



# The Servante

Official Newsletter of the Bruce Chadwick SAM Assembly 138 Alliance of Illusionists

Volume 2023 - Number 2 - March 2023

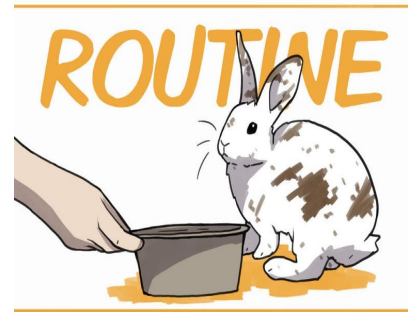
Next Monthly Assembly Meeting - Thursday March 16, 2023 - 7:00 pm  
Illusion Warehouse, 3917 McCart Ave, Fort Worth, Texas  
Three blocks north of Seminary Drive/Across from the Public School

## ROUTINING AND CLUB PERFORMER PERFORMANCES

The SAM Assembly 138 Alliance of Illusionists will meet on Thursday March 16, 2023 at 7:00 pm, the Illusion Warehouse, 3917 McCart Ave, Fort Worth. The meeting is slated to be filled with performances including performances by Hare Evison and William "Weebo" Beaty.

In addition, Bruce Chadwick will lead the main core activity with a presentation on "Routining and the Art of Magic."

The Executive Committee will meet before the meeting at 6:00 pm. All elected officers should be in attendance, and any other dues-paid-up member of the club may attend at well.



### ROUTINING AND THE ART OF MAGIC by Bruce Chadwick MA, M.Div.

Magic tricks and illusions are essentially puzzles with simple secrets that make them work. The magician uses these secrets to mimic accomplishing the impossible and entertain audiences. Unfortunately some magicians think that magic entertainment is mainly about "puzzling people."



The reality is that magic tricks performed only as puzzles are not very entertaining. Puzzles challenge intellect and few people enjoy having their intellect questioned. The so-called "catch me if you can" game that many magicians play is not fun for most people.

For magic to be entertaining, it must be much more than just doing tricks. The accomplished magician understands that magic tricks are only theatrical props and that the entertainer's job is to take these props, devise entertaining routines, and create performance that approaches art.

### LEARNING THE TRICK

After a magic trick is chosen, the first step toward creating an artful performance and an entertaining routine is for a magician to clearly understand the mechanics of the trick to be performed. The magician must become proficient in understanding the sequence of performance steps that lead to an effect's climax. This simply means that a magician must learn how to do the tricks he has chosen to perform, and learn to perform them well.

(continued on page 13)

## MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY MONTHLY ASSEMBLY MEETING

It was a full house with 23 members and guest in attendance for the Thursday February 16, 2023 Monthly Assembly Meeting of the Fort Worth SAM Assembly 138 Alliance of Illusionists. President Bernie Trowbridge kicked the meeting off promptly at about 7:00 pm in the party room of the Illusion Warehouse magic shop. The meeting moved quickly into what the club calls New Member Introductions. Candidates either performed a trick or two, or otherwise introduced themselves and told the club about their magic interests. They were then escorted out of the room by an officer while the club discussed their qualifications and voted whether or not to accept their petition.

Fulltime professional performer and member candidate William “Weebo” Beaty introduced himself. He proceeded to do a whimsical card trick that would make the late Svengali proud. Its obvious Weebo has a lot of performing experience. His comical look and dynamic performing persona puts him in high demand for family shows. He was readily inducted as a new member of the Assembly.



Candidate Hari Evison, most recently from Maui, Hawaii was next. He attempted a comical die and metal container divination routine. Hari is an electrician by trade, but took to magic at an early age due to his father’s influence. We are happy to have him as our newest Active member.

The club also welcomed Sara Pylant to Associate club membership. Sara is new to magic and has most recently worked as an assistant to Bruce Chadwick. An educator by trade, Sara finds magic both refreshing and exciting.

The club also welcomed several guests. Kenny Caspar from Dallas found our club fun and exciting. We hope he will seek membership in Assembly 138 in the very near future. Brenda Helmer introduced her sister Bridgid Breazeale. Both Brenda and Bridgid are daughters of our late club member Bernie Dolenz. Margaret Clauder brought her son John Clauder to the meeting. John has been bitten by the magic bug very badly and we know he will join our Assembly soon.

Then it was on to the magic of Joe Rotio. Joe has been a dynamic member and officer of Assembly 138 for the past five years. Soon he will retire from the railroad here in Fort Worth and move back to his home in Florida. Joe performed a cups and balls routine that was, well, “nuts” to say the least! In recognition of his devotion to our club, President Trowbridge bestowed Joe with a plaque commemorating his service. The club then took a break with refreshments and a cake honoring Joe.

