

# Ring 170 and SAM 99 "The Bev and Alouise Bergeron Ring"

June 27, 2022 | Archived Famulus



## Ring and Assembly Report June 2020

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**Be kind and courteous. Masks, especially K95 and KN 95 masks are encouraged, but not required.**

Michael Matson gaveled the meeting to order and announced that after four successful years as president, his magic show commitments were increasing, and he asked the board to approve our suggested plan for presidential succession. It was approved that Ryan Stiner would become president, beginning on the first of July. We have a flea market planned for the end of June.

Thom Parkin gave us an update on his memorized deck project and his creation of a brand-new deck to easily learn the system.

Mike Matson then began a teach-in on the well-known, but fearful, card move known as "The Pass". He showed a variety of methods. Dan Stapleton added his version, as did Kent Gunn.

The monthly show began with Dennis Phillips doing the classic 100 Foot Rope Tie Challenge. Two spectators were invited up and given an unprepared rope and Dennis sat in a black metal folding chair. They worked about 4 minutes to tie him securely to the chair. The challenge was that he could get out in less time than it took to tie him up. He wiggled out and won the challenge.

Jeremy Mickelson presented a skillful "Coins Across" using a borrowed table glass. He ended with the production of a giant coin. Next a chosen card visibly migrated to the top of the deck in elevator fashion.

Vicenti did a delightful effect where coins passed through the bottom of a metal creamer cup. He followed up with an Okito Coin Box and finally a borrowed and signed card revelation.

Dan Stapleton did three entertaining effects with ordinary paper money. He rolled a dollar and a ten-dollar bill together than they changed from one to the other on top. He then tore off the corner of the dollar bill and ate it and the bill was restored and finally he did a challenge that he could hold the bill by two fingers and a spectator could not catch it. The volunteer never did catch it.

To conclude the meeting, Mike , our outgoing president, ceremonially passed the gavel to our incoming president , Ryan Stiner.

Dennis Phillips, Secretary

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#### **Information from The Orlando Sentinel and other local news releases and sources:**

COVID-19 case hospitalization rates are high enough that the current COVID-19 wave could threaten resources in most Central Florida counties if efforts to curb the spread aren't taken, the CDC says.

Despite the increase, COVID-19 hospitalizations are nowhere near their peaks. AdventHealth Central Florida has about 180 COVID-19 patients hospitalized throughout its facilities, compared to 1,100 hospitalizations at the peak of the winter omicron wave, said spokesperson Jeff Grainger on Monday.

To keep hospitalization rates at this manageable level, the CDC advises everyone in counties with high COVID-19 community levels to wear masks in indoor public spaces, regardless of whether they are vaccinated.

This advice won't likely spur any local mask mandates at this time, however.

The increase may be due to waning immunity against reinfection, new highly infectious omicron subvariants, relaxed mitigation measures, and more indoor gatherings, said University of South Florida epidemiologist Jason Salemi.

Hospitalizations likely won't return to their omicron or delta surge peaks because immunity against severe infection doesn't fade as quickly as immunity against reinfection, Salemi said. But hospitalizations will still rise more if people don't start taking precautions.

“We should be doing more to block community spread of the virus,” Salemi said. “Where our peak is and how quickly we come down, it has a lot to do with our actions.”

The CDC marked Orange, Osceola, Lake, Polk and Seminole counties as having “high community levels” of COVID-19, the highest of three categories, for the first time since a relatively new rating system began on Feb. 25. This rating is primarily based on COVID-19 hospital admissions.

COVID-19 hospital admissions are up 7% in Lake; 7% in Orange; 9% in Osceola; 27% in Polk; and 7% in Seminole for the week of May 26 to June 1 compared to the week prior, according to data from the Department of Health and Human Services. Many were treated and released, and ICU units are not strained.

Orlando Health Senior Vice President & Chief Medical Officer Dr. George Ralls noted the health care system has seen a “moderate” increase in COVID-19 positive admissions over the last few weeks but many of the people hospitalized were there for something else and tested positive incidentally upon admission.

This is the first time since early March that the CDC has issued a widespread mask recommendation for Central Florida counties.

