Ideal for
Theme Parks, Haunted Houses, Walk Throughs,
Palloween Festivals & Stage Shows

PAUL OSBORNE'S

SPIDORA
SHRED HER
THE BUZZ SAW
BURNED ALIVE
GIRL TO GORILLA
HEAD ON SWORD
LIVING HALF GIRL
ARM AMPUTATION
THE HEADLESS LADY
JACK-O-LANTERN GIRL
DEATH BY CREMATION
EXECUTIONER'S DREAM
THE WITCH'S CAULDRON
EASY BUILD GUILLOTINE
DREADFUL DREAMHOUSE

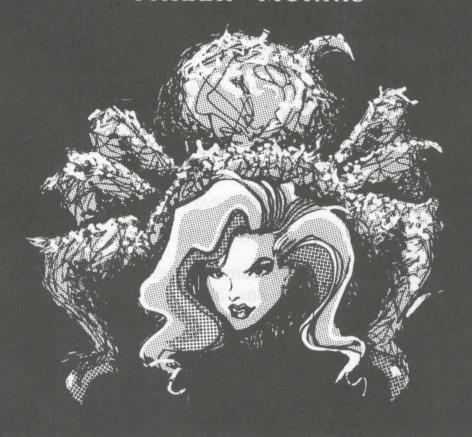
THE STOCKS OF PERIL THE SLATE OF FATE THE SWITCH WALL TABLE OF DEATH SWORD CABINET THE BLADE BOX TORTURE CHEST DECAPATARIUM HEAD OF URUS MUMMY CASE SPIRIT POST HEAD-XPLUS MANY MORE PLANS IDEAS AND DRAWINGS!!

With a foreword by PHILLIP MORRIS Featuring haunted house tips by VORTA PAUL OSBORNE'S



Additional Illustrations by DREW EDWARD HUNTER

Foreword by PHILLIP MORRIS



A special thanks must go out to Phillip Morris, Drew Hunter and Charles Chapman for their unselfish contributions to the world of spirits and this book. Also I would like to thank the many young performers who have participated in our Halloween shows and productions, most notably Joe Romano, Ron Fitzgerald, Bob Murphy, Mike Hakansen, Mike Bishop, Davyd Suber, Mike Moser, Alex Sharp and Christian Budman. Dick Clark Productions' Marilyn Wilson and Scooter Pietsch made the season memorable and Rhonda Shear made it "unforgettable".

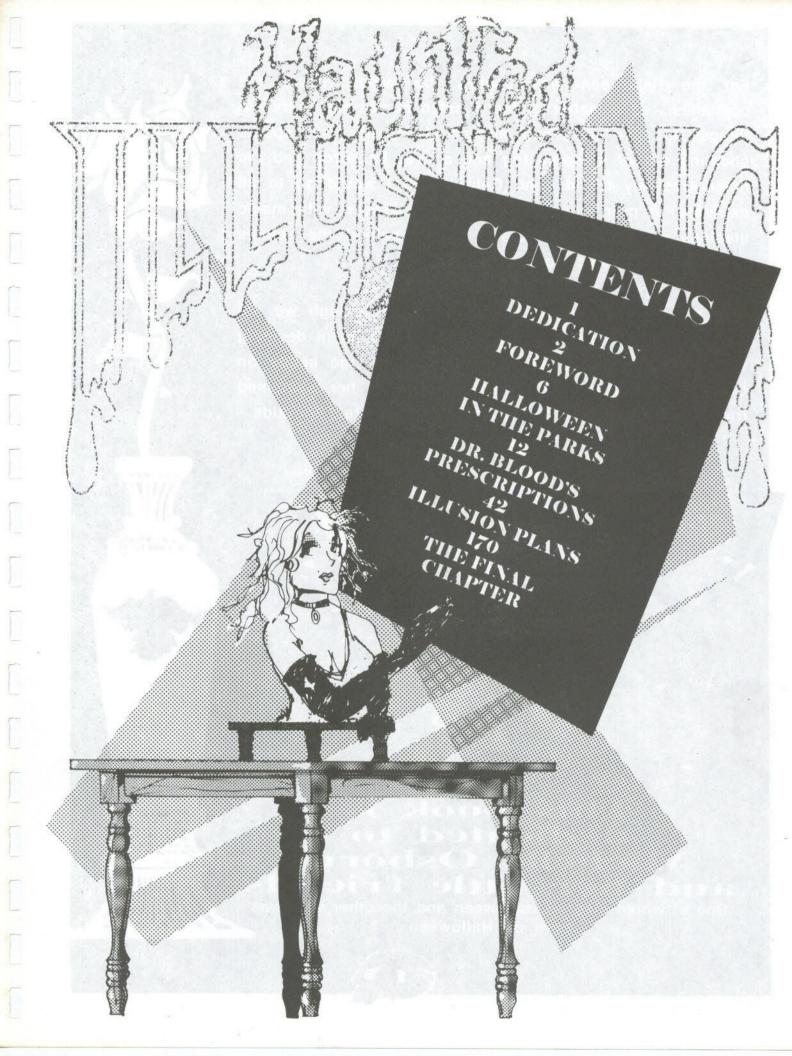
Copyright © 1996 by Paul and Michelle Osborne All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording or by any information storage or retrieval system, without written permission from the author.