The main core activity for the evening was an incredible lecture on “street magic” by Shel Higgins. Shel is an incredible performer who received high accolades on a recent America’s Got Talent appearance. He has also appeared on Discovery Channel’s Fast and Loud, featured at the Busking School and Busking Boot Camp, did two seasons as a street performer in Daytona Beach, and one season in Key West. He has also performed for the NBA Dallas Mavericks/ WNBA Wings halftime show and worked for eight years at the State Fair of Texas.

Shel emphasized in his lecture some of the peculiarities it takes to be a street performer. He talked about the importance of engaging an audience with the appropriate material and how to seek “truly magical moments” when connecting to an audience. Shel said that performers must first choose unique material and that the motivation to pay the bills will turn the material into entertainment! Shel performed a fun Cards Across routine and then closed his presentation by swallowing a sword while jumping a rope and riding a unicycle! And with that friends, we didn’t know how to end the meeting on a higher note except to say, Shel Higgins was readily inducted as the newest member of the dynamic SAM Assembly 138 Alliance of Illusionists!



## MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

President Bernie Trowbridge called the February Executive Committee Meeting to order on Thursday February 16, 2023 at 6:05 pm in the Museum Room of the Illusion Warehouse. All officers were in attendance and included President Bernie Trowbridge, Vice-President Lonnie O'Lander, Secretary Bruce Chadwick, Treasurer Cindy Bighorse, Sergeant at Arms Connor Branach, Historian Jack McCoy, and Member at Large Charlie Montroll. Also members in good standing Gary Poe, Lisa and Jimmie Fulce were in attendance.

The January Annual Business and Planning Meeting as presented in the February SERVANTE were approved. Treasurer Cindy Bighorse gave a brief Treasurer's report. She reported a previous balance of \$5,327.38. From that were expenses of \$14.86 for Mail Chimp and \$230 payment to the caterer for the January Installation Banquet. The club received income of \$1666.36 from members paying 2023 dues, leaving the club with a current balance of \$6,773.72 (not including the Dolenz pillow). The committee agreed to wait on moving some of its Operating Account money to the club's Edward Jones Reserve Account.

Much discussion ensued regarding booking Eric Stevens to lecture for the club in April. The club was offered the date of Saturday April 8, 2023. However since that is Easter weekend, the committee has requested that the club contact Scott Wells and ask if the lecture date can be changed to Sunday April 16 at 2:00 pm. Secretary Chadwick will notify the committee about Scott's response. Cost for the lecture will be \$15 for members in good standing or \$25 for non-members and guests. The club will pay any balance due.

The club is also contemplating Booking Matthew Garrett on Friday, October 6, 2023 or Saturday, October 7, 2023. As well, consideration is being given to book Keith Leff on Saturday, November 11, 2023.

The agenda for the March AOI Monthly Assembly Meeting was discussed. It was determined that the main core activity will be presentation on how to routine magic effects. Bruce suggested the possibility of presenting a lecture himself, or possibly using a panel discussion or question and answer session. With no further business, the meeting was concluded promptly at about 7:00 pm.

**A WORLD OF MAGIC  
IN TEXAS**  
HOUSTON • TAOM 2023  
WITH GUEST OF HONOR BILL PALMER  
SEPTEMBER 1ST-4TH

SCAN OR CODE TO VISIT  
[TAOM.ORG/2023](https://taom.org/2023)  
MORE ACTS TO COME!

PERFORMANCES BY: STEVE VALENTINE • MARIO THE MAKER & KATIE • CHAD LONG • BRENT BRAUN • DAVE & JAKE RANGEL • CHRISTOPHER CARTER • KATRINA • DOUG CONN • MICHAEL FINNEY • HARRY MAURER • ERIK TAIT • PLUS SCOTT WELLS WITH THE MAGIC WORD PODCAST!

TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF MAGICIANS

Save the Date!

DALLAS MAGIC CLUBS

The Dallas Magic Club's  
**MAGIC AUCTION**  
Saturday April 15 - 10:00 am

No Charge for Dallas Magic Club Members in Good Standing  
\$20 Fee for non DMC Members  
(So you might as well pay your \$25 Dues so you can take part in this and other upcoming events)

**DMC**  
DALLAS MAGIC CLUB  
SAM ASSEMBLY 13 • IBM RING 174



I grew up in Rockford, Illinois where there was only one magic shop, which fortunately was only about a thirty-minute bike ride from my house. Richard

Gough was the owner and my first mentor in magic. He offered a series of weekly youth classes which really jumped started my love for magic. It was also at the Magic Manor that I attended my first magic lecture; the lecturer, Albert Goshman. I believe the lecture cost me \$25 which was a lot of money for a fifteen-year-old kid.

