing pandemic alert with pockets of high COVID rates continuing-

Our live, in-person meetings resumed this July at the International House of Pancakes, on Kirkman Road in Orlando and we plan to continue live monthly meetings on the 3rd Wednesday of every month. Hopefully the good times are back. Zoom meetings have been discontinued for the time being. Precautions are still advised for the unvaccinated and those concerned about the Delta variant and as an option , for those who want, at the meetings, we will assist them in practicing social distancing and wearing masks in the meetings.

The regular meeting was preceded by a board business meeting and we reviewed our budget and procedures for returning to normal with dues and in-person activities.

President Mike Matson gaveled the regular meeting to order and we had 26 present. He first did a touching tribute to the late Bev and Alouise Bergeron. They usually sat in the same chairs on the side of the room, so Mike made a blue and a pink balloon dog and put the doggies in the chairs to remind us of their presence, in spirit. Bev was known for creating the now popular one balloon animal. The name of our group has been changed and we identify now as the Bev and Alouise Bergeron Ring. It was announced by Mike and Dan Stapleton that a memorial for Bev and Alouise will be held this October 2nd at the Magic History Conference being held in Orlando and some of Bev's memorabilia and books will be sold by Bev's family.

Thom Parkin showed his memory training deck used to learn the Aronson stack. He had a deck created using pictures and other cues to help anyone quickly learn the stack. He has the decks for sale on the club website.

President Matson noted that every meeting Bev Bergeron did a “teach-in” and we will miss that, so Mike did another of his Theory and Thaumaturgy presentations. This was about the ways to present the “Multiple Outs” classic mental trick with the card, envelope and pencil. He went into great detail with the patter and psychology.

The show portion of the meeting opened with Bob Swaddling doing the Animated Matchboxes and then he added a magician-fooling ending where he completely separated the boxes. David Freeman did his Renaissance Fair act with Multum in Parvo. He said that he was pouring Meade, a popular drink of the time made from fermented honey. The Meade kept filling larger glasses and then none of the glasses could hold it all.

Pasquale had a baffling routine with three Rubiks cubes. He predicted what a spectator’s random moves would produce and make a selected color appear on one side on another cube and quickly solved the last cube.

Steve Nelson borrowed two decks of cards and had them divided and a card chosen. He then took out his cell phone and had a spectator time the amount of seconds to find the card from a mixed up pile. The seconds matched the location of the card in the other spectators pack!

Closing out the show, Dan Stapleton , standing on the other side of the room, had a spectator divide a deck of cards into 3 piles and then do a slop shuffle and Dan was still able to quickly find the card.

Dennis Phillips

Because live performances are vital to our magical art, some current information about public health issues may be helpful to you. I know that as a performer, I want to get back to work.

The good news on COVID 19 is that , so far, the death rates have been falling. The less welcome news is that Florida earlier this week made up one-fifth of the country’s new coronavirus infections. Florida Governor DeSantis said that it was a Summer Surge, from having more people out and about and would recede in August. Other medical advisors added that the surge is also due to the lack of full vaccination and the rise of the new “Delta Variant” of the virus among the unvaccinated. The Governor affirmed that Florida will not go into a lockdown and is against mask mandates and vaccine “passports”.

In Florida’s last two weekly reports, the number of new cases of COVID 19 shot up from 23,000 to 45,000 and then 73,000 on Friday, an average of more than 10,000 day. Hospitals,



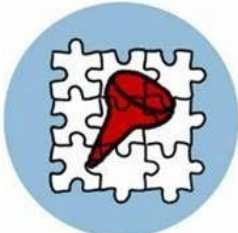

here at the end of July, are starting to run out of space in parts of the state, especially in the Jacksonville area.

Since the Corona virus is a single strand RNA virus, it can mutate easily and that can cause continuing mutations and variations. You all are probably familiar with how the Influenza family of viruses are classified by the structure of their outer shells, such as N1H1 and so forth. The different Corona group of viruses are also classified by their molecular structure.