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**Hello Dennis Phillips,**

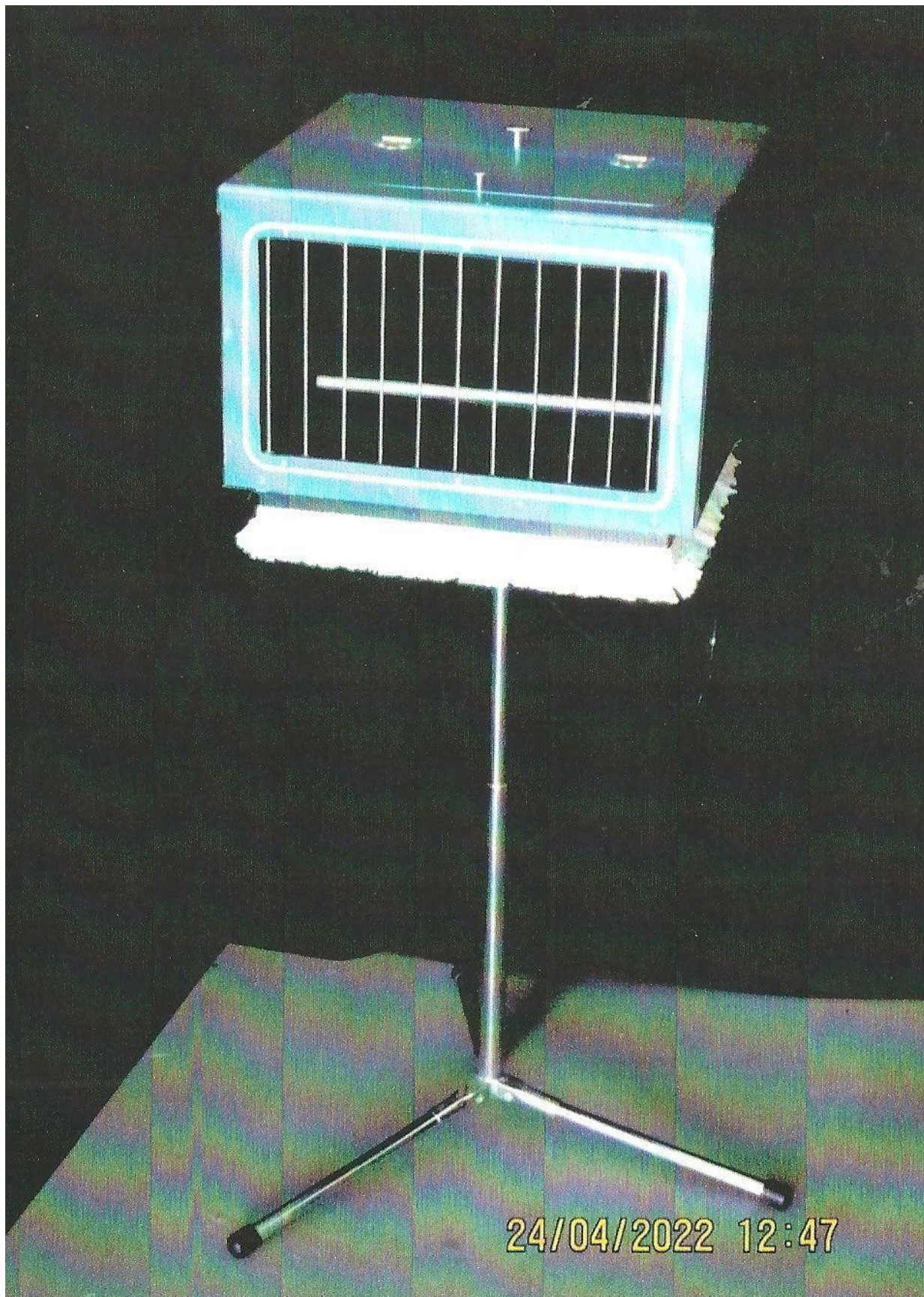
I am Bill Harvey and I live in St. Cloud, Florida. I have a Zig Zag Illusion (Abbotts) it was used 6 maybe 7 times, so it's like new...I'm asking \$525 for it....also a Hank Lee ( made by Chalet Magic) Dove to Rabbit , or just use as a dove vanish, (comes with on stand)..asking \$150.

The Zig Zag would be a pickup only, it has no case...the Dove vanish could be mailed, it has no case either...a well packed box may do fine for that...If someone is looking for above illusions, they can reach me at my e-mail address [wedomagic@centurylink.net](mailto:wedomagic@centurylink.net)

or phone me at 407-957-9893.







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

### **“The Bev and Alouise Bergeron Ring”**

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#### **BREAKING:**

If you are a working professional and use your vehicle for business purposes and keep a milage log:

On June 9, 2022, the IRS announced that they would make a mid-year mileage rate change to combat the much higher-than-normal gas prices.

From July 1, 2022, through the end of 2022, the standard mileage rate for business travel will increase from \$0.585 per mile driven for business to \$0.625 per mile.

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Our own Dan Stapleton performing on the Mike Huckabee Show (TBN)

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The Gypsy Thread ( broken and restored thread) is a classic effect. It was Eugene Berger’s signature effect.

I picked up the idea of using waxed dental floss from the late Rachel Wild Columbini’s first husband, Tom Jones, magician.

The wax tread makes the effect very easy to perform and set up and lends to my comedy patter about being a cheapskate and saving small old pieces of dental floss.

Note that Bev Bergeron correctly said that any small thread is not very visible on stage, so he used Orange 100% wool yarn for his stage shows.

The classic tricks are classic because they are always entertaining, when performed correctly.

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I used to have an Abbotts "Positive Fire bowl". It was made from metal and had a pin hook on one end, and you can hang it vertically inside your coat jacket where it was ready to be stolen.

The ignition method was that: welded on the inside bottom of the fire bowl was a metal tube, container.

It was like an old metal lipstick cover. Just above where it was welded was a smaller fine wire holder, open also at the top ,.

The set up was that you turned the bowl vertically and half-filled the tube with water and lighter fluid. Then you opened a small glass bottle, about the size of a Testors model paint bottle that was filled with kerosene and had a small chunk of metallic sodium. You used a dry wood Popsicle stick and carefully broke away a small piece of sodium that was less than the size of a BB. It was put in the wire cage.

All this was hung in your coat.

During performance you showed a 30-inch foulard ( why not just say cloth?-That would not sound magical, I guess) and reach with your free hand into your coat and bring out the vertical bowl. When the bowl is out and under the cloth, you turned it horizontal and the water and lighter fluid flowed out into the bowl and made contact with the sodium and it glowed red , from the chemical reaction and ignited the bowl.

I used this as a kid in high school and early college. I never had any problem getting sodium from the school chem lab. When that easy source for chemical reagents was no longer available, I made a different method with a Bic lighter, lamp wick and a hinged flap.

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### **Paul Daniels performs “Powers of Darkness”.**

The original idea was from Corinda and using coat hangers was a Mike Caveney contribution.

I do this routine and it is a crown pleaser when done for the appropriate audience.

