The Layman

From the magician's dictionary (apparently):

lay·man (l?'m?n)
n.

> *1. One of the lowest forms of the species homo sapiens. Recognizeable by the inability to show even the most elemental powers of reasoning or observation. Frequently observed to be conspicuously drooling and unable to operate a towel to wipe it off.*
> *2. On object of pity and derision by higher forms of life, such as a magician.*

Interesting, the real world sees things much differently:

> *Humans are also noted for their desire to understand and influence the world around them, seeking to explain and manipulate natural phenomena through religion, science, mathematics, philosophy and mythology. This natural curiosity has led to the development of advanced tools and skills; humans are the only known species to build fires, cook their food, clothe themselves, and use numerous other technologies. (Wikipedia)*

Every time I hear the ***it just blows right by laymen***, I want to scream. Just because someone is too nice to call your hand on the transparency of your latest miracle, doesn't mean they were fooled for an instant! Make no mistake – if magic doesn't fool it isn't magic. Mystery is the only reason for magic. That doesn't mean there can't be elements of comedy and intrigue. Certainly clever and interesting patter is one of the core ingredients of good magic, but if people aren't saying – ***how in the H… did he do that***, then you've wasted your time!

Again, I must point you to b d erlands blog and today's entry entitled Lucifer's Lawyer: Downplaying the Process. It's brilliant. The essay studies considerations in making your magic mystifying – hiding the secret and, thereby, avoiding exposure and embarrassment. He covers the bases pretty darn well.

While he spends some time with tension and relaxation, I wish he would have emphasised framing as practised by magical geniuses like David Williamson. They are close relatives, but there are differences.

I also wish he would have used a larger font, underlined and put in bold the **VERY SPARINGLY** when he talked about the use of the *magician in trouble* plot and the *multiple climax*. I can think of very few times that I've ever bought the *magician made a mistake* bit and I'm quite sure very few watching it did either. Those few occasions were when a piece of the torn newspaper accidentally fell to the ground *unnoticed* by the magician and the restored paper was missing that piece. I also recall a bit where Lance Burton failed to notice that he dropped something in his original act and all worked out, but these are the very small minority.

The multiple climax is great, when in context. Look at Mike Close's *Dr. Strangetrick* for a sterling example. Most of the time, I hear *your card is the seven of spades AND my ring is on a different finger*. Huh!?!?!?

Enough of my prattle – check out the essay. I should be required reading.

Take care……