I sat there in that smoked filled room with my notebook in hand and ready and made sure I left with as much good information and magic secrets as I could. The fact was I got one or two things, and for the most part watched an amazing close-up routine. I didn't understand a lot of the techniques or sleights he was talking about but I bought his lecture notes and rode my bike home anxious for the next time there would be a lecture.

In my mid-twenties I became very interested in personal development. I read books, watched videos, listened to audio tapes, took classes and attended seminars in an effort to become the best me I could be. A few of my favorites were Jim Rohn, Og Mandino, Zig Ziglar and Dennis Waitley.

In my early thirties I got involved with a company called The Peoples Network. It was a company completely dedicated to personal development. I started traveling across the country, spending eight to ten weeks at a time promoting lectures given by Jim Rohn. My job was to make appointments to go into businesses and give thirty-minute presentations on the importance of setting goals, reading books, and doing things to constantly improve oneself. During the presentation I would suggest books and give popular Jim Rohn quotes, hoping at the end I had convinced them to invest \$295 in themselves.

Auto dealerships were almost always a sure thing for getting an appointment to do my presentations. The problem was there are a lot of negative people in car sales. One could walk in and almost always know who would or would not be purchasing the lecture package. The salespeople standing outside the door smoking and complaining were more than likely not going to purchase. But walk inside the dealership and look up on the wall at the plaques of the salesperson of the month, and one would find that it was the same one, two, maybe three names. They were the people who usually were early at their desk, planning their day, and working their leads. They were the people who more than likely guaranteed sales. Almost always they were the people who also had seen the lecture multiple times.

The interesting thing about Rohn's two-day seminar was that it changed very little from year to year. Yet it would be the same successful people who invested in themselves with time and money to listen to a lecture that hadn't changed much from the last time they attended. What successful people know is that they had changed since the time they last saw the lecture. They knew they were in a different place mentally to receive the same information. Things they had completely missed previously could very well be "AH HA" moments the next time!

This is true for magicians who invest time and money to attend lectures, buy books and videos. Magicians often get lost, thinking they already know it all, and therefore fail to make the investment. But all it takes is being able to walk away with that one gold nugget that takes one to the next level in their performance, teaches how to book more shows, or helps them find the perfect opening effect. A person who has already read the book or watched the video should read the book and watch the video again!

I wish I had the opportunity to see Albert Goshman's lecture again with who I am today. I can only imagine the number of gold nuggets I would leave with. Fortunately this time I am sure I would think about the next lecture as I drive home in my car!

Until next time, Bernie



“You need to quit magic.” Those aren’t words you want to hear from your booker but there I was. I was on the phone with a professional who once produced David Copperfield. Since the settling of the pandemic, I’ve been looking to get back to work in front of more live audiences. Finding a new agent seemed to be the route.

But “quit magic?” Why!? He hadn’t even seen a video of my act yet! I clung to his every word to see why he was so pessimistic about magic. He explained to me that he’s seen the same magic repeatedly. One copycat after another claiming to be a creative performer when these acts are merely just another batch of chef salad with the “dressing of the day” atop.

He wasn’t talking about tricks, either. It’s all the other key elements to magic that are making bookers roll their eyes. So many acts dress, talk and act the same. While one could argue that “if it’s new to the audience then it’s new altogether” but thanks to the appetite of today’s entertainment-driven culture; audiences know when they are getting something fresh versus when they are being fed chef salad. Yes, there’s a time for doing classic material but we shouldn’t use that material as a crutch.

Chasing down originality can feel like chasing a ghost. You feel like its near but can’t quite put your finger on it. But here is one special cheat that you can use to catch that ghost: be RELEVANT. My booker friend went on to say that when Copperfield broke into pop culture, he transformed magic by changing the way he talked and dressed. They became relevant. Same for Copperfield’s latest Vegas show or Justin Willman’s *Magic for Humans*.

The incestuous patterns we see in magic are a byproduct of uncultured magicians. We obsess over magic, buy more magic, and run in the same social circles with other magicians. While these can all be good things, shouldn’t we be getting our inspiration from OUTSIDE the world of magic? One of the most toxic poisons for the development of magic is to spend too much time around magic culture. My wife is a successful visual artist. She doesn’t paint to show off her brushes or canvas but to communicate a message of how she feels or an observation about nature or culture. She connects to the audience through her medium of painting. It’s never “just a pretty picture.”



Likewise, in magic it should never be “just a cool trick.” We should never push a cigarette through a coin just because we can. Too often does our work become about the trick instead of about the audience. And while killer effects are good things to show to our audiences, without ample presentation the only message the audience will be left with is “how did they do that?” That’s not good enough. It is foolish to assume that an audience will respond well to our magic just because a trick is strong.

