

On Developing A Character

I mentioned recently that I attended Bill Goldman's lecture. One of the attendees paid him a tremendous compliment when he said *I can't tell when you're talking to us and when you are about to do a trick*. It was true - Bill was the same performing a trick, teaching a trick or just bull shitting before and after the show. This is the essence of what Vernon was talking about when he talked about *being natural*.

If you're working a party or a restaurant, then the fellow performing the magic should be the same fellow that, hopefully, ingratiated himself to his audience before the magic began. I so often feel like I'm watching 2 different people - the guy who introduced himself and the magician. I keep waiting for him to turn around and then turn back as Elvis Presley, a la Andy Kaufman. I believe it was Leipzig that said *people like to be fooled by a gentleman*. Certainly he lived in a simpler time, but I believe it still holds true.

However, suppose you are an incorrigible ass hole. What can you do?

There are options:

- Do a mime act
- Hide behind some exaggerated character
- Make balloon doggies to music
- Start an Internet magic talk forum
- OK - before someone else says it - Write a magic blog!

Actually, there's a time an place for character magicians, but not when personal interaction is involved.

Take care.....



Drivel & Drool

Things I find useful:

Evernote - someone recommended this to me recently as a free form database to use while browsing the Internet. Really well done and free. The web site is <http://www.evernote.com/en/>.

IESpell - A nice spell checker that integrates with Internet Explorer. When you are typing a message online or filling out a form, just right click and choose *Check Spelling*. It's as easy as that. Check it out [here](#).

Roboform - Roboform is a Password Manager and Web Form Filler that completely automates password entering and form filling. I find this indispensable. I don't know about you, but I have a boatload of log ins to track and am constantly filling out forms. Roboform is the best at making this job tolerable. They are at <http://www.roboform.com/>. Oh, it costs 30 bucks. They have a *free* version, but it is virtually worthless.

Irfanview - Since it's free, I'll let the web site do the talking:

IrfanView is a very fast, small, compact and innovative FREEWARE (for non-commercial use) graphic viewer for Windows 9x/ME/NT/2000/XP/2003.

It is trying to be simple for beginners and powerful for professionals.

IrfanView was the first Windows graphic viewer WORLDWIDE with Multiple (animated) GIF support.

One of the first graphic viewers WORLDWIDE with Multipage TIF support.

The first graphic viewer WORLDWIDE with Multiple ICO support.

- Some IrfanView features:
- Many supported file formats ([click here](#) the list of formats)
- Multi language support
- Thumbnail/preview options
- Slideshow (save slideshow as EXE/SCR or burn it to CD)
- Show EXIF/IPTC/Comment text in Slideshow/Fullscreen etc.

- Support for Adobe Photoshop Filters
- Fast directory view (moving through directory)
- Batch conversion (with image processing)
- Multipage TIF editing
- Email option
- Multimedia player
- Print option
- Change color depth
- Scan (batch scan) support
- Cut/crop
- IPTC editing
- Effects (Sharpen, Blur, Adobe 8BF, Filter Factory, Filters Unlimited, etc.)
- Capturing
- Extract icons from EXE/DLL/ICLs
- Lossless JPG rotation
- Many hotkeys
- Many command line options
- Many PlugIns
- Only one EXE-File, no DLLs, no Shareware messages like "I Agree" or "Evaluation expired"
- No registry changes without user action/permission!
- and many more

This is an incredible piece of software AND they update frequently. Go to <http://www.irfanview.com/> and see what I mean.

There once was a man from the sticks
Who's hobby was writing limericks.
But he failed at the sport
'Cos he wrote them too short.

Random Spittle

Not long enough for an article:

1. That sound you hear when you go to the Cafe' is death rattles from Mein Brooks' attempt to create blogs within the confines of his domain.

Didn't work Stevie! It was a bad idea from day one. Maybe you can save the posts to enter in MCJ's next "most boring post" contest. I'm not sure they'll win, but they will certainly be able competitors for the title.

