

Ethics - Tim Ellis and the usual i/m drivels

I don't know Tim Ellis, but from everything I read and in talking with people that do know him, he's one of the genuine *good guys*. His recent post raises a huge number of ethical issues that magicians must resolve " **if they care**. He's obviously given this a lot of thought. I'll be posting some thoughts in the near future and strongly suggest that any readers here click over to Tim's blog and give your input.

Anyway, this subject brought to mind a prior post:



<Originally Posted September 26, 2005>

I'm going to talk about ethics today. Not magic ethics, in particular, but human morality as we old timers call it.

Understand, the stuff people call *marketing* today had a simpler and more easily understood moniker in my day - *lying*. As examples, I'm choosing a couple of magic related items, because I know them best.

The first is from the Genii Forum. Kaufman generally doesn't allow comments on items for sale, but this one got through:
http://geniimagazine.com/forum/cgi-bin/ultimatebb.cgi?ubb=get_topic;f=14;t=005153

In short someone is announcing an eBay sale of: *Cards as Weapons Ricky Jay s/c*

FIRST PRINT

Richard Hatch, a knowledgeable man on these things calls the seller to task:

Just a quick note, the CARDS AS WEAPONS you list is the 1988 Warner reprint, not the Darien House first printing from 1977 (simultaneously published in both hardcover and softcover). The listing should be corrected. Good luck with your sale!

It was pointed out that the listing was technically correct as this was a *First Printing* of the Warner edition. Billary Clinton would be proud! Anyway, the response deserves a complete recitation:

*Usually I don't respond to people who respond to things I've posted. I've noticed that in other areas (alt.magic, magiccafe, etc.) it just becomes a meaningless dialogue that ends in someone bringing up Hitler's name (forget what that's called...it actually has a name). But I respect the Genii Forum and the people on it, so I'll respond to this. I don't feel I did anything illegal, immoral, unethical. I'm sure you're all aware that the subject line of an eBay auction is two fold: for searches, and to pique interest. The character limit is, I think, 50 or so letters, so the subject line needs to be brief. You post only that which will be in people's searches, and that which will get an interest in people. I've done both. I guess I could've put in the subject: "Warner Edition" but it wouldn't have fit and also, that's not something most people search for, not something that means too much to people. Maybe for collectors it does, but for the general population who just want this book for whatever reason (for investment, to learn card throwing, to have something by Ricky Jay, to see a naked woman) whatever the reason, *most* people don't care about Warner. So I put First Edition in the subject line to get me in the searches, and to intrigue. It is now the buyers obligation to read further, WHERE I DID PUT THAT IT'S A*

WARNER EDITION 1988 (nothing illegal, immoral, unethical here). If someone buys this book (or any auction) just by looking at the subject line and going no further into the description, they're fools. Anyway, I hope posting this does something positive (I never would've responded like this in any other forum (including KJ) and hope no one brings up Hitler's name.

Let's look at this response. Firstly the limit is more than 50 and *Cards as Weapons* Ricky Jay s/c *FIRST PRINT - Warner Ed.* would have fit just fine. The whole *Caveat Emptor* mentality makes me ill. No amount of rationalization can possibly obscure the fact that a non-misleading title was very possible and while I must agree that nothing *illegal* was done, I'll pass on agreeing about the *immoral* and *unethical*. Personally, I would have no problem if the title merely stated the book and author. This would accomplish what he wished for searches and not mislead people. This is assuming he stated the year, etc. in the description.

I fear most people won't understand what this is about and that's a crying shame.



<PS>