The mission of the magician is to use the medium of amazing magic to communicate a message to the audience; one other than “Watch this cool trick.” Let’s choose messages that are relevant to our audiences today. Ask these questions in order to find inspiration for relevance: What’s in the news? What matters to my audience? What is on my mind (besides magic) that I would like to portray to my audience?

When I experience quality art (including magic or other artforms), I walk away asking questions. I’m not so concerned with how the artist created what they made but how their work made me feel. As magicians we should have the same goal. Audiences should be left feeling astounded but more interested in how we made them think and feel.

Remember, when audiences see us do magic, they get to live vicariously through us as we do the things they can only dream of doing. Pair that power with a culturally relevant message and you have a formula for an original act. You don’t need to chase down the ghost of originality. It will come to you if you seek to be relevant. But if you can’t make your magic relatable, perhaps it is time for you to take the advice of one bitter Nevada booker and trade magic for stamp collecting. *Share your thoughts! Email me at [bronsonchadwick@gmail.com](mailto:bronsonchadwick@gmail.com)* 1

JACK  
♠♠♠



EMCCOY  
A A O P A  
T R I T Y  
H D N I !  
S S C  
S

**Accessassinator 2**—The following is a condensed version of my effect, 'Accessassinator' which got a lot of notice when I posted a video on YouTube back in 2011. I'll have it on the YouTube page by the time you're reading this, simply enter the title in the search window. I think so far I'm the only one to title a video as such. The original is a personal favorite because it's mostly a potpourri of moves by a few famous magicians. For more description refer to the video description.

**Effect:** The 4 kings are shown front and back and each placed on top of 4 tabled portions of the deck. The story is told of 4 kings who ruled by fear and persecution. A king caught wind of a possible assassination attempt, so he surrounded himself with 2 guards and hid in his secret chamber (sandwiched between the 2 jokers and placed in the card case). When the top card of his pile is shown, it is an accessassinator (ace), a narrow escape! When the top cards of the other 3 piles are shown they are also accessassinators. When the group are removed from the case it's seen that between the 2 joker guards are now all 4 kings! The 2 main slights used are a variation of Ed Marlo's strip out addition and the squiggle display (creator unknown).



### Setup

Manage to get the 4 aces on the back (top) of the deck. Also, ensure a king isn't near the back.

### Performance



Remove the 2 jokers and place them face up on the table. Holding the deck face up and as you talk get a left hand pinky break above the bottom 3 aces. Spread through the deck and out jog the 4 kings, maintaining the break as you do so. Once the kings are found and up jogged, stop spreading.



Close the deck by moving the right hand leftward, using the left palm as a backstop of sorts. **Don't** square up but leave it semi-messy.



Take the deck into the left hand (still pinky break above bottom 3 aces) and with the right hand fan the kings in a nice display where all are visible.



With the right hand grasp the deck at its lower right corner, thumb on top, **fingers going into the break**. The left hand still has complete control of the bottom 3 cards.



With the right hand pinch the deck tightly. The left hand now moves upward, beneath deck and kings, its 3 cards travelling with it secretly to beneath the kings.



The left fingers close against the left and right edges of the kings, squaring the kings and secret cards horizontally.



Holding the kings motionless with the left hand, the right hand moves the deck inward, which strips the kings (and the 3 aces secretly below them) out from the front.



The right hand rotates the deck face down and places it onto the table.



Tell the spectator to cut the deck into 4 piles from your right to left. The left pile will have an ace on top.





Spread over the top 2 kings and take them by the right hand.

Also keep the faces towards the spectator as much as possible so they can't see the thickness of the left hand's cards.



The thumbs of both hands push upward, the top kings up jogging at a slight outward angle. The left index is at the front edge to hide the extra thickness of its bottom king and keep those cards square. This displays the 4 kings to the spectator.



Close the face up spread, placing the right hand kings back on top of the left's. Turn the packet face down and repeat the move explained in the past 2 images to display 4 backs to the audience. They will believe those to be the 4 kings but 3 are actually aces.



Lower both hands to the outside deck portions and deposit the supposed bottom kings onto them. The left hand will be depositing 3 cards so practice making it look and sound identical to the right hand's actions and look at the right hand as well when doing it, keeping focus off the left hand.



Deposit the remaining 2 cards onto the middle deck portions. The spectators will believe you just put a king on top of each pile. Actually the right 3 have aces, the left has 1 ace and the 4 kings on top.



Pick up the leftmost pile (the pile with the kings).



Quickly spread and close, catching a pinky break below the top 4 cards.



Turn the top card face up to display a king, maintaining the break. With the right hand pick up the 2 face up jokers.



Place the face up king between the two jokers.



Move the right hand leftward, the king travelling between the jokers.



Square everything up against the left hand, get everything flush then immediately lift all the cards above the break in right hand biddle grip (the 3 other kings secretly below the lower joker. The fingers hide the extra thickness from the front.