Let's hope that we do not return to the pre-vaccine days of mass death and illness. Most scientists and medical practitioners have praised the results of vaccinations but still some people make the choice to not be vaccinated. That is their choice. My wife and I and my son, a school teacher, have had both doses of the Pfizer mRNA vaccine and my Registered Nurse daughter had both doses. My youngest daughter got the J&J single dose vaccine before leaving for grad school in Italy. None of us have had any side effects, so we join millions who have been successfully vaccinated.

For those who want to know, there are Four Vaccine types and they all work differently in our immune system: In the United States, we only have access to the mRNA vaccines and the Jansen (J&J) vector vaccine.

Even before coronavirus broke out in 2019, pharmaceutical companies were working on designs for vaccines they could quickly adapt to a pandemic strain of virus. Their work paid off in some of the new Covid-19 vaccines being tested and prepared for rollout as illustrated below.

 mRNA VACCINE	 VECTOR VACCINES	 PROTEIN SUBUNIT VACCINE	 WHOLE, KILLED VACCINES
Used by: Pfizer, Moderna Doses: 2 mRNA vaccines are the newest approach. They use genetic material called messenger RNA, a kind of genetic software that instructs cells to make a piece of the coronavirus spike protein. That will get the attention of the immune system. The mRNA is coated in soft fatty lipids to protect it.	Used by: AstraZeneca, Janssen, Sputnik Doses: 1-2 Vector vaccines use another virus to carry in the genetic instructions to make the spike protein. For coronavirus they all use adenoviruses, a type of common cold virus. They attach to cells and inject DNA that tells the cells to make coronavirus spike protein.	Used by: Novavax, Sanofi Doses: 1-2 Protein subunit vaccines just get little pieces of the target virus circulating in the system for the immune system to find and recognize. Instead of using the human body as the vaccine factory, genetically engineered insect viruses are used to infect moths, whose cells then produce the pieces of coronavirus spike protein. These are harvested and made into a vaccine.	Used by: Sinovac Doses: 1 Whole inactivated virus vaccines take longer to make because batches of the coronavirus must first be grown and then killed using a chemical or heat, and then made into a vaccine that can be injected to elicit an immune response.

The big question, then, is how long, if you get COVID 19, does natural immunity from the virus last? Scientists can't answer that yet as the virus hasn't been with us for long enough.

The same is true for the vaccine -- we don't know how long the immunity from the vaccine lasts either.

Scientists assumed that the vaccine would provide some form of immunity for a number of years, said Peter Collignon, a professor of microbiology at the Australian National University,. "But the bottom line is, we don't know yet."

At the moment, the coronavirus vaccines look like they are more effective than the influenza vaccine, which needs to be administered every year.

Scientists are optimistic about the vaccine and think the chance of long-term side effects is unlikely. As Jonathan Stoye, from the Francis Crick Institute in London, puts it: "I think the risk is much greater from the virus than the vaccine."

But that doesn't mean there aren't still questions about the vaccine beyond how long immunity lasts. We don't know whether the virus will mutate, in a way that will render a vaccine ineffective. The longer we take to vaccinate large swaths of the population, the more opportunity it has to mutate, said Ferran. And some of the new vaccines employ mRNA technology, which has never been used widely before -- raising questions about whether the immunity from those vaccines will last for the same length of time as traditional vaccines.



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

“The Bev and Alouise Bergeron Ring”

“Be so good they can’t ignore you.” – Steve Martin

Pam Thompson, wife of Johnny Thompson, passes.

Thompson died at the Las Vegas home she shared with her friend Steve Mullica, after a five-year battle with Alzheimer’s. She was 86.

Thompson had been in failing health since the death of her legendary husband, Johnny “The Great Tomsoni” Thompson, in March 2019. Her ashes will be laid to rest alongside Thompson’s at the Magic Graveyard in Colon, Mich.

Pam Thompson appeared in The Great Tomsoni act shortly after the two married in 1973. The duo would grow into a popular specialty act on the Strip in the 1970s and 1980s. The two toured internationally and across the country and were a Vegas showroom favorite.