Neither Paul Osborne nor Illusion Systems publishing assumes any liability for injuries resulting from any illustrations, ideas or effects constructed therefrom.

Manufacturing rights for any apparatus described are strictly reserved by the author.

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

P.O. Box 36155
Dallas, Texas 75235



For me Halloween was always the props, never the costumes... as a matter of fact I hated masks-hot stuffy old things! But give me a cool electric chair with some sparks shooting out of it, some fog and a neat backdrop and I'm home free! My friend John Colwell and I would go to all extremes to prop out his house for Halloween with magic illusions and special effects. I stayed behind the scenes and made the magic work.

Now my wife is altogether different. Even though we are "grown ups" a big part of our September is spent deciding what Michelle will be when she hands out the candy on October 31st. Here she is with a few of her costumed friends (Bentli, Google and Buzby) ready to greet the kids.



This book is dedicated to Michelle Osborne and her little friends

One of whom died on Halloween and the other who was born on Halloween



FOREWORD

Phillip Morris

From the ancient Greek theater to Shakespeare, to today's Freddy Krueger, the theater-going public has had a love affair with the macabre. Halloween is the second largest commercial holiday in North America, second only to Christmas.

Over the years many famous magicians supplemented their normal attendance figures by adding a Halloween attraction. Houdini was the most famous magician to ever live, and he made his reputation with escapes. However, he made his fortune from admission paid to see him as a "spookologist." He would expose the spirit mediums of the day. The great German showman, Dr. Heineman, was the first to present the "Headless Illusion" in this country. It was the largest grossing attraction at the 1939/40 New York World's Fair. Thousands upon thousands of patrons waited in lines for hours to see "Olga," who was advertised to have been decapitated in a car/train accident and was only being kept alive by the aid of modern medical science. After the fair was over, the illusion continued to break attendance records while being exhibited at state fairs and major carnivals. Within these pages you will find the "Spidora" illusion. This is the girl with the body of a spider. We featured this illusion and a revised version of the "Headless" illusion in a stage show we produced for a then popular chain of drive-in theaters. Again, a smashing success. A unique thing about this particular stage show was that we used the same female assistant in both illusions. The audience would see her head in Spidora and her body in the Headless illusion, but never both at once.

As a part of American history for 40 years, from the early 1930s to the mid '70s, magicians presented a stage show attraction in theaters known as a ghost or horror show. The performer would present an hour stage show featuring haunted type illusions. The show would climax with a seance where the entire theater was turned into total darkness. Ghosts and spirits would fly over the heads of the screaming audience. To say these shows were a financial success would be a gross understatement. Every night the shows would pack theaters to capacity, turning away hundreds and on some nights, even thousands.

Personally, I presented such an extravaganza under titles such as "The House of Horrors," "Dungeon of Death," "Tomb of Terrors," etc. We played literally every city, town and hamlet throughout the United States and Canada, during the 20 or so years we had the shows on the road. On occasions we even presented the shows in Spanish. As this is being written, popular illusionist David Copperfield is presenting a similar attraction as a finale to his show called the "Barcley House." The concept harkens back to the ghost show workers of the past.