The right hand holds the packet as the left hand puts its deck portion back down in the row.



Immediately the left hand returns, palm up and peels the top joker off the right hand packet (typical biddle peel).



The left hand returns and peels the king off the left side, but this time the right hand raises slightly, causing the left side of its card(s) to tip the king over leftward. The left thumb aids as well by keeping the left side of the king from sliding.



The king lands face down onto the left hand's joker. The right hand follows just behind, immediately lowering all its cards on top of the left hand pair. To the spectator it looks like you simply flipped the king over face down between the 2 jokers.



The right hand takes over holding all the cards so the left hand can reach and pick up the card case.



As quickly as possible, but clearly, open the case and insert the entire packet.



Put the box back down. You're done and everything's ready for the revelations.



Turn over the top card of the leftmost pile (the pile the spectators saw you take the king from, it will be an ace. At this point there's nothing magical yet though some may wonder how you managed to get an ace there. Now turn over the top cards of the other piles. This will come as a shock. With empty hands grab the case, open it and remove the packet inside it.



Do a one-hand fan to show 2 face up jokers with 4 cards now between them.



With the left hand, palm leftward, thumb above and fingers below, tightly grab the fanned cards as a group



The left hand now reaches outward, turning palm downward also, with revolves the fan's orientation towards the spectator. Press downward with the index and middle fingers on the fan's center area as the thumb moves out from below. The spectator(s) will be surprised to see all 4 kings there.



Finito', a double magic occurring trick and a nice final display to boot.

The success of this trick relies on the spectator believing you put a king on top of the 4 packets. Their instant vanish will be a very big surprise. The patter runs along the line of 4 kings, one rich with guards and safe house (case). They all get 'ace'ssassinated, or so feared until reveled all are safe between the guards.

(continued from page one)

This is the demonstration level of routining, and similar to the way many magic tricks are often presented in magic shops. At this learning stage, there is usually no real emphasis on creating an entertaining routine. The magician simply learns how to do a trick and “perform” it without hesitation.

Learning how to do a magic trick should be logical, sequential, and smooth. An audience should never have to exert undue mental effort in following each step of the trick. If a particular step or the transition from one step to another is muddled, the audience will be confused and not receive the full benefit of the climax of the effect when it occurs.

An excellent way to reach the initial “magic demonstration” stage of magic is for a performer to learn how to do a trick in numerical and sequential order. Sometimes it is helpful for the sequence to be in written form. For the cut and restored rope trick for example, the sequence might be listed as:

1. The magician displays a piece of white cotton rope.
2. The magician pulls on the rope to show the rope is strong and is only one piece.
3. The rope is "doubled-up" into the magician's hand to find the "middle."
4. The magician takes scissors and cuts the middle to make two pieces of equal length rope.
5. The rope is tied is tied back together.
6. The magician wraps the rope around his hand.
7. The scissors are laid down and the magician disposes of the “evidence.”
8. A magic moment occurs to apparently cause the rope to be restored.
9. The rope is unwound from around the performer's hand and the rope is shown to be restored.

Taking the time to write down the list of steps required to perform a magic effect will cause a performer to clearly think through each step of action required. If the sequence is clear in the magician's mind, it will usually be clear to an audience as they watch the magician's performance. Listing the steps will also provide a foundation that will help the magician start devising an entertaining routine.

The performer should then practice the trick to the point that the magic demonstration is clean, smooth, and refined. Practicing in front of a mirror or in front of a video camera can be useful to evaluate and verify that each step is succinct.

In this process, the magician begins to determine how to handle the prop, molding the steps so they flow together, determine rhythm, and choose the correct performance speed for each step. When everything is concise, logical, and progressive, then the performer can begin thinking about a routine, patter, and pursue artful performance.

## **SHOWMANSHIP**

Showmanship deals with aesthetics. As such, showmanship is a term that is very hard to define. In the theatrical world, showmanship is a person's skill at performing or presenting things in an entertaining, artful, and dramatic way. People may not be able to define showmanship, but it is apparent to them when they see it happen.

Many different theatrical elements come together to create showmanship. These can include characterization, speech, storytelling, action, reason, movement, mannerism, intention, effect, and misdirection. Elements such as these must be molded into a sequence to produce good entertainment. When components such as these are woven artistically into a whole, showmanship begins to take shape.

If the performance of a particular trick is to follow a verbal presentation, the magician is going to have to determine what to say. If the presentation is going to be presented as humorous, the magician must work on the visual and verbal things that will make the presentation trick funny. If the effect is going to be performed seriously, or perhaps silently to music, the magician will have to carefully choose these ingredients and melt them together into a routine.