2. I've been looking at *Richard Osterlind's Mind Mysteries Too* Volumes 5, 6 & 7. My first reaction is - he should have stopped at 4. As I've said before, the true value of a book or DVD can only be determined after it has aged a while. I'm willing to withhold final judgment.

The *Question and Answer Act*, which is touted as being "worth the price of the whole series" is shamefully transparent. I'm a huge fan of the first 4 volumes of this series. I thought they had more good magic than any other L&L set. Maybe I'm getting jaded, but nothing in this series really excited me. Time will tell.

3. Richard Kaufman is killing the Genii forum by being such an irascible dick to participants. He's adopted Brooks' mantra of *it's my forum and if you don't like it **FUCK OFF!*** Too bad, it was the best. New messages have nearly dried up except for the incestuous babble among the insiders. Maybe he should have kept it closed after he unceremoniously shut it down in a tizzy recently.

4. I've been thumbing through *Lorayne: The Classic Collection* recently. This is a rewrite and revision of Harry's first 3 books and *The Epitome Location*. Many of us cut our teeth on CUCM and thumbing through it brought back some pleasant memories. None of them about Harry though, who has become a condescending, egotistical, industrial grade prick.

5. Favorite quote seen recently: *Freedom of the press is limited to those who own one.*

6. If you get a chance to see Bill Goldman lecture, it's worth the cost. It's a little disorganized, but you'll get a lot of tips on trade show magic and the types of tricks that work.

Take care.....



Drivel & Drool

Another thing I found funny:

(On September 17, 1994, Alabama's Heather Whitestone was selected as Miss America 1995.) Question: If you could live forever, would you and why?

Answer: "I would not live forever, because we should not live forever, because if we were supposed to live forever, then we would live forever, but we cannot live forever, which is why I would not live forever,"

-Miss Alabama in the 1994 Miss USA contest.

~~~~~

"Whenever I watch TV and see those poor starving kids all over the world, I can't help but cry. I mean I'd love to be skinny like that, but not with all those flies and death and stuff."

-Mariah Carey

~~~~~

"Smoking kills. If you're killed, you've lost a very important part of your life,"

-Brooke Shields, during an interview to become Spokesperson for federal anti-smoking campaign.

~~~~~

"I've never had major knee surgery on any other part of my body,"

-Winston Bennett,

University of Kentucky basketball forward.

~~~~~\

"Outside of the killings, Washington has one of the lowest crime rates in the country,"
-Mayor Marion Barry, Washington, DC.

~~~~~\

"I'm not going to have some reporters pawing through our papers. We are the president."  
-Hillary Clinton commenting on the release of subpoenaed documents.

~~~~~

"That lowdown scoundrel deserves to be kicked to death by a jackass, and I'm just the one to do it,"
-A congressional candidate in Texas.

~~~~~

"Half this game is ninety percent mental."  
-Philadelphia Phillies manager, Danny Ozark

~~~~~

"It isn't pollution that's harming the environment. It's the impurities in our air and water that are doing it."
-Al Gore, Vice President

And .

"We are ready for an unforeseen event that may or may not occur."
-Al Gore, VP

~~~~~\

"I love California. I practically grew up in Phoenix."  
-Dan Quayle

~~~~~

"We've got to pause and ask ourselves: How much clean air do we need?"

-Lee Iacocca

~~~~~`

"The word "genius" isn't applicable in football. A genius is a guy like Norman Einstein." -

-Joe Theisman, NFL football quarterback & sports analyst.

~~~~~

"We don't necessarily discriminate. We simply exclude certain types of people."

-Colonel Gerald Wellman, ROTC Instructor.

~~~~~`

"If we don't succeed, we run the risk of failure."

-Bill Clinton, President

~~~~~

"Traditionally, most of Australia's imports come from overseas."

-Keppel Enderbery

~~~~~

"Your food stamps will be stopped effective March 1992 because we received notice that you passed away. May God bless you. You may reapply if there is a change in your circumstances."

-Department of Social Services, Greenville, South Carolina

~~~~~

"If somebody has a bad heart, they can plug this jack in at night as they go to bed and it will monitor their heart throughout the night. And the next morning, when they wake up dead, there'll be a record."