Pam Thompson was a classically trained actress, studying with Lee Strasberg at The Actors Studio in New York and appearing in several summer-stock productions.

In 2010 she became the first magicians assistant ever to be awarded a "Performing Fellowship" from the Academy of Magical Arts.



Here is their classic act

Here is an excellent piece of magical theater. It is the classic Orange, Lemon, Egg and Canary by the late Tommy Wonder.

It has a totally different feel from the way Richiardi Jr., Fu Manchu ,David Copperfield and others have done it.

Tommy Wonder has made it a theatrical play and it has a refined European feel rather than the more typical rushed circus feel.

Carl Ballantine used to have a very funny line. He would freeze his movement and with a arrogant swagger say, “Every move a picture!” Few realize that his phrase is taught as the key to all performance dance....the “position”, the “transition”, the “pose”...It is all created to make a pretty picture.

When my wife and I taught ballroom dance, most pictures taken at dance recitals were always greeted with pain by the students. They would complain about their body, leg and arm positions as well as the look on their faces. I would always say, “Make every move a picture!”

Every serious student of stagecraft, show production and stage shows should recognize Italian, French and Russian ballet and the differences among them. (French style) pays more attention to elegance and precision. Cecchetti (Italian style) pays more attention to technique. Vaganova (Russian style) is very precise and focuses on flexibility. I prefer Vaganova. In terms of a dance style for illusionists it is similar to the very physical and dynamic Gene Kelly as opposed to the more French Fred Astaire. James Dimmare is an example of Fred Astaire style which we uses for his cabaret act. The Pendragon’s Substitution Trunk could be described as “Every move a picture!”.

This is actually a great effect that can be themed. (clients logo, “happy birthday” etc.)

It is a commercial item

And can be seen in different forms from different dealers. Just Google “Tic Tac Toe Pro”

The secret is not too complicated, but here it is!

The Thin Model Sawing has the assistant laying face up in a box with almost no room above her. Her head is seen on one end and her feet on the other end. The magician saws through the slit in middle of the box using a large wood saw, cutting thin wooden strips proving that the saw is real. The magician then inserts two flat metal blades into the slits in the center of the box, dividing it into two separate halves. The halves are pushed apart, and the magician walks in between them. The small side doors are opened, and the assistant's legs are seen inside the bottom section, and she extends her arm out of the other door in the upper section. The table halves are then pushed together, and the side doors closed. The blades are removed, as well as the neck and ankle stocks. The box is opened, and the assistant stands up and she is safely back in one piece.

Milbourne Christopher says in his *Illustrated History of Magic* that Turkish magician, Zati Sungar shrank the size of the Thurston/Dante/Carter "Sawing in Half" box and creating the "thin model" sawing. Sungar developed this illusion around the 1936 according to Jim Steinmeyer's *The Complete Jarrett*. Guy Jarrett developed a similar illusion some years earlier, but it lacked the Sungar features of side doors.