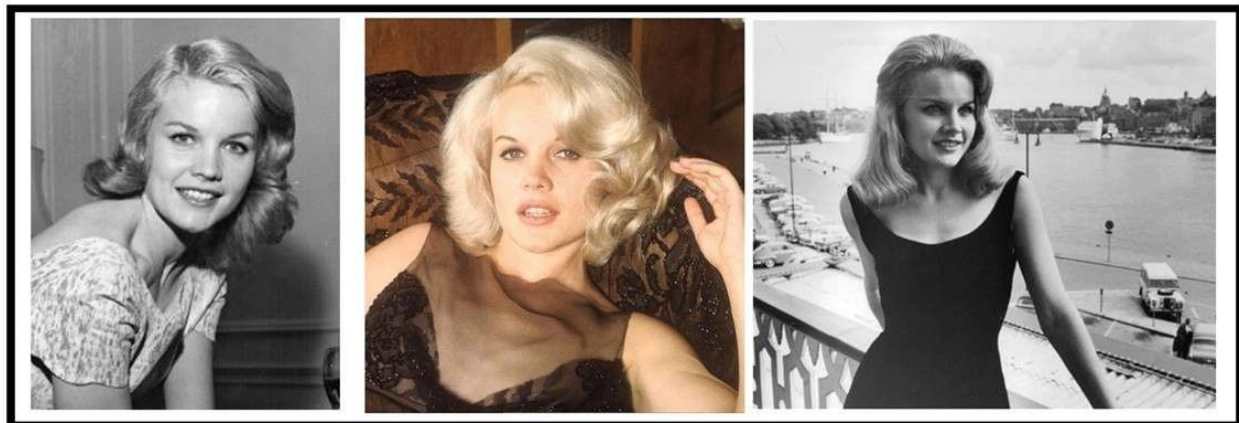
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**Actress Carroll Baker** was an assistant to Burling Hull ( Hull lived September 9, 1889 – November 1982) in the 1950s and 60s, with photos of her made in the 50s and 60s.

Hull lived in Deland, Florida and would sometimes attend our Ring meetings. Burling was close to Bev Bergeron and Sammy Smith also became his friend and biographer was an executor of his estate.

Carroll Baker left Hollywood in the early 1960s and went to work in Italian films.

She is still alive and 91 years old and lives in London.







**Actress Carroll Baker said about Burling Hull,**

“My mother and father had divorced, and I was living with my father in Pennsylvania. We didn’t have very much money. And when I graduated from high school, I was working in a factory. All my girlfriends had gone to university. The boy I was in love with went to university. And, and I said to myself, “I’m just not going to be stuck in this small town working in a factory.”

Because of my mother, I had taken dancing lessons. So, when I was off work, I would go to our attic, which had a wooden floor. I used to tap, tap, tap and follow Ann Miller’s routines. So, then my mother said, “Well, why don’t you come for a while and stay in Florida with me?” Well, that was terrific, because in Florida they have every conceivable club, like the Lions Club. And I got my first engagement there dancing. I earned \$20. I kept getting dancing engagements and went to beauty contests.

We went to Daytona Beach and there was an International Convention of Magicians. There was this one magician, named Burling Hull and he called himself the Great Volta. So, he was retired, and he didn’t have an assistant. He said, “I’m inventing acts now, and I’ve invented an act that’s just for a woman. It’s the magic jewel act.” So, I went to stay with he and his wife and practiced my part in the magic act.”

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## The 100-foot Rope Tie Challenge at the June Ring-Assembly meeting

(Photos courtesy of Dan Stapleton)



The “100 Foot Rope Challenge” had been written up by Lee Jacobs and Burling Hull and Brian Bushwood has nice video demonstrating and explaining it on his You Tube “Scam School” series.

At this date I am 73 years old and in good physical shape, so I can still do it and the straitjacket. It does not take much physical effort and if you don’t have hip or knee joint pains and are a normal weight, you will be able to do it.

I hope that most of the 15 guys at the Ring and Assembly Meeting got the general idea what the effect and impact was supposed to be. Henry Rydzinski gave a valiant effort at trying to make my old unreliable MP3 player work and I appreciate that.

For lay audiences and at a regular show, I have my assistant hold the microphone and I have a whole series of jokes, some slightly suggestive, depending on the audience: “Oh! Ha! You look like you have done this before. Who’s the lucky girl?...”

Volunteer and magician Kent Gunn is a former Navy sailor and I introduced him as an expert with knots. It helps to ask if there are any volunteers with law enforcement experience or former Boy Scouts to help.

As the music plays, I like to fake a lot of effort and if they tie me at the ankles, I kick myself over in the chair and lay on the floor and kick off my shoes and flail around like I do when I am in the straitjacket. The metal chair makes noise like a car wreck.

The spectacle is intriguing to watch, like the car wreck that people crane their necks to see. People like it. It works especially well at college and high school shows and outdoor events. Believe it or not, as a kind of moral metaphor object lesson, it is a hit in church shows,

It is 100 feet of braided nylon rope (slight less than a half inch wide). It is available for less than \$30 at Home Depot.

The chair is my own standard black metal folding chair and I like it because it makes noise when I roll over on the floor and when people’s finger rings and metal clothing objects, like belt buckles, hit it.

There is no “secret” other than maintaining the position that I am in, in the photos, and telling the volunteers that the only rule is to not put the rope around or near my neck or cut off the blood circulation anywhere. This forces them to mostly wrap you. Using the almost half inch wide rope prevents them from making any tight knots. With minor movement the ropes simply fall off you like getting out of a cocoon.


The challenge is, and to make it look exciting, is to offer them \$100 each if you cannot get out of the tie faster than they tie you up. Tell them, “The longer you take, the longer that I have to get out!”. This psychologically forces them to rush and that means mostly wrapping you. It helps to get them to slow down and make more knots because that adds to their time and means nothing to your effort to get out. The closest I ever got to losing the challenge was when two guys did just simply wrap me tightly (probably I let them wrap too tight) and tied the ends to the back bottom rung. They took about a minute and a half, and it took me almost a minute to get enough slack to get loose but their thinking was counterintuitive to what the vast majority of volunteers think or do.

The showmanship is for you to fake a struggle and act as if it is a challenge to get out of it. You should have a couple of people call out the time in 15 second intervals as the music



is playing. This builds the tension. At the end hold up both hands in a triumphant pose with fists in the air like the movie, Rocky.

In performance you can almost always get out of the tie in less than on third of the time that it takes them to tie you.