## **CHARACTERIZATION**

Characterization is a combination of the behavior, appearance, mannerisms, and personality of a performer during performance. Since magicians are essentially actors who portray the role of individuals who can do the impossible, magicians must use the same tools as actors use to create their characterization and demeanor surround a person that can apparently do the incredible.

Acting roles often require certain mannerisms, style, attitude, age, appearance, and behavior. Other required attributes may include age, costume, makeup, apparent educational level, economic status, intelligence, ethnic proclivities, moral inclinations, and many other characteristics.

Also acting roles often call for a fictional character with a specific persona and characterization that is radically different than the personality of the actor in real life. At the same time, some actors perform using the character and persona as they are in everyday life. Likewise magicians must decide who and what they are as they perform.

It should be said that magicians are probably better off by not trying to copy the personality and character of fellow magicians. A magician who tries to duplicate another performer is pursuing false art. Imitation is not flattery.

However this does not mean a performer cannot model characterization on character types. The bungling scientist, mannerisms of Forest Gump, the dizzy platinum blonde, the sophisticated college professor, a character from Grim's fairy tales, a superhero character, and the nutty professor, all come to mind. Magicians can base their characterization on the mannerisms from thousands of various characters fictional or real.

## **PATTER**

Some magicians are strictly talk type performers whose entire performances use speech. They use the power of talk to converse and entertain their audiences. Other magicians perform without any verbal interaction with an audience and instead use music as a valuable medium to enhance their performance. Yet other magicians integrate a combination of talk and music, while other magicians perform in dead silence!

When a magician uses any type of speech in a performance, what the magician says is called patter. Patter can be developed from a multitude of sources. A magician might look to whimsical situations and life experiences. Presentations can be related to stories, fairy tales, current news items, jokes, poems, or childhood experiences, books, news items, and thousands of other things.

Patter can be related to humorous presentations, life encounters, social events, fictional accounts, person to person interactions, pretense, and even education. There is no set formula for determining patter. The only requirement is that it be interesting and have entertainment value. The process of patter is a process that is different for everyone, but the key for artful performance is for patter to be unique.

Suppose a magician wants to perform the cut and restored rope trick with a verbal presentation that has a humorous tone. A magician might go back to the numerical sequence of the parts of the trick, such as listed earlier for the cut and restored rope trick and think about each part in the sequence.

Is there a particular part of the sequence that recalls an event or produces an idea or happenstance on which patter might be based? Does some action in the steps trigger something a magician has heard about, experienced, or even dreamed-up?

Perhaps a story of a magician going to a hardware store to buy some clothesline that is sold off a spool. The clerk measures the rope wrong and cuts the rope too short. The magician then uses his magical abilities to restore the rope so it can be measured correctly. Or maybe the cut and restored rope trick can be related to the frustration one experiences when their shoelace breaks. Wouldn't it be neat if it were possible to magically put one's shoelace back together?

Sometimes magic instructions come with purchased tricks that have suggested patter. Also some magicians discover the world of patter books with suggested stories for tricks. While there are no rules against using such sources, a magician should always personalize such patter suggestions with additional material such as stories, jokes, one-liners, innuendos, and so forth, to make the patter more personable. Patter must be molded, massaged, and changed to fit the demeanor and personality of the magic actor. Magicians should make deletions, add verbiage, and reword patter so that it becomes apropos and fits a performer's style and characterization.

A magician should always remember that there is tremendous power in words. A magician developing patter must be a wordsmith and carefully choose his words. Sentence structure is important as is accurate verbal descriptions. Patter should be personalized with flair and characterization that make a person's presentations novel. Also by adding originality, the magician will come up with better patter and presentations that better fit the performer's character and performance style. Patter must be analyzed, modified, and refined. Unnecessary verbiage should be eliminated. In the same way a trick is learned, rehearsed, and perfected, similarly patter must be rehearsed and polished.

How does what a performer says fit the sequential parts of the trick? Where can patter be changed to fit the trick better? Magicians must work on what they say and how they say it so that the talk begins to flow and produce a unified whole.

It is best for magicians to do their best to make their patter as precise as possible. However the truth of the matter is that patter is usually defined through performance. Most magicians ultimately get to the point where their patter is the same every time they perform. Their presentations essentially becomes similar to a script that an actor memorizes for a play. The system of refinement from multitudes of performances is usually the best way for cleanly presented patter to develop.

As magicians start writing their patter, an effort should be made for the patter to be original and relevant. Certainly magicians should never copy their patter verbatim from other performers. The system of copying will rarely produce art. Also the magician who attempts to copy another performer's presentation is nothing but an imitator and even a false artist. Despite what some have said in the past, imitation is not flattery!