A Recommended DVD

Over the years we all hear of moves which are performed so well by certain magicians that their name becomes synonymous with the sleight or routine:

- Albert Goshman - Spellbound
- Don Alan - Chop Cup
- Ken Krenzel - Classic Pass
- Chris Capehart - 3 Ring Routine
- Slydini - Lapping
- Steve Brooks - His Jabba the Hut imitation

You get the idea. Paul Cummins is a name that always comes up when the Side Steal is mentioned. His work with it is legendary.

Paul does Marlo's *Deliberate Side Steal* better than anyone. It's been honed by years of performance and practice. It's practical and attainable. Last week Paul began shipping his new DVD - *The Side Steal Declassified*. I can think of no better way to learn this sleight than buying this DVD. I really felt like Paul gave us everything he has on the methodology. He performs about 6 tricks and explains the move and it's variations very succinctly. Production values were better than most.

I don't know if Paul will be distributing the DVD through normal channels or just his website at <http://www.fasdiu.com>.

I'm generally not a member of the camp that says if you get one good trick or idea from a book or DVD you got more than your moneys worth. Not me - I feel screwed. Be warned, there is not a lot of information on this platter, but if you want the real work on one of the most important moves in card magic look no further.

Take care.....



Drivel & Drool

Things that really bug me:

Companies that spend a jillion dollars on a web site, yet the programmers aren't smart enough to strip spaces, periods, dashes etc. from phone and credit card numbers

George F. Bush - 1 & 2

Police departments that have so much time on their hands they do "safety" checks. Can I hear a big Bull Shit!

The Patriot Act - like its going to catch anything.

Names for employees, like "associates" and "partners" OR my new favorite From Sam's Club - "coach". What really bugs me most is the places that use these feel-good terms like Wal-Mart would sell their employees body parts to slave traders if it would add .01 to the quarterly income.

"Disrespected" athletes making 8 figure salaries.

Big Oil - I guess everyone saw that Exxon just made more money last quarter than ANY US company in history! I recently wrote about their blatant thievery and some douche bag commented that it was a supply issue - China- India and other palaver spewed out by the American Petroleum Institute. I said then - just wait for the quarterly report. If anyone thinks we got rid of all the fucking bandits and crooks when Enron and Worldcomm crashed you're fooling yourself. American business is corruption on corruption. We can no longer entrust our well being to "free enterprise". It doesn't exist.

Wall Street - speaking of crooks. The Exxon quarter "disappointed" the MBAs, CPAs and CFUs and the stock went down. What a joke our financial system has

become.

Alan Greenspan - he's screwed up more times than George F. Bush II and no one seems to know.

Escalades - the ultimate prickmobile.

Powered By Qumana

I thought this was funny

Nothing to do with magic. Just a joke I liked:

A husband takes his wife to play her first game of golf. Of course, the wife promptly hacked her first shot right through the window of the biggest house adjacent to the course.

The husband cringed, "I warned you to be careful! Now we'll have to go up there, find the owner, apologize and see how much your lousy drive is going to cost us."

So the couple walked up to the house and knocked on the door.

A warm voice said, "Come on in." When they opened the door they saw the damage that was done: glass was all over the place, and a broken antique bottle was lying on its side near the broken window.

A man reclining on the couch asked, "Are you the people that broke my window?"

"Uh...yeah, sir. We're sure sorry about that," the husband replied.

"Oh, no apology is necessary. Actually I want to thank you. You see, I'm a genie, and I've been trapped in that bottle for a thousand years. Now that you've released me, I'm allowed to grant three wishes.

I'll give you each one wish, but if you don't mind, I'll keep the last one for myself."

"Wow, that's great!" the husband said.

He pondered a moment and blurted out, "I'd like a million dollars a year for the rest of my life."

"No problem," said the genie. "You've got it, it's the least I can do. And I'll guarantee you a long, healthy life!"

"And now you, young lady, what do you want?" the genie asked."