Today the popularity of haunted houses all over the world is a growing phenomenon. They range from a small haunted house sponsored by a school or civic club to a giant commercial haunted house that will gross millions of dollars annually. Many of these spooky attractions are opened on a year round basis. Now I mention the above to point out the enormous market and potential that is available to the showman with a little imagination.

When Paul Osborne first mentioned to me his intention to write this book of haunted illusions I knew it would be an instant success. Paul, more than anyone else in the world is a walking encyclopedia of show illusion knowledge. Now you have the opportunity to tap into his enormous creative resources, making your own haunted attraction something people will talk about for years to come. Our sincere thanks and gratitude to Paul for not only the hours spent in assembling all of these outstanding illusions, but for creating many new and original illusions.

Phillip Morris

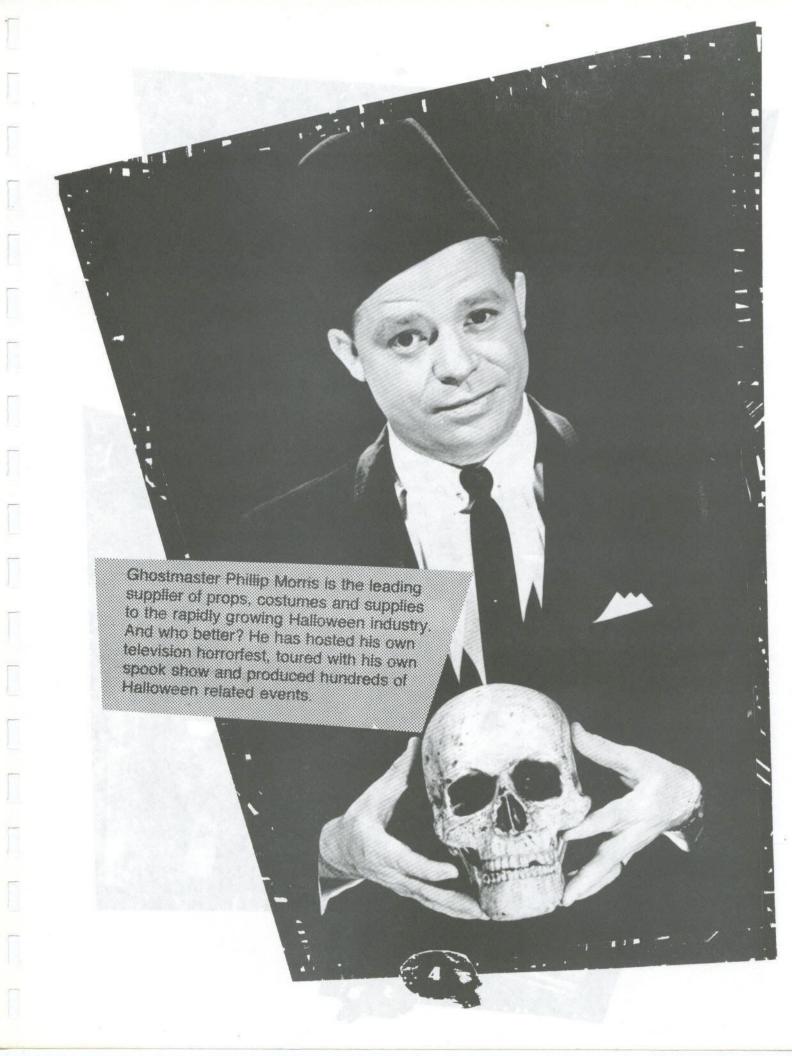
Phillip Morris continues to be a leader in the ghost show business. His giant costume and prop shops (Morris Costumes) located in Charlotte, North Carolina and Downey, California continue to be the leading suppliers of costumes, make up, props, magic and masks to the entertainment industry. For any of your theatrical needs we suggest you contact Morris costumes at 1-800-334-4678



My first "Krypt Kickers" band was a group I put together from Arkansas that John Tesh would kill for. They were the number 1 attraction at Six Flags, St. Louis, 1989.