This is not to say that magicians can't learn from each other. When a magician sees another magician perform in a novel and interesting way, the magician should analyze why the fellow magician's routine and presentation is appealing. Magicians can use similar patter, routines, and choice of effects. In his book *MAGIC AS AN ART*, Tristan says:

If you wish to succeed in show business, then you have to stand out, and to stand out means that you have to be unique and original. Not original to the point that no two Magicians can perform the same effects--many singers have the same basic repertoires, but their approaches, voices, and styles differ. Your routine, your style and your patter must be personal and original.

Finally, one of the cardinal rules is for performers to not rely on the old crutch of telling an audience what they are doing as they perform. "Now I'm going to take this piece of rope and fold it in half. With these scissors I will cut the rope into two pieces, etc." The magician who does this is the magician who usually has spent no time developing and working on thoughtful patter presentation.

## **PRODUCING A SHOW**

Magic tricks are usually learned, rehearsed, and routined individually. As more than one effect is chosen and routined, sometimes relationships between tricks become apparent. This can lead a performer to see how tricks might be arranged to create an overall show. This usually leads a performer to think about progression and a running order. The overall goal of routining is to make one effect flow to the next effect. It is the process of determining flow and continuity.

Some magicians choose the method where one or more pieces of apparatus of one trick can be used in the performance of a succeeding trick. For instance, a magician might pluck a rose from his lapel that magically transforms into a silk handkerchief. The handkerchief is then flicked into the air and it magically divides it into two. The two handkerchiefs are tied together with a knot that suddenly magically unties itself. One of the hanks is then pulled through the hand and it changes color.

If the apparatus of one effect isn't used as a bridge to a subsequent effect, two tricks might be bridged by other means such as what a performer says or does.

It is also important arrange effects to move upward toward stronger and stronger climaxes. This can be done with any combination of music, patter, presentation, as well as with the blending of overall effects.

George B. Anderson in his book *MAGIC DIGEST* has written a very nice little summation on routining. He says:

Routine your tricks in logical sequence. A drama doesn't start with a climax and then dwindle away to nothing, and neither should your magic. Start with a "flash" trick, something quick and snappy that commands immediate attention. Then do several of your pet effects, but do them in ascending order, starting with the one that gets the least audience reaction and continuing with tricks that top it. Wind-up your performance with your blockbuster, your pet trick, the one that you think is the best thing in your repertoire.

## **CHOOSING APPROPRIATE MATERIAL**

There are literally thousands of magic tricks. Magicians, and especially newcomers to the art of magic, tend to buy and learn to do as many tricks as they can. They also tend to buy any and everything that appears to be "new" and remotely interests them. Certainly magicians should learn new tricks, gather new ideas, and buy and learn new magic. Most magicians go through a lot of material and progress through a long journey to ultimately choose the effects they will use. There is no other way to say it other than to say that the process of choosing appropriate material will take time, analysis, and a lot of experimentation.

One thing many successful magicians realize through time is that the way to be a truly successful performer is to learn how to do an effect or series of effects better than anyone else. This is of course probably impossible to realize, but it is something to ponder. In the end, famous performers usually develop their reputations by performing specific tricks exceptionally well.



Also no performer can create a nicely polished routine and constantly change his routines. Once a magician puts a routine together, then a performer should think about sticking with that routine and attempt to polish it into art. Why replace accomplished hard work with something new?

Unfortunately after arduous trial and error, sometimes routines just don't work. Such routines might need to be eliminated altogether. At other times, the material a magician has used for years may become outdated, old, and hackneyed. It is rare, but sometimes one must "kill their babies!"

Some magic effects are complicated and intricate while others are very quick and simple. Some magic is especially designed and made for children's audiences while other effects are made for stage use only. The magician will discover that certain tricks lend themselves more readily to certain audiences. However a wise magician is the magician who realizes that tricks are only theatrical props, and that the magic happens with entertaining performance. Virtually any magic trick can be routined to fit any audience.

It is also usually wise for a magician to avoid duplication and choose tricks that are different from one another. For instance, the floating light bulb and the Okito floating ball probably don't belong in the same show unless they are somehow routined together. They are too similar in nature. Still this is not a hard and fast rule. Some performers such as the late Cardini performed their entire acts with nothing but productions.

Where variety is the goal, a magician might consider the categories or types of magic and vary his choice of tricks accordingly. For example, a magician might do an appearance type of illusion, move into a transposition effect, then an anti-gravity effect, a penetration, and then close with a powerful transformation.

As a rule, The magician can hardly expect to do justice to a trick the first time he performs it. In fact no matter how simple the trick, justice may not be reached even the tenth time a trick is performed. There will always be minor details that can be improved and refined, and artful presentation depends on the smallest details.

Also successful routining is a matter of trial and error. That is why tricks improve with age. Through performance, the magician gains experience. Better methods are devised. Better cover and misdirection is developed. Patter becomes refined. The pitfalls to avoid in the performance of each individual trick are discovered.