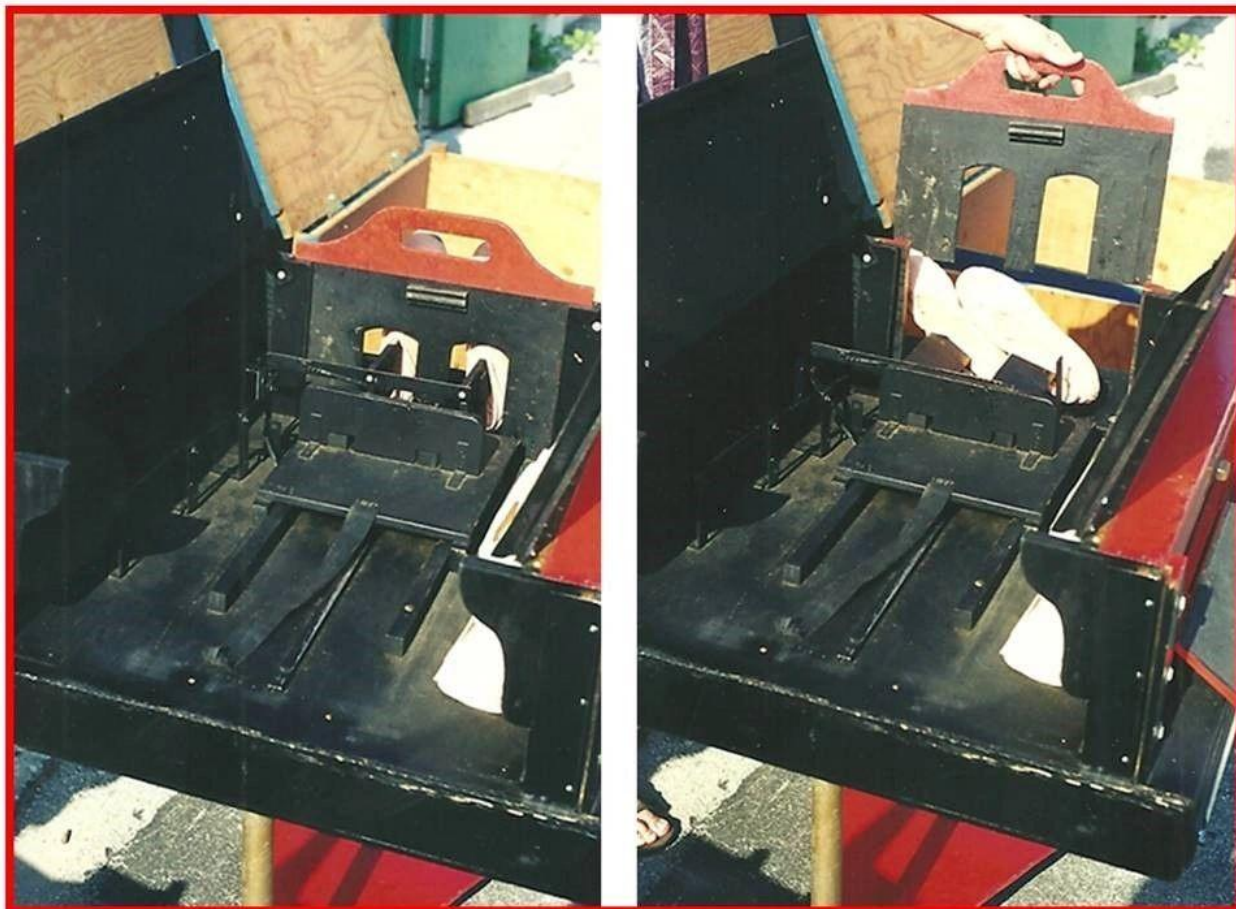
Sungar traded his secret to Tihany around 1945. Bob "Torchy" Towner saw Tihany's version and showed it to John Daniel of Owen Magic in Los Angeles. John Daniel and Carl Owen then created the version in the late 1950s that we know today.

My illusion, which I built in 1973 is based on the Alcorn and Abbotts versions. It lacks some of the clever Owen's features like remote control fake feet, which hinge up from the bottom footrest and the fake leg which folds into the bottom box. My feet just push out from the box and the leg fake is permanently fixed.

I made my sawing to exactly fit my wife's size. I first made a cardboard mockup of the top box. I still have the illusion. The photos show the prop and the two wooden crates that hold it.

To push out the feet the assistant just kicks them out and to pull them back into to box, she pulls the strap. The feet are mounted on a hinge mechanism and a monofilament line goes out the backside and it has a loop in it. By pulling the line, the magician, or his male helper can make the feet move.





This is a NO FORCE Mental Epic. I don't understand how it could fool anybody.

It seems so obvious, to me, on the video that he was filling in the previous answer, as he supposedly wrote the next one. This was due to the ease of raising the paper slips.

Few outside the business would know that and the "one ahead" is not known or understood by most audiences, so maybe it is an improvement over Hen Fetch's original version.

At least, it is nothing mechanical like the regular Mental Epic and does not need that final lame irrelevant force.