HALLOWEEN in the PARKS

Paul Osborne

When I was a little kid my parents took me to a small Colorado mountain town called Estes Park. Not much to do there really for a little guy. Big mountains...but then they took me to this gas station that had a miniature train attraction next to it. It was a small train about twenty inches tall, and silver. It held about 12 kids. The conductor was a man they called Mr. Martin. He came by all our little seats with a fedora hat on and gave us a ticket. Then he put on a conductor's hat and punched our tickets. Then he changed hats again and collected our tickets. Then he put on the engineer's cap and drove the tiny train back around the Big Thompson river. I think it was called "The Silver Comet." Uh oh, it stopped, he got out and put on another hat and got a crowbar. He put that crowbar under each wheel and lifted our cars until the train was free and we laughed as we jiggled in our seats. Another hat, and we took off. We traveled through giant lollypops, a candy house, a dark tunnel (it smelled bad in there) and almost into the river over a rickety bridge. I was glad we made it back to my smiling parents...and I couldn't wait to go again. Much later I found out that the Mr. Martin that always conducted the tour was the coach at the high school during the fall and winter seasons. spring and summer he created this character and this attraction... "Attraction"! The first time I ever heard the word! I learned it meant an event that you enjoy and want to revisit. I was so happy during these days that I decided to dissect the word "attraction" and make it a part of my life. Never have I seen the birth of an "attraction" that lends itself to fun, creativity and family participation like the Halloween season.

For me, the concept of creativity always meant being unafraid in public places. It still does.

I had never really given much thought about Halloween illusion shows until my friend David Kynard called me from Six Flags. He was the entertainment director at the time and wanted to do "something" for Halloween. The men in the carpeted offices had decided to try a promotional event---so why not Halloween?

The year was 1979 and we had just premiered our new show, "TRIKZ," at Ramagosa's Pier in Wildwood, New Jersey. It was a "Fantasy Rock Illusion Show" styled after Gene Simmons' popular band of the time- KISS. The show closed September of that year, and I had no work for the performers (the worst part of my job) so I jumped at David's offer. To my knowledge that was the first time a fully produced Halloween show played a fully themed amusement park. As per their standard, Six Flags put up a first- class Halloween attraction in 1979.

The years that followed were filled with politics, and Halloween promotions fell by the wayside. In 1988 I got another call, this time from Tom Majo,r the then operations director of Six Flags -- Halloween was on again! But it was the eighties, KISS was basically out of the picture, and Six Flags was trying to position Halloween as a major marketing concept. We all thought (incorrectly) that Halloween was a teenage event. We were on target concept-wise but way off base money-wise. The years of "family values" were around the corner, but I was blindly buying Alice Cooper's guillotine and squirting people with fake blood in the themed streets. I hired a young magical talent from Chicago, Mr. Ron Fitzgerald, who really defined the Halloween look of the day. Ron had worked with me before for several seasons. I liked his David Bowie style combined with the Warhol, Edgar and Johnny Winter stark bizarre look. I first interviewed him for our Marriott shows, but he was unable to join us for the Magic World shows, since he had a tour planned for Europe. I kept him in mind and added his talents to subsequent productions, but I always saw Ron as Mr. proved to be the perfect street host and symbol for our Halloween. He murdering mayhem in the streets of Six Flags.

The stage star of those days was my friend Joe Romano, a man's man who projected a strong male, even macho magic image. I pitted him against an evil Dr. Fright who only appeared in vocal form, thanks to my disturbing theatrical vocal genius, Lynn Mathis. We shoved lightbulbs through Joe, chain-sawed his girlfriends in half, and haunted his every moment with ghosts produced from an antique Modern Cabinet. At Astroworld in Houston I hired raunchy stand-up comedienne, Rhonda Shear (now star of *USAUp All Night*), to play the part of Vampira, a seductive Elvira-styled "Ghostess" of a musical/magical revue show. Rhonda brought her own brand of humor to this less-tha- family production (.... "the Houston police have just reported that some one broke into the Harris County substation and stole all the toilet seats. So far they have nothing to go on....")