While it takes time to perfect a trick down to the smallest detail, the experienced performer can shorten the journey to make an effect artful by applying simple processes and routine correctly. The shortest distance between two points is a straight line, and only experience will enable the performer to know how to draw that straight line.

Lastly, a magician must carefully consider his audience. This includes not only the choice of routine, but also the effects chosen. If a magician is primarily a children's entertainer, then obviously tricks and routines should be chosen for the children's audience. Complicated card tricks or mentalism effects that involve complicated addition and subtraction of numbers are probably not the best choices for children.

The magician who plays to church audiences should probably choose material that appeal to the family audience. A school show magician might need to choose routines and material that will play to various grade levels at the same time. A professional salesman might use effects that open the doors to get past a company's receptionist and reach the company boss.

Multitudes of dentists, physicians, and medical personnel use magic effects to gain the confidence of children. Other magicians go table-to-table doing marvelous feats of mystery, and since the performance is primarily for the guests in small intimate environments, the magician might steer toward close-up magic.

## REFINEMENT AND CHANGABILITY

After a magician decides that a routine is ready to be tried before a live audience, the routine should be performed precariously and with extreme judgment. Every element of action, flow, continuity, mannerism, handling, speech, and many other factors should be carefully analyzed.

Beautifully polished routines do not happen overnight. Timing, moves, and brilliance do not come after the first performance, or the tenth performance for that matter. It takes many consistent performances in front of an audience to polish a routine and learn where the audience reacts, laughs, and applauds. Even the most brilliant comedians who have been performing the same material for many years are constantly on the hunt to find refinement and finesse.

Al Leech in his wonderful little book entitled *DON'T LOOK NOW!* says: "Why is it that the accomplished professional does his tricks with such ease, and why does he get the response he does? For one thing, he has done the same tricks hundreds, perhaps thousands of times. They are as natural as breathing."

When it comes to applause, many performers are amazed at the power they have over an audience to command applause. In essence, many performers know exactly when and often how hard an audience is going to applaud, even though an audience might think their applause is spontaneous. This comes from thoughtful presentation and using subtle cues to tell an audience when and where they should applaud, and sometimes even give a standing ovation.

Also magicians should be leery of discouragement. They should understand that for performance to start turning into art, it requires constant analysis, rework, and maturity. Sometimes it is a challenging endeavor. Some magic professionals spend a lifetime perfecting a twelve-minute act.

Know too that changes in social norms may require that routines and material be changed to fit the times. Socially accepted standards, race and ethnic perceptions, politics, economics, patriotism, and many other cultural aspects, all change through time. Factors such as these may influence a magician's routines and presentations may need to be altered or even eliminated to fit current cultural and social standards. Every aspect of a magician's performance should be considered fluid, malleable, and changeable.

It is this author's hope that these few words will help performers become accomplished magicians. Certainly there is much to learn and there is no way this quick discussion can detail how to fully routine magic effects and move to producing art. Scores of books have been written on the subject and many opinions have been produced. A magician would do well to read as many perspectives as possible and get as many insights as available. The first step to becoming a polished performer with a powerful ability to entertain is to know that polished routines exist. Hopefully some of these words will aid in that discovery.

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**DFW AREA MAGIC HAPPENINGS**

**FORT WORTH SAM ASSEMBLY 138 ALLIANCE OF ILLUSIONISTS**

Meets on the third Thursday of each month, 7:00 pm at the Illusion Warehouse party room and magic shop located at 3917 McCart Avenue, Fort Worth, Texas 76110. Contact communications@allianceofillusionists.com or go to <http://sam138.com/alliance/> or Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/162025544420781/>



**FORT WORTH MAGICIANS CLUB INC AND REN CLARK IBM RING 15**

Meets on the first Thursday of each month, 7:00 pm. See <https://fortworthmagiciansclub.org/>

**MID-CITIES MAGIC CIRCLE**

Meets monthly. See the Mid-Cities Magic Circle Facebook group.



**DALLAS MAGIC CLUB, SAM ASSEMBLY 13 AND IBM RING 174**

See [www.DallasMagic.org](http://www.DallasMagic.org) for meeting information.

**IMPROV COMEDY CLUBS IN ADDISON AND ARLINGTON**

Both comedy clubs periodically host weekend comedy magic shows. For more details go to either [www.ImprovArlington.com](http://www.ImprovArlington.com) or [www.ImprovAddison.com](http://www.ImprovAddison.com).

**MAGIC IN THE LIVING ROOM**

Periodic magic shows every 1st Tuesday at 7:00 pm at The Line Public House, 940 E Beltline in Richardson. See [www.MagicLivingRoom.com](http://www.MagicLivingRoom.com) for more information.