This is an example of the showmanship and cleverness of the late Paul Daniels.

"Going through the Great Wall of China (mugs)"!

Can we laugh now?

Here were some of my standard gags during the worst of the lock down:

The Covid-19 virus is still bad in India. I haven't receive a phone call for an extended car warranty in 2 weeks.

Things are tough in Disney Studios. Snow White is down to six dwarfs. Sneezy was placed under quarantine...

In Germany, everyone is panic buying sausages and cheese. It's the Wurst Käse scenario.

They identified the first person that contracted the Coronavirus in China. His name is Ah Choo...

Lately I've had a lot of pains and aches. I may have that dreaded Chinese disease - Yung No Mo...

I asked a worker at Walmart where I could find the nuts. He said that today they're in the toilet paper aisle...

I had to go grocery shopping. Prunes were half off at Winn Dixie today. I got a good run for my money.

I read the CDC's list for Coronavirus and wonder how a fever, cough and shortness of breath would cause a shortage of toilet paper...

Many people aren't shaking hands because of the Coronavirus. I'm not shaking hands because stores are out of toilet paper...

All this stress has led me to drinking. I keep trying to make a healthy protein shake, but somehow it always comes out as a margarita.

Someone told me about using vodka for cleaning the house. It worked! The more vodka I drank, the cleaner the house looked.

I must have been drinking too much because I got the results of my latest blood test, the doctor offered me \$60.00 a case.

Ever since I hit 65, my insurance company only sends me half a free calendar at a time. Yesterday my insurance agent called. He said that considering the corona virus, he wanted the calendar back.

With this virus going around, at my age I am only buying day-old bread.

Sad what is going on in Italy. You know that I am part Italian.

I was in first grade in school and the teacher asked me for the definition of “innuendo”. I told her it was an Italian suppository. What did I know?

The virus has messed but the cruise business. I remember my last cruise. I spent a lot of time with a pirate - Captain Morgan.

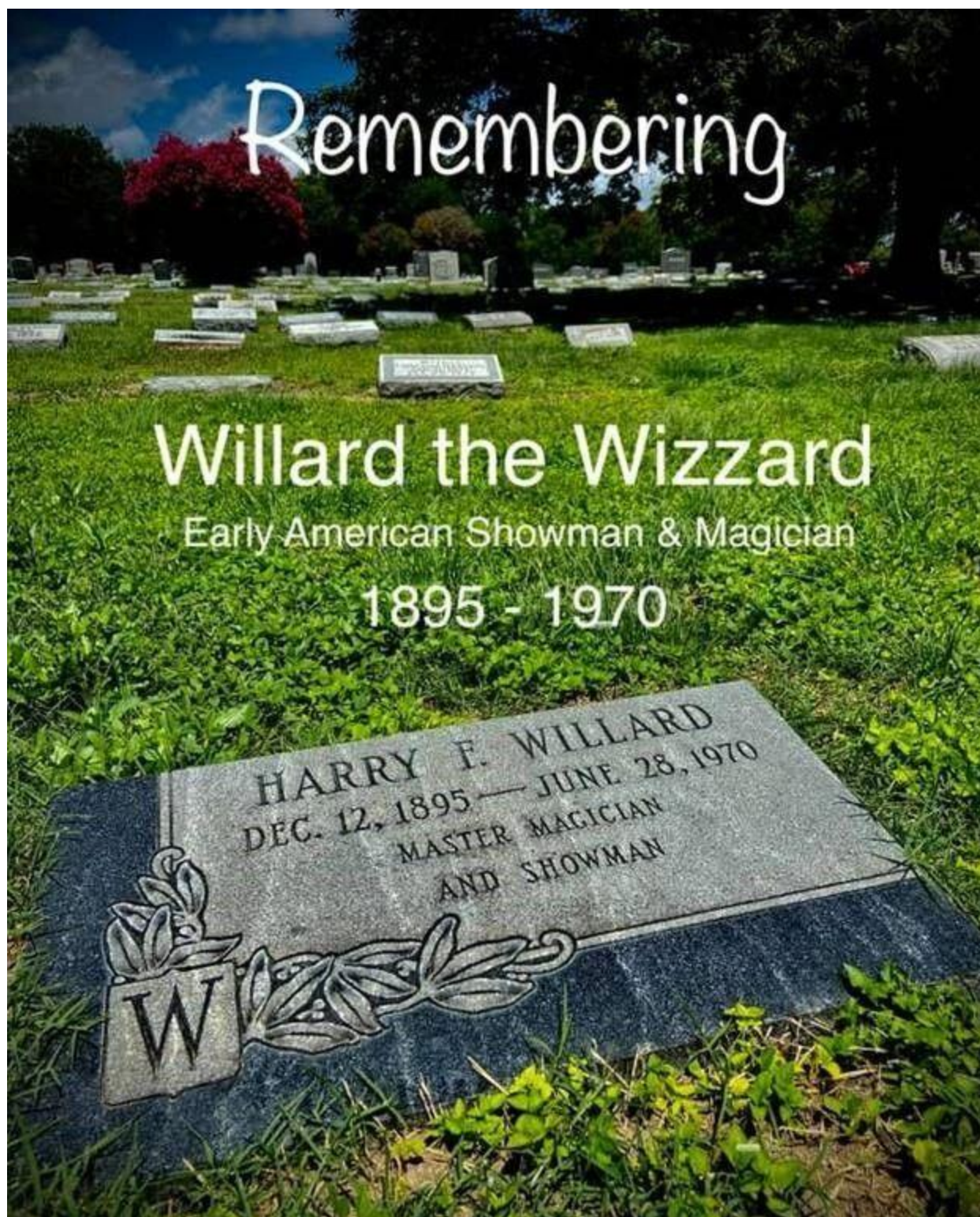
Being quarantined with my wife is tough. My wife asked me if I knew what her favorite flower was. Apparently "Gold Medal" was not the right answer.