Those were Six Flags' and my Halloween halcyon days. We made a lot of mistakes. We spent too much money and we improperly spent a lot of it. Bob Pittman was my ultimate boss at Six Flags. He said our target was families. An ironic statement from the man who invented a teenage product--MTV--and sold it for millions of dollars. We all resisted his decree, but obeyed and "cleaned up our act." No more squirting blood, no more scantily clad Elviras, no more Iron Maiden music. Gone was the gore, the blood-red fountain water and



Danger!, Experimentation!, Risk!, Fear!...all the stuff I was good at....out the window.

However...

.....a profitable and creative Halloween was looming. Damnit, that Bob Pittman was right again.... he defined the Halloween that theme parks worlwide are now cashing in on. Want to know what it is?

In a word, family.

The secret to Halloween success rides on three important factors. First, MARKETING. You have to put the word out there so the public will know what you are doing. I can't tell you how many small parks I have seen try a Halloween promotion and think that by virtue of the event people will "just show up." Not so. You have to promote it and position it wisely for your market. Naturally, you must also have a second factor-- PRODUCT. Product means what you are presenting, Haunted Houses, shows, displays, special film guests, etc. This is your chance to shine and be creative, have fun with your product and remember that this is what the public is paying for-so don't disappoint them. Whatever you provide should be executed properly. The third and final factor is QUALITY--do it right. If the budget isn't there, you can still put thought and elbow grease into your project to make it good.

After much experimenting and wrestling with the concept, I think those of us in the park industry all agree that three things, in this order, will make your event an aesthetic success. First and foremost is your haunted house. Even if you bring in a group or a charity to provide this, it will be your anchor. If you have more than one, so much the better. Decor is next on the list. A park facility really needs to create the Halloween atmosphere. Mood lighting, eerie sound effects, and display items create this image. Pumpkins, hay bales, wheat shocks and fun spooky props all over make your facility something unique, something to market. Sadly, I think shows are last on the list, but they are a definite image builder and enhancer.

At Six Flags we divided our shows into the two categories of entertainment that defined the Halloween promotion. Indoor shows were sit-down venues that were rigidly scheduled and had a good degree of production value. We did illusion shows called "Dr. Frite's Theater of Mystery" and we did musical revues called, "The Shock Hop," "Freaky Follies," "Haunted Hotel," and "The Wax Museum." Outdoors we burned witches in a cremation illusion, used the Hangman illusion to nail Freddy Krueger, entertained the kids from a giant puppet show called "Spooky Strings" and musically brought back the "Krypt Kicker Five."

Even with the family approach in mind, we still made some mistakes. Six Flags has a huge stunt arena used to stage the Batman stunt show.





am proud to have Ron as a Halloween alumn. As you can see, he looks ight for the pan and you will see and read more about him in this book. Today Ron can be found in the Chicago area producing his own bizarre cable TV show and hosting his own Halloween magical events.

They wanted something for Halloween in there and they wanted it to be a "Rock and Roll" teenage attraction. We settled on an idea I had tossed around in my mind for a number of years. It was called "The Death Test" and it was to be hosted by two Penn and Teller style caustic comedians. Audience members would participate in a macabre type game show that would eventually put them in head cremations, guillotines and straightjackets. It was to be an "audience participation torture show!" I brought in two young performers that I had worked with before from Chicago Bob Murphy and Michael Hakansen. They were perfect as the leather-clad torture hosts. Both are very funny and played well off each other. We brought them into the giant Gotham City set on Harleys and the set was decorated with giant implements of torture. Bob's wife, Kim, was the perfect stooge in the audience selected to go in the Twister illusion at the end of the show. The music was pure rock-and-roll played over a monster sound system. To add flavor to the show, I hired six former Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders to dance and work with the hosts. We put them in white wigs, black sunglasses, black leather jackets, motorcycle caps, and flesh-colored tights with black thongs over them. The girls were covered head to toe except from a small amount of cleavage seen when their jackets opened and you could see the black tube top. I should say also that these girls did have impressive cleavage. If you have seen the Cowboys cheerleaders, I am sure you know what I mean. We had one girl who confessed to actually having two enhancement operations, since she wasn't pleased with the first. During rehearsals, the Six Flags brass checked out all elements and were pleased with the concept, in that this was the rough-an- tumble Batman stunt theater and attracted a more liberal, youthful, rock and roll crowd. They felt that the promotional package that year was well rounded with 80% of Halloween for the families, 10% for the little ones and 10% for the teenagers---the perfect blend.