I'd like to own a gorgeous home complete with servants in every country in the world," she said.

"Consider it done," the genie said. "And your homes will always be safe from fire, burglary and natural disasters!"

"And now," the couple asked in unison, "what's your wish, genie?"

"Well, since I've been trapped in that bottle and haven't been with a woman in more than a thousand years, my wish is to have sex with your wife."

The husband looked at his wife and said, "Gee, honey, you know we both now have a fortune, and all those houses. What do you think?"

She mulled it over for a few moments and said, "You know, you're right. Considering our good fortune, I guess I wouldn't mind, but what about you, honey?"

"You know I love you sweetheart," said the husband. "I'd do the same for you!"

So the genie and the woman went upstairs where they spent the rest of the afternoon enjoying each other. The genie was insatiable.

After about three hours of non-stop sex, the genie rolled over and looked directly into her eyes and asked "How old are you and your husband?"

“Why, we’re both 35,” she responded breathlessly.

“No Kidding? Thirty-five years old and both of you still believe in genies?”

Take care.....



It Is A Magic Show After All!

Recently, I’ve been inundated by *actors turned magicians* and their clone lectures. Basically, they all have the same premise:

you can take the lamest piece of shit imaginable and through good staging and a well developed character you can have a great performance piece.

Well, if you do this you know what you’ve got? A lame magic performance. It might be entertaining, but it isn’t magic.

If all I want is entertainment, I’ll go to a good strip club, grab a gin and tonic and watch naked women with big gozangas strut around. Now that’s entertainment.

(Actually many years ago - in days when I did periodically go to a strip joint, I watched a stripper, Miss Nude Canada I believe, disrobe and do a magic act - buck nekkid. It was nearly surreal and, at first, you didn’t know where to look, but that was resolved quickly. Put it this way - I have no idea what the tricks were.....)

If you’re doing a magic show - do good magic. There’s plenty of excellent tricks. Tricks that actually fool the audience when performed well. Now, when you add staging and character attributes you really have something.

Don’t ever let anyone sell you on the - *there’s no bad tricks, just bad magicians* bull shit. There are tons of bad tricks and your audience, *the laymen*, are actually capable of real human thought. If you’re depending on *this just blows right past laymen*, get a new trick. It probably won’t.

Do yourself a favor and download these clips of Whit Haydn performing four

terrific routines.

Notice particularly, the clarity of the effect. I'm sure no one watching was confused at any point. The magic is technically well done, the character well developed and the staging is flawless.

I still think Whit's a tool, but he's a hell of a performer.

Take care.....



Drivel & Drool

Goodbye Glenn!?

Glenn Bishop recently announced he would quit his blog(s) to focus on other things. I suspicion we'll see him back, as these damn things get in your blood.

As I have said before, I think he's one of the good guys - somewhat mercurial, but so am I. It was, apparently, important to Glenn to make peace with a couple of the Castle regulars that he had *issues* with. That appears to have gone well and I'm glad for him.

Keep in touch Glenn!

Worth A Read

I'm glad to see MagiCentric back on his game. I felt the Haydn/Bush thing really blew his doors off and I really doubted his ability to come back. Recent posts have put that fear to rest. I particularly liked this Post on originality. He's one of the few to get it.

I'm so tired of ***originality for the sake of originality*** I could scream. You know what I mean:

....and the third coin magically flies from the left hand to the right.....and the deck is now blue! Huh?

There's no need for me to repeat what he already said so well. It's worth a read.

Learning the Vernon Wand Spin

I had a heck of a time learning the Vernon Wand Spin from the written directions (the spin only, not the ball vanish), until I ran across an excellent clip on Dave VanVranken's site. Check it out [here](#). It really helps in the learning process.

Thanks Dave

What the hell is a "parlor"

Parlour (or parlor), from the Fr. parler ("to speak"), denotes an "audience chamber," but that is not the import of the Hebrew word so rendered. It corresponds to what the Turks call a kiosk, as in Judg. 3:20 (the "summer parlour"), or as in the margin of the Revised Version ("the upper chamber of cooling"), a small room built on the roof of the house, with open windows to catch the breeze, and having a door communicating with the outside by which persons seeking an audience may be admitted.