I was helping her with chores today. I learned a valuable lesson. Don't wear headphones while vacuuming. I finished the whole house before I realized that the vacuum wasn't plugged in...



Harry Willard was the mentor and inspiration for Bev Bergeron.

Harry's grave is in San Antonio, Texas, which is where his long time home was and the base for his Gulf States Tent Show Circuit.



Francis Willard (b1940), his daughter, is still known as continuing on Harry's famous Spirit Cabinet Routine. Here she

performs the act with her late husband, Glenn Falkenstein. Francis' daughter, Hanna, is married to Michael Ammar.

I built and repaired some illusions for Scott Pepper when he was based in Orlando working Disney Cruise ships. Joe Vecciarelli linked us up in 2015.

Scott now has a theater in San Antonio and is planning on getting back to cruise ships and booking other acts for his theater while he is away.

He first showed me this...

I like this effect:

Here is the source: (currently not available)

<https://www.penguinmagic.com/p/S10387>

Jason Palter, the creator, also offered a Spiderman mask for sale as well as Elvis.

That was nice for those return shows or shows you are doing back to back where a few of the same folks may be in the audience.

Simple by effective!

A straw, scissors and you are set.

Wayne Dobson, now retired and suffered from a form of MS, was in the class of British Magic Variety performers like

Paul Daniels and Tommy Cooper. Yes, the material is dated and Dobson uses some low brow British humor but for it's time, it was well received.

Most British comic personalities are one-dimensional, such as Benny Hill. In many ways, so was Paul Daniels. He played on character, a wise guy who puts you on.

This is Abbotts Slick Rope Tie... We all know about it but forget what a great bit it can be.

Mike Bliss uses two ropes. It works the same way as one. The whole bit is all acting and playing with the volunteers.