Come opening day I watched as families, not teenagers, made their way into the giant arena. Still not worried because the majority of the show was OK for all-- we did do a current political joke and the music was pretty strong, and there was some impressive cleavage--but we could cover the problem areas quickly if we had to. Everything else was fine for the families, just slanted to teens, a hip new style show. Twenty minutes later the complaints FLEW into quest relations. It was a surprise to me and the Six Flags PR director to hear that the objections concerned the costuming of our girls. It wasn't the breasts: they were totally covered, but the perception of the flesh-colored tights with the black thongs over them gave the appearance of nudity--unbelievable! We were showing "too much flesh colored fabric!" We changed the costuming to black biker pants--still complaints. Finally we put them in black jeans and took out any sexy movements in the dance numbers (of which there were none you wouldn't see on any theme park stage). We stopped short of having them sing Kathy Lee Gifford Christmas songs. In checking surveys we found the majority of complaints came from married women. In quizzing the survey takers, we found out that they were the large female visitors who didn't like it that their husbands were enjoying the show too much.

The specifics were even funnier. We found out that the women were offended by the costuming from the waist down. These cheerleaders had huge breasts. In talking further with Six Flags PR, we deduced that for the most part, large women also have large breasts. It was the tiny, tightly costumed 20 year-old-bottom that was the culprit. The young, thin, attractive moms had no problem with the show. The big lesson we learned is that no matter what you do, don't stray from your family audience at Halloween. With an attraction for the masses such as this, you have to appeal to the masses, period, end of report. The teenagers will be entertained by virtue of the fact that it's Halloween. Don't offend the family, and families come in all shapes and sizes!

Big-budget shows like this are fine for a large park with some capital, but what about a small facility that wants to build an attraction. Creativity can really come into play here. I have found Halloween to be a truly emotional holiday for many in the art world. By mobilizing local artists, even art students, props, posters, gravestones, hanging ghosts, and displays of all types can be created. Record stores are full of sound effects and Halloween-themed music and soundtracks to play as backgrounds. Our chapter by Vorta is an excellent beginning on creating your own haunted house, or maybe you can arrange for the March of Dimes or another charitable organization to bring their house to your facility. Local performers can be sought out. Magic and puppet clubs can be located to provide you with some excellent entertainment and street atmosphere. The promotion can be done very well on a shoestring if you are organized.

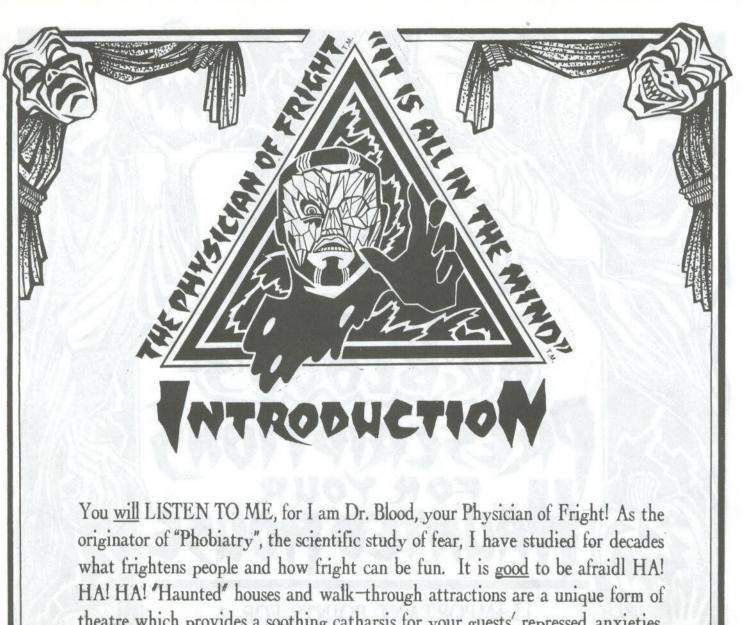
One final thought would be your time frame. Nobody seems to understand the importance of planning this event in advance. If it is new to you then one year ahead is not soon enough. 365 days is not that long to organize an all-new event. Treat yourself properly and allow enough time to make the holiday work for you. The first Halloween we did at Six Flags was thrown together and a definite learing experience. The bottom line is that opening night 25,000 people were projected to pass through the gates. After 40,000 had been admitted the main road had to be shut down. It was a major disaster. We had not planned properly, and "the inmates took over the asylum." People stole our masks and props and dodged food bills. Souvenirs were missing and even some cash out of the register. We had not planned properly in the support area to make the promotion any more than mayhem. Naturally, with 20/20 hindsight we re-thought our plans and brought in a successful and profitable Halloween promotion.