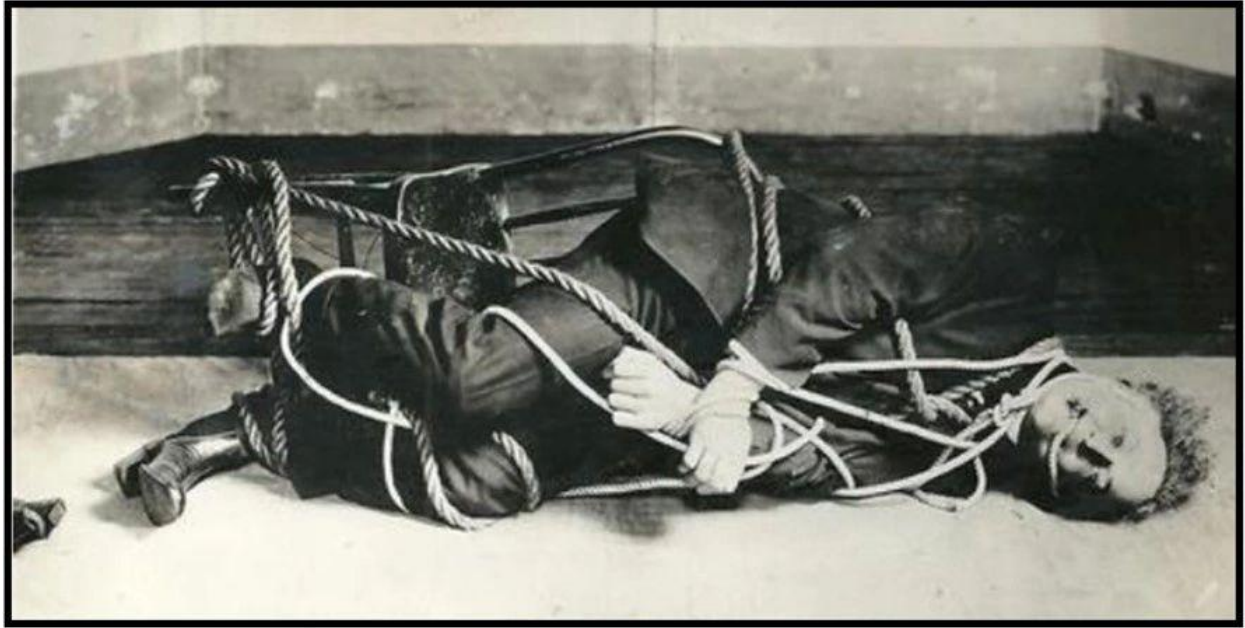


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Phil Moore's "Lighter Than Air" Levitation is seldom seen.

It was said to be dependable mechanically and worked well but heavier than a military tank and noisy.

I was told that Phil Moore used a chain-driven garage door opener as the driving mechanism.

The other popular Super X type moving floating effect, the "Gamola", uses a worm gear linear actuator.

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### **Mental Epic**

Mental Epic is said to have been created by Baltimore's Hen Fetch.

It is based on a mechanical method of doing the "one ahead mental prediction of three things".

I made a stage size on that is two by four feet. I used white markerboard.



To recap and see the effect watch:

This trick uses a board with six sections. The mentalist secretly writes his/her predictions, one at a time ,in the three top sections and closes the flap after each prediction. The bottom three sections are then filled in, one at a time, with two random thoughts from two different audience members and a third audience member chooses a card. When the top three sections are uncovered, they match the spectators' answers exactly!





The method is to turn the board away from audience view and simply scribble anything in the square in the upper left square and cover it over and asked them to think of , for example, a famous male singer. That name is jotted in the bottom left corner.