I'm not sure a lot of us actually perform Parlor Magic, but the venues we work tend to be small areas like a living room with little control over the placement of the audience. I've been thinking about the tricks that can be performed in an environment like this. One we could call hostile - at least to a magician

- McCombical Deck
- Ken Brooke's Sidewalk Shuffle
- Egg Bag - Sterling or Malini
- Chris Capehart's 3 Ring Routine
- David Williamson's Ring and Rope
- Some Mentalism Routines
- Billy Bishop's Wrist Tie or Jaspersene Thumb Tie

We're looking for tricks that take up very little room - are foolers - and can be performed in a chaotic environment. We can also assume no safe table is available

As I've been going through this exercise, I'm finding very few tricks that conform to the way we must work today. Surprisingly, most of the stuff is rather old. We'll

be going over each of these and adding others as we go along

Feedback and ideas are welcome

Take care.....



Drivel & Drool

I'm Afraid It's Getting Worse

(This is happening in what used to be a free country - the United States of America. Bush is having our children killed to save this and there's NOTHING we can do! By the time we "exercise our rights as free people" and vote their sorry asses out of office it may well be way too late. Way too late.)

Selina Jarvis is the chair of the social studies department at Currituck County High School in North Carolina, and she is not used to having the Secret Service question her or one of her students.

But that's what happened on September 20.

Jarvis had assigned her senior civics and economics class "to take photographs to illustrate their rights in the Bill of Rights," she says. One student "had taken a photo of George Bush out of a magazine and tacked the picture to a wall with a red thumb tack through his head. Then he made a thumb's-down sign with his own hand next to the President's picture, and he had a photo taken of that, and he pasted it on a poster."

According to Jarvis, the student, who remains anonymous, was just doing his assignment, illustrating the right to dissent. But over at the Kitty Hawk Wal-Mart, where the student took his film to be developed, this right is evidently suspect.

An employee in that Wal-Mart photo department called the Kitty Hawk police on the student. And the Kitty Hawk police turned the matter over to the Secret Service. On Tuesday, September 20, the Secret Service came to Currituck High.

"At 1:35, the student came to me and told me that the Secret Service had taken

his poster," Jarvis says. "I didn't believe him at first. But they had come into my room when I wasn't there and had taken his poster, which was in a stack with all the others."

She says the student was upset. "He was nervous, he was scared, and his parents were out of town on business," says Jarvis. She, too, had to talk to the Secret Service.

"Halfway through my afternoon class, the assistant principal got me out of class and took me to the office conference room," she says. "Two men from the Secret Service were there. They asked me what I knew about the student. I told them he was a great kid, that he was in the homecoming court, and that he'd never been in any trouble."

Then they got down to his poster.

"They asked me, didn't I think that it was suspicious," she recalls. "I said no, it was a Bill of Rights project!"

At the end of the meeting, they told her the incident "would be interpreted by the U.S. attorney, who would decide whether the student could be indicted," she says. The student was not indicted, and the Secret Service did not pursue the case further.

"I blame Wal-Mart more than anybody," she says. "I was really disgusted with them. But everyone was using poor judgment, from Wal-Mart up to the Secret Service."

When contacted, an employee in the photo department at the Wal-Mart in Kitty Hawk said, "You have to call either the home office or the authorities to get any information about that."

Jacquie Young, a spokesperson for Wal-Mart at company headquarters, did not provide comment within a 24-hour period.

Sharon Davenport of the Kitty Hawk Police Department said, "We just handed it over" to the Secret Service. "No investigative report was filed." Jonathan Scherry, spokesman for the Secret Service in Washington, D.C., said, "We certainly respect artistic freedom, but we also have the responsibility to look into incidents when necessary. In this case, it was brought to our attention from a private citizen, a photo lab employee."

Jarvis uses one word to describe the whole incident: “ridiculous.”

Powered By Qumana