Throughout this book I have selected photos depicting my Halloween memories and productions to share with you. This scrapbook of memories should give you a feel for the fun and the lessons we have had with the Halloween season... and may give you some ideas for your promotion! I have always felt that within us all there is a major "downloading" of creativity. There is also a sensibility factor. Often the two collide; often they can work in harmony. Harmony is what Halloween promotions should reflect. A safe, creative approach to the macabre that is non-offensive. No more conflicting words exist in one sentence, but this is the challenge, and if met properly can result in a artistic and financial success.

As you plan your Halloween event, no matter how large or small, please remember two words, safety and family. With those words as guidlines you can't help but have a successful promotion.







theatre which provides a soothing catharsis for your guests' repressed anxieties. Where else, (beside my Institute of Phobiatric Research, of course!), can you scream your lungs out without being institutionalized? Every time that you help people to safely confront and release their fears, you are providing an important service for your community. And remember, I am here to help you!

Heed my 13 important points for a safe, effective and profitable haunted attraction!



PHYSICIAN OF FRIGHT.



This is the most important consideration and the most serious. IF YOU CANNOT PRODUCE A SAFE HAUNTED ATTRACTION THEN DON'T DO ONE AT ALL!!! The safety of your guests, cast and crew must be planned, trained and constantly implemented into your haunted attraction. NEVER IGNORE SAFETY CONCERNS OR TRY TO AVOID THEM.

Until the time that I can impose my "Dr. Blood's National Uniform Safety Standards for Haunted Attractions" upon this great nation of ours, each separate community sets its own safety standards which are usually enforced by the local Fire Department, since fire and smoke are the greatest dangers in a haunted attraction.

Above all, make the appropriate personnel at your Building Inspection and Fire Department aware of your plans from the very beginning and tell them that Dr. Blood sent you! Cooperate fully with them by allowing them to express their opinions concerning your location and your construction, electrical and plumbing layout and become a vital part of your overall safety program.

Basic safety considerations are:

FIRE EXITS

Find out your Fire Department's maximum distance allowed from the nearest emergency exit and design your walk-through accordingly. These exits should have approved emergency hardware and be designated by standard illuminated signage.

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

Find out how many are required by your Fire Department (usually determined by square footage) and place them prudently. They must be immediately accessible in an emergency but keep them away from mischievous guests!

SMOKE DETECTORS

Find out if they are required by your Fire Department and ask for quantity and suggested placement.

EMERGENCY LIGHTING SYSTEM

A separate system of lighting that can be turned on in an emergency to increase the illumination level in your haunted attraction (which most likely will be dimly lighted) or replace a failed system may be required. This system must be capable of being activated from a single place. An automatic sound shutoff/emergency announcement system may be required and is definitely desirable if your budget allows.

FIRE RETARDING

Spray all combustibles in your show with a fire retardant. Home-made solutions work well but Fire Departments in some towns require that you have a certificate saying that it was done by a professional company. The Fire Department will test, so don't try to fool them!