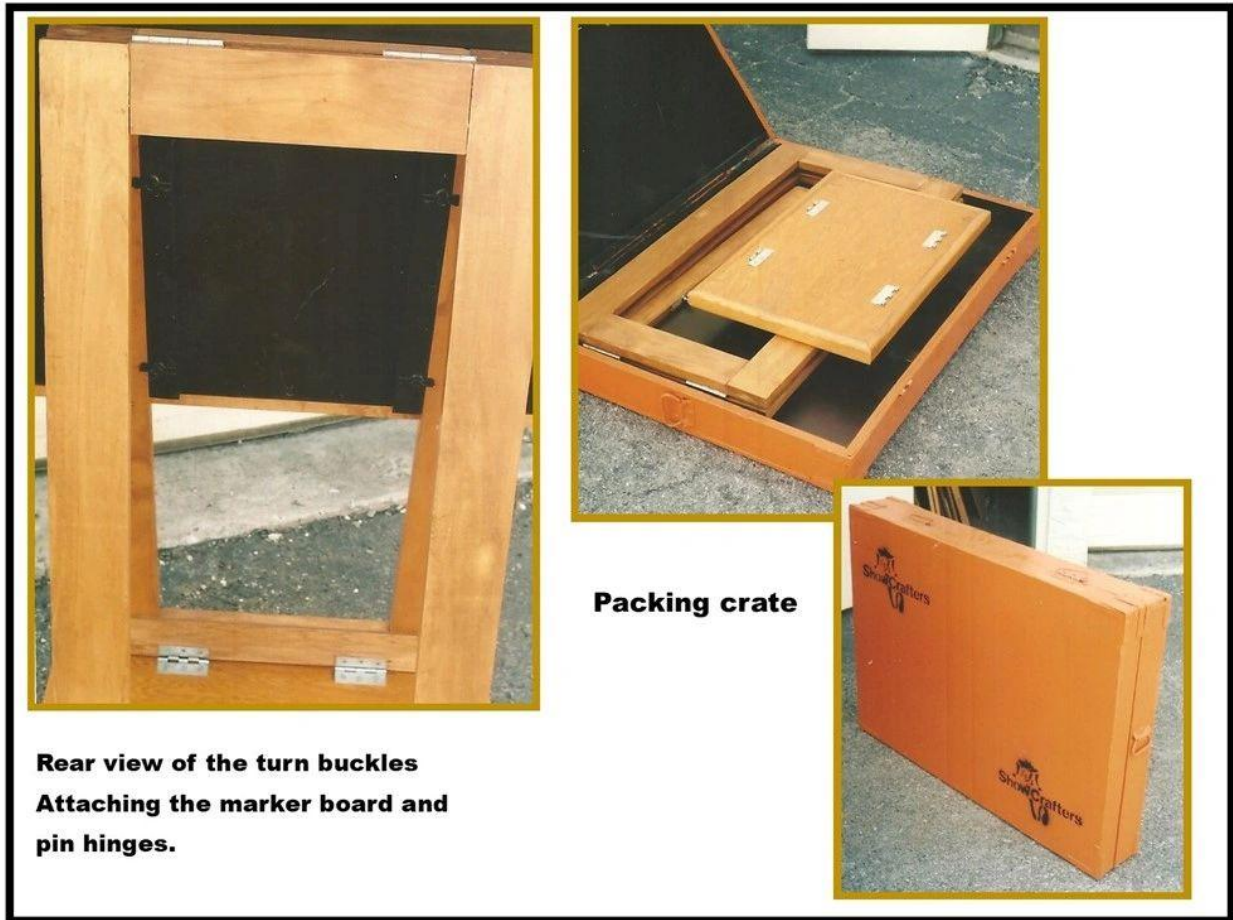
Note: there is a

possibility for doing a real miracle, so don't waste the dead left corner. Once, in a mostly older female crowd, I jotted in Frank Sinatra for that square and covered it over and asked for a male singer and the women said, "Frank Sinatra". I played that coincidence for all it was worth. I wrote the name in the bottom and then said, "I can see this is going to be a good night for my psychic skills and I said, "look what I wrote before you even thought of it." I slowly raised the flap to reveal Frank Sinatra. It got a gasp and applause. I then erased both names and said, "think of another name, a female singer".

The next step is to write the first prediction in the middle square (where it will be slid over later to the left square). Ask for another thing, like a famous song. Close the flap and write that second item in the bottom center square. Finally, tell them that you are making a prediction in the right square for something that will happen. Fake like you are writing in the upper right square and slide over the slide and cover the last item with the flap. Have them select a card ( forced) and write it in the lower right square.

Now you are set for the reveal, one at a time , left to right.

Here you can see my Stage Size Mental Epic in its travel crate.

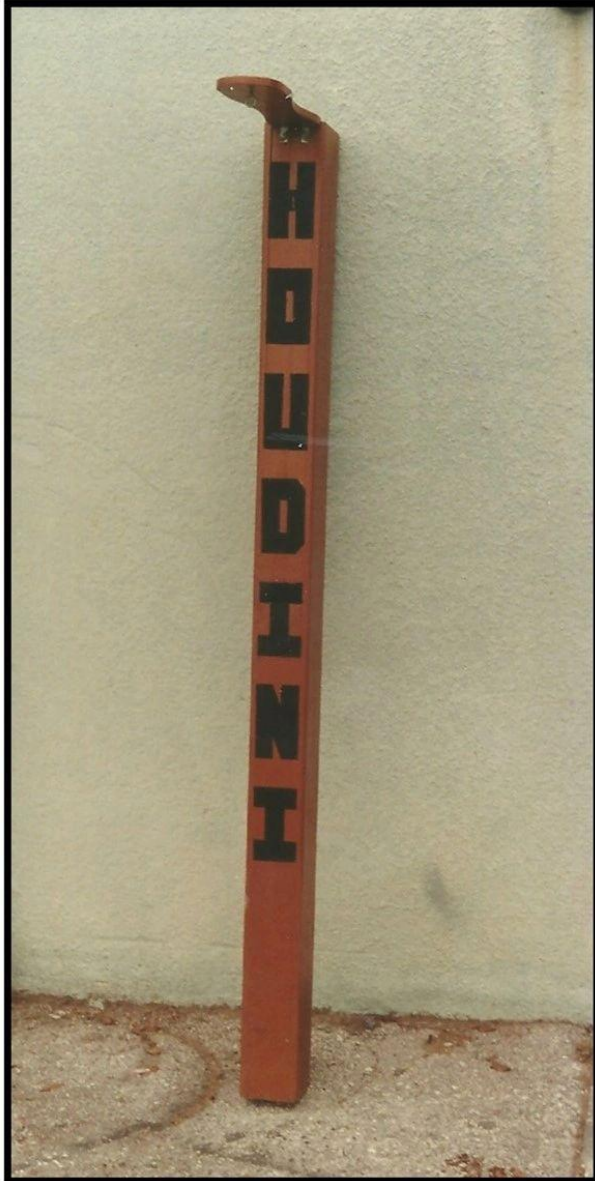


I think that the weakest part of the effect is needing a force for the last item. I will give you some ways to make that part better.

I am aware of a no-force method where you use one color marker for the top squares and another for bottom “just so we keep it honest”. This method reverses the rows. The bottom row is the prediction row with the flaps and the top row is their choice. The board still has the slide over flap for the first two prediction, but it has an extra single sliding flap for the right prediction that slides down by gravity. What happens on number three is that they give you their thought of item and you “accidentally” write it in with the wrong color marker from bottom row. You recognize your mistake and grab a towel to erase it and as it is cover it , you let the flap slide down and then write their prediction with the correct color marker. Yes, in this method you are faking the last prediction before it is covered.

For the last item, in my force method, I have mostly used a giant Pop-Eye Popper , rough and smooth deck. It seems less tricky than most other forces.

I have used a clear forcing bag, and, I have used the old “no ink” ballpoint pen to have a person make an “x” on a U.S. map behind their back. I had premade an “x” for the force.



Probably the most fun force was the old “1089” force to force the number of my Las Vegas hotel room on a patter storyline about a lucky trip that I took. The lower right square is big enough to do all the calculations. If you just use two ransom numbers and the same math methodology, you will force the number 99.