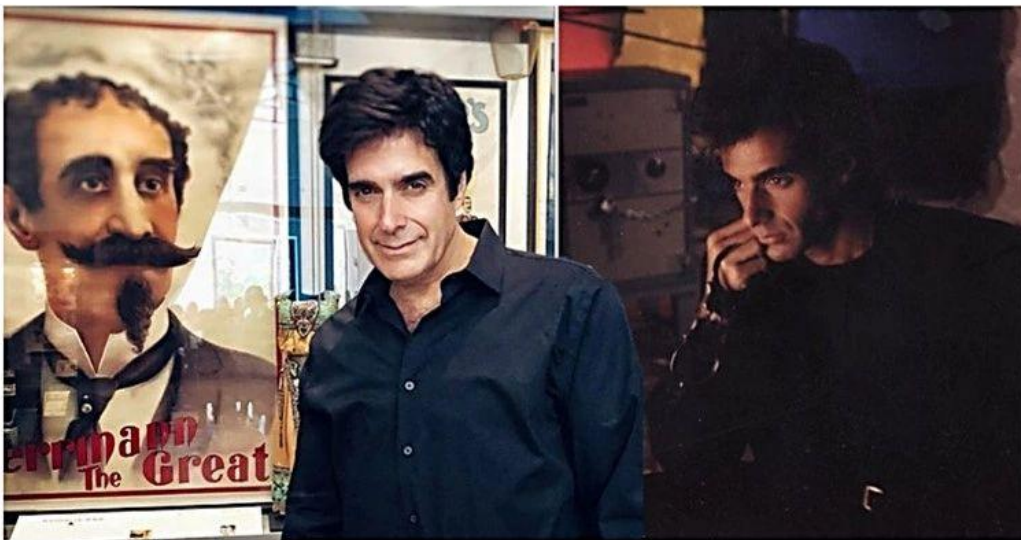
The Copperfield Story and his Wealth

https://www.therichest.com/rich-powerful/david-copperfield-billion-dollar-magician/?fbclid=IwAR2eWUP1REuCeSvpUw5g_st86xNva7t0LtrcGHeketjp_-uvuKg0Jktl9hs

The Billion Dollar Magician: How David Copperfield Levitated To The Top

Controversial and magical, David Copperfield has managed to avoid disappearing and become a billion dollar entity.

BY LEENA NASIR
PUBLISHED JUN 23, 2021



David Copperfield is held in the highest esteem for his incredible compilation of mesmerizing storytelling and insane illusions. His performances are always grand, seat-gripping, and jaw-dropping. Forbes reports that there is simply no other magician that does it quite like Copperfield does. He's been entertaining the masses for decades, and each time he appears on the stage, fans know they're in for a thrilling experience. Aside from being entertaining and offering a mind-blowing entertainment session that fans won't soon forget, David Copperfield also happens to be the most commercially successful magician of our time. His net worth sits at a jaw-dropping \$1 billion... and counting.

The late David Maas and his wife Dania popularized the Modern Quick Change Act in the United States.

This latest version, using motorized reels and pulls and magnets and blends in pure magic and is a nice progression in the technology.

Finally, here is a treat for all the Baby Boomers, who remember “The Banana Man” on early TV . It some ways it was a very magical production act. His production items kept appearing!

The Original Banana Man act was the creator of the act Adolf Proper, known as "A. Robins" (died in 1950) . He was dressed as a clownish character in a baggy tuxedo, producing an amazing and apparently impossible number of props from countless pockets and secret places in his costume. He would then perform various clown routines with the props. These props included (among many other things) a clarinet, a mandolin, a huge magnet, a violin, a music stand, several watermelons, and three hundred bananas. He did not speak in words, but uttered cries of delight, surprise, etc., in a nasal falsetto, and imitated the sounds of the musical instruments he "played." His costume was also capable of quick transformation. A profile of Proper reported that the costume weighed 60 pounds loaded, and it took him 45 minutes to prepare it for each performance.

Sam Levine (died in 1974) bought Proper's original props and gimmicks from Proper's estate, and performed as The Banana Man on [Captain Kangaroo](#) and [The Ed Sullivan Show](#). The clip below is Sam Levine as “The Banana Man” and the one we remember.

Allan Jones of Cleveland, Tennessee, purchased the entirety of the Banana Man props and gimmicks sometime in the early 2000s.

Dennis