I realize that you can achieve the same effect with index cards and billets and wine classes, but the large prop fits in with a large illusion show

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### **The Slick and “Slicker” Post**

Your assistant stands against the post as you fasten four ropes around her neck, her waist, her legs, and her ankles. These ropes fasten her to the post. A separate single vertical rope is now fastened to each of these ropes and attached to the top section of the post. There can be little doubt that the girl is securely fastened to the post.

At the magician's command, the ropes fall free as the girl steps away from the post. All this action takes place in full view. The four

ropes, with their knots still intact are seen hanging tied to the long rope.

I used a Houdini theme for my prop and the lettering to hide the push-in mechanism.

The theory was simply. You took each length of rope and held it horizontally in front of the girl and brought it around to her back where you looped each side around the protruding peg. When the peg was pulled back in, the attachment fell loose, and the rope was freed.

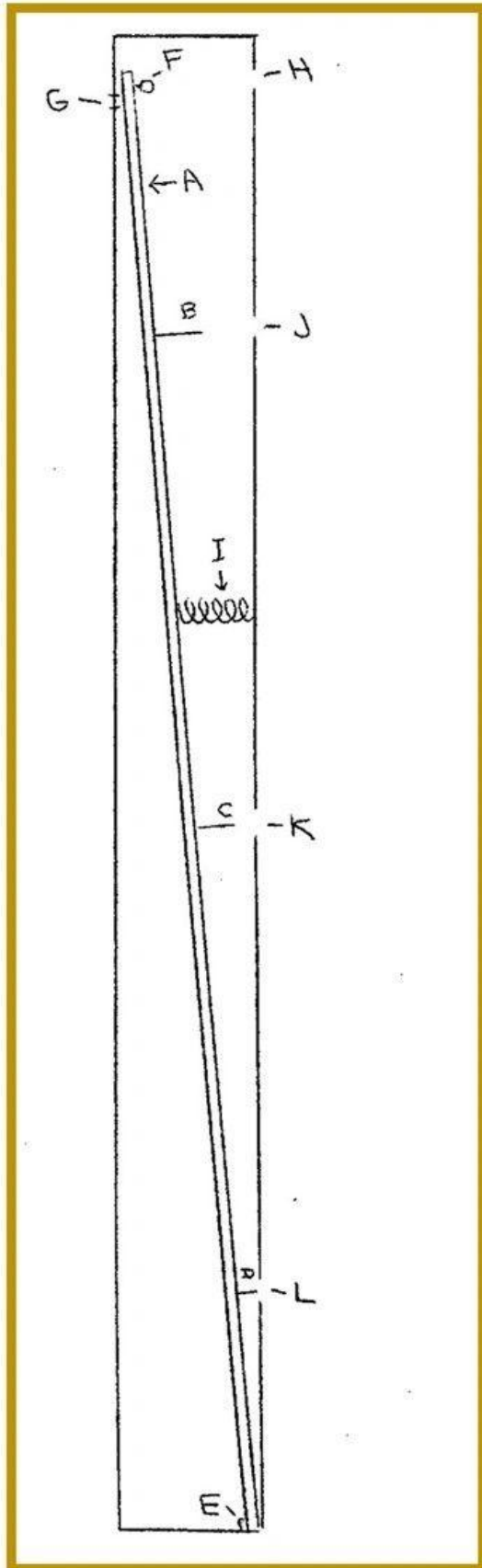
Abbotts had an internal , spring-loaded board that had the pegs that protruded.





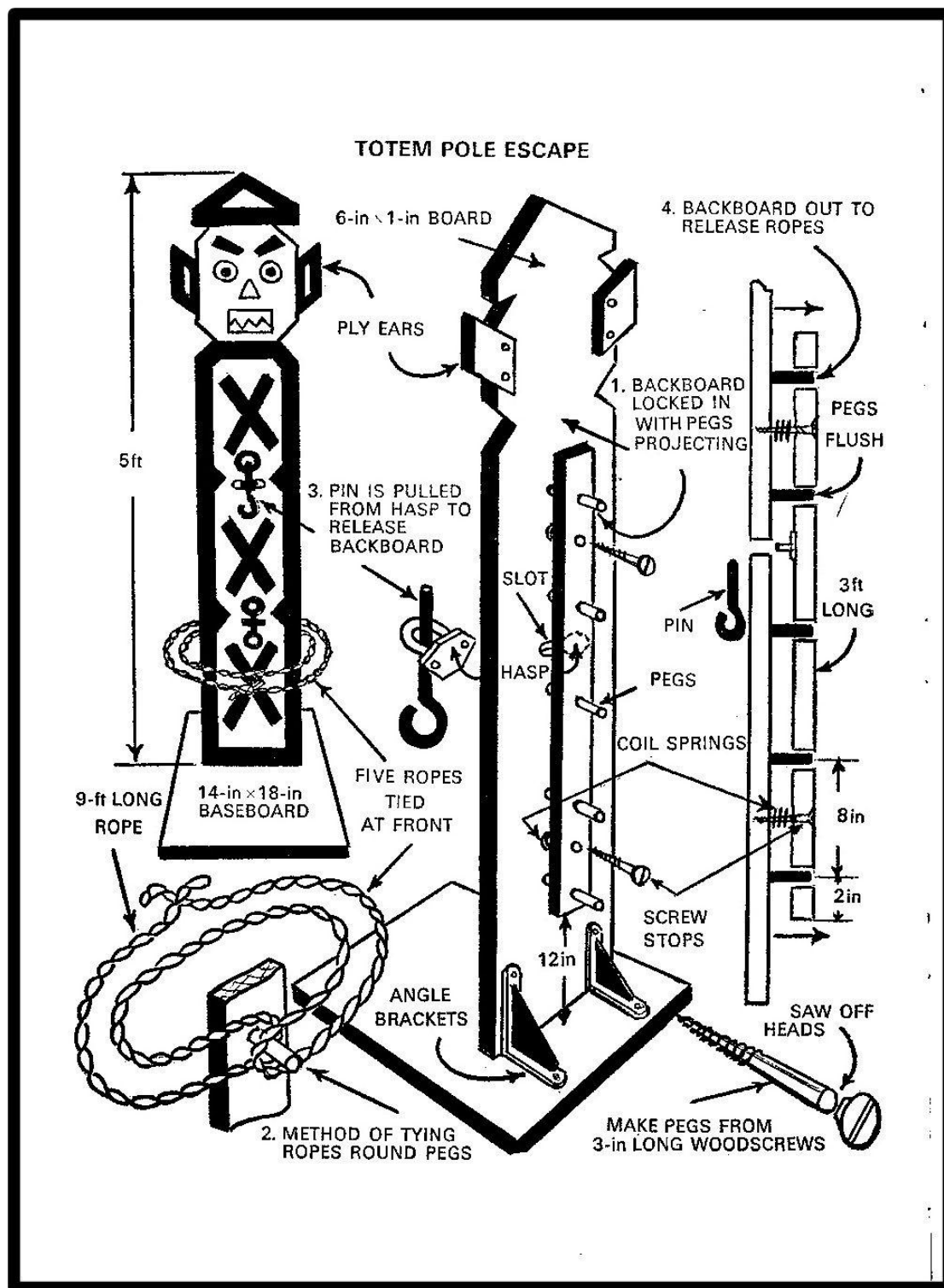
This was UF Grant's simpler construction with an internal hinged board. Like the Abbott version I added a hole about waist high so that by pushing it in, you would force all the pegs, on the spring-loaded internal board out the back holes.

Side x-ray view



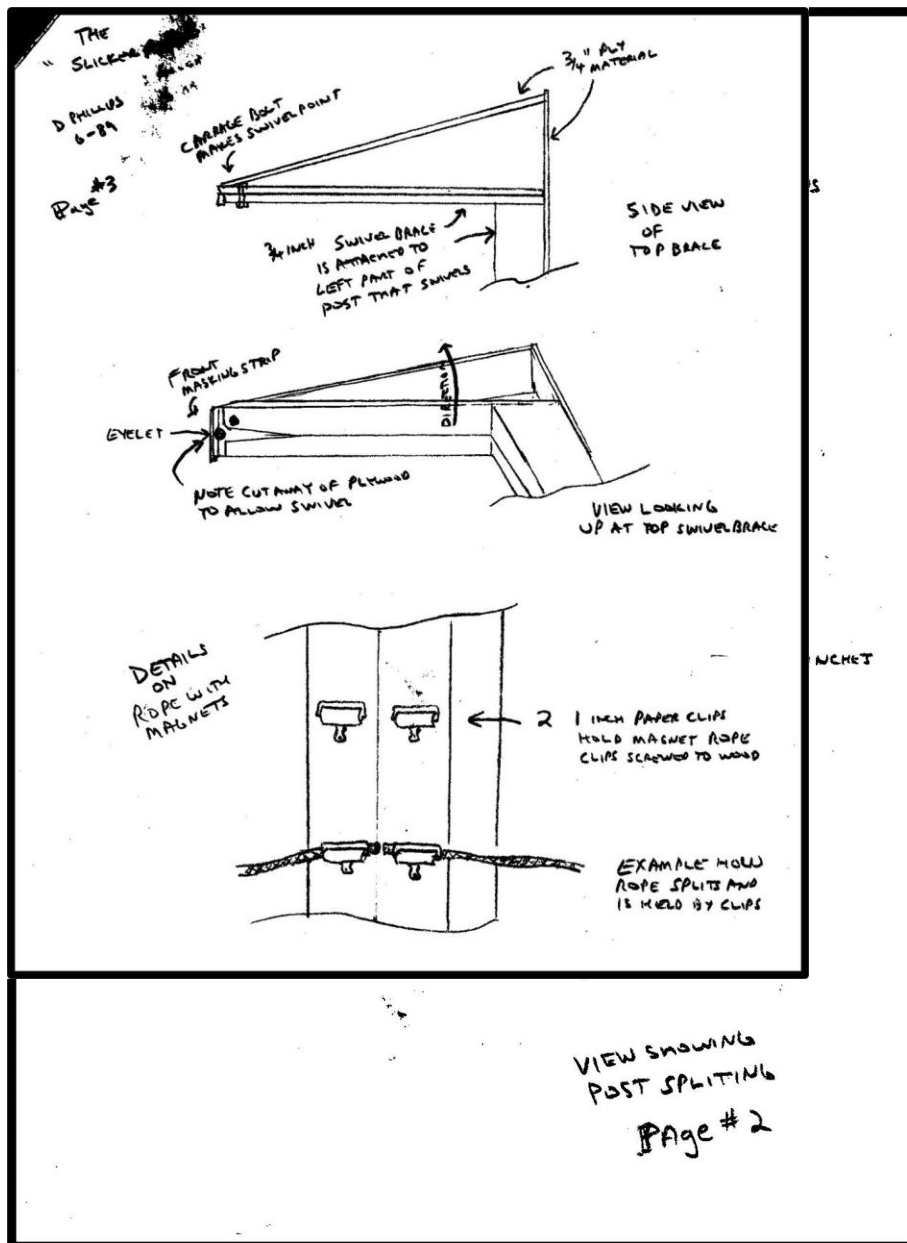
There are different themes for this effect. I made an elaborate Native American Totem Pole Post for my college year's "Chief Foxwind" themed act. It was popular with Boy Scout "order of the Arrow" shows.

Eric Hawkesworth's book "Conjuring" ( from Supreme Magic 1971) also had a Totem Pole Escape.



I wanted to take this single post escape to a higher level. I like the premise behind Robert Harbin's "Assistant's Revenge", but the size of the prop and operation always made the Harbin illusion seem obvious to me.



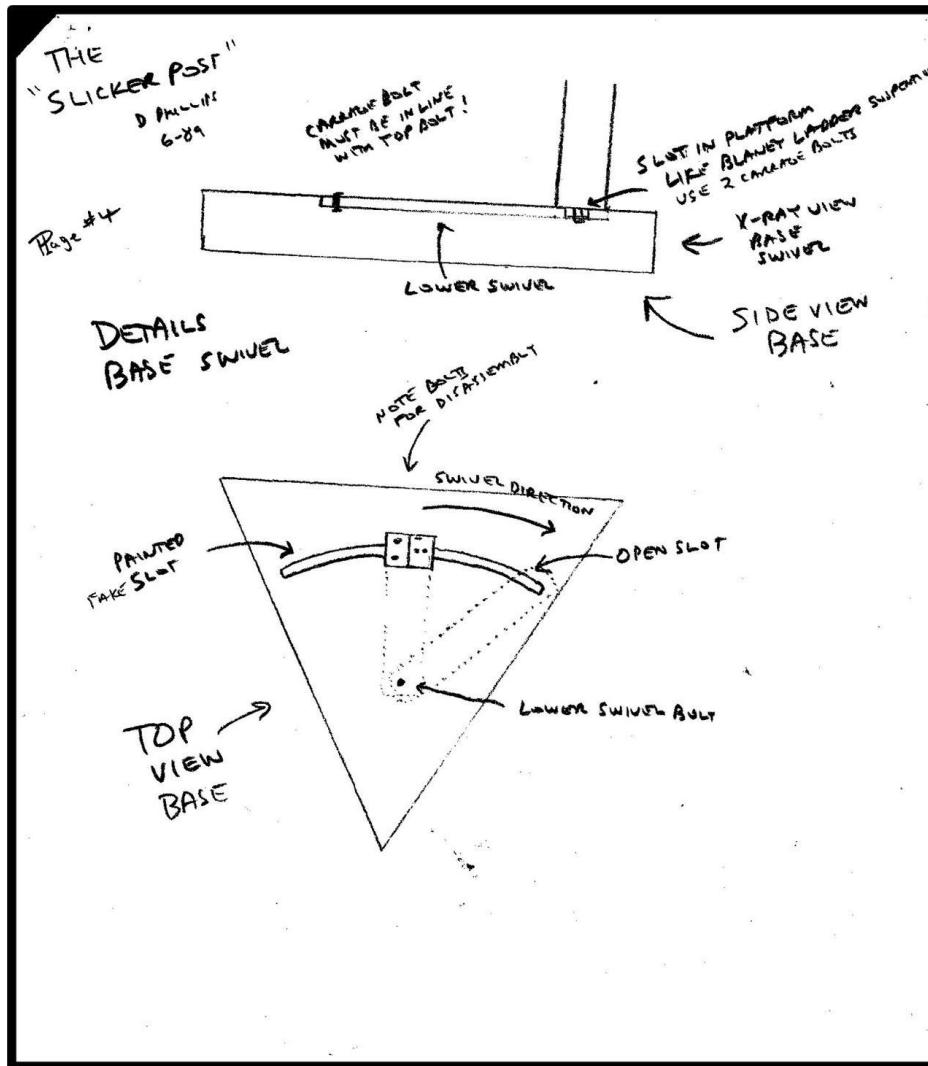


So, why not do the exchange effect with a single post? The post could split open! So, I came up with "The Slicker Post". Not shown in the plans is the need for a square PVC frame of pipe and either an assistant to hold it up or a spirit cabinet type arrangement for cover.

Later, in the late 1990s, I saw a video clip of Switzerland's Peter Marvey and he had the same idea as me, but he used a massive shower of "gerb" pyrotechnics to mask the exchange. I believe that he used metal chains, rather than rope.

The methodology is that the magician is

bound to the post in the same way as the regular slick post but the post splits to let him out and allow his assistant to step in and when the post is closed back up, it appears that there has been an almost instant change.



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I own a cotton candy machine which I use for concessions on my full evening illusion show. It, and my popcorn machine were a major source of extra profits. Like the circus, I often "rolled the show on concessions".

It is amazing how the cotton candy machine works . Typical machines used to make cotton candy include a spinning head enclosing a small "sugar reserve" bowl into which a charge of granulated, colored sugar (or separate sugar and food coloring) is poured. Heaters near the rim of the head melt the sugar, which is squeezed out through tiny holes by centrifugal force.

The molten sugar solidifies in the air and is caught in a larger bowl which surrounds the spinning head. Left to operate for a period, the cotton-like product builds up on the inside walls of the larger bowl, at which point machine operators twirl a stick or cone around the rim of the large catching bowl, gathering the sugar strands into portions which are served

on stick or cone, or in plastic bags. As the sugar reserve bowl empties, the operator recharges it with more feedstock. The product is sensitive to humidity, and in humid summer locales, the process can be messy and sticky.

Cotton Candy has the highest gross profit margin of anything. A tablespoon full of sugar equals \$ 3.00 of profit from the machine. Oh course, you need a 4-cent paper cone.

Cotton Candy has been around since the late 1800s.

William James Morrison, a dentist and inventor from Nashville, Tennessee, is widely credited with the invention of the first cotton candy machine, a device that cut out much of the manual labor previously associated with spun sugar.

In 1897 he and his friend, confectioner John C. Wharton, worked together to produce a machine (which they called the “electric candy machine”) that melted sugar to produce the gauzy , spider-webbish sweet that when it instantly melts in your mouth it feels like magic, it's gone.

The machine and the candy it produced (called Fairy Floss at the time) was first introduced to America at the seven-month-long St. Louis World’s Fair in 1904, where the confection was sold in boxes for 25 cents apiece.

The product was wonderfully well received, and Morrison and Wharton sold over 65,000 boxes!

Joseph Lascaux, a dentist from New Orleans, invented a similar cotton candy machine in 1921. His patent named the sweet confection "cotton candy", eventually overtaking the name "fairy floss". Cotton candy machines were notoriously unreliable until Gold Medal's invention of a spring base in 1949—since then, they have manufactured nearly all commercial cotton candy machines and much of the machinery for cotton candy in the US.

In the United States, National Cotton Candy Day is celebrated on December 7.



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John Mulholland (1958)

From the Dan Wynn Archive



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Dennis