FIRE SAFETY TRAINING

Make all of your cast/crew aware of the fire plan and the location of the safety elements. Ask your Fire Department to come lecture your cast/crew on fire safety and give a demonstration of the proper use of a fire extinguisher.

SECURITY PERSONNEL

Uniformed and officious-looking officers placed prominently around your haunted attraction will greatly increase safety for all. Off-duty police persons make for excellent safety and if you can get them to volunteer, so much the better. Give your crew and security a wireless communication system so that they can stay on top of any emergency situation. And make sure your security persons don't try to get in a few scares of their own.

FIRE EMERGENCY PLAN

Produce a floor plan of your haunted attraction that shows all of your fire safety elements. Have a copy approved by the Building Inspection and Fire Departments before building your haunted attraction and display a copy in your backstage area for the benefit of your cast/crew. Make sure your cast/crew is aware of the nearest emergency exit and are prepared to direct guests to it. Have several fire drills during training to insure mastery of the safety plan.

OVERHEAD SPRINKLER SYSTEMS

In larger municipalities, under certain building codes, in certain existing structures, and contingent on the size or projected attendance of your show, the subject of an overhead sprinkler system may arise. These are prohibitively expensive for temporary and small-scale haunted attractions. Your Fire Department will possibly waive this requirement if you demonstrate your complete dedication to an otherwise excellent fire safety plan. Nonetheless, I strongly recommend a sprinkler system in any indoor haunted attraction, if possible.

NO SMOKING!

<u>DO NOT ALLOW SMOKING</u> in your haunted attraction by cast, crew or guests, even during the construction phase or even when it is closed to the public! Place a large can of sand as an ashtray outside and away from your attraction for nicotine addicts and post signage forbidding smoking.

The elements that add up to good safety in your haunted attraction will be a relatively expensive part of your budget, but don't scrimp or cut corners. The best haunted attraction in the world will be reviled if anyone is seriously injured or killed due to your negligence. In addition, a tragedy at your show will affect the success and reputation of everyone else's show, including MINE! Safety standards and their enforcement vary widely from community to community. However lax these may be, ALWAYS KEEP YOUR SAFETY STANDARDS HIGH! Rest assured that I, Dr. Blood, will be watching. You are being observed! HA! HA!



Themeing your haunted attraction is an excellent and effective way to increase the quality of the experience and give it a uniqueness that will set it apart from all others. A theme will create a cohesiveness to your design, give your haunted attraction "identity", and can be used as a valuable marketing and promotion tool.

A theme with a background story line can come completely from your imagination, a rich resource indeed for most hauntrepreneurs! Or consider utilizing your locale or region. Are there any myths or historical events that can be tied in and expanded for a haunted attraction? Even the latest fantasy/horror fad or motion picture can suggest your theme.

A host/hostess fantasy character can be created naturally out of your theme and be invaluable to your attraction and its marketing. I, Dr. Blood, can guarantee it! HA! HA! HA! Get a live person to perform as your character and you will have someone who can be a recognizable spokesperson with the media, make special appearances and welcome guests to your show. But be absolutely sure that your host/hostess character performer stays "in character" when he/she is portraying the role and that he/she knows all aspects of your theme, production and schedule so that they can speak accurately and intelligently with the media and guests about your show.

DR. BLOOD'S WORTHY COUNSEL: Although your character doesn't have to be "Mr./Mrs. America" and can be creepy, unnerving and frightening, it's best to stay away from being downright repulsive and disgusting.

DR. BLOOD'S VERY STRONG WORD OF CAUTION: Trademark and copyright infringement is a <u>serious</u> crime! Make sure that you do not use the titles, names or intellectual properties of comic books, motion pictures or your fellow hauntrepreneurs. Imitation may be the sincerest form of flattery but, taken too far, it is the surest way to get slapped with a lawsuit! When in doubt, check it out. You may even want to go to the modest expense of trademarking <u>your</u> character.

STANDARDS HIGHT Rest assured that L.Dr. Blood, will be watching. You are being obean





I, Dr. Blood, declare the official opening of one of my Wax Mussum "experiments" at my anomal "Shockfail Party Strick Proview". The media begs to invitations.



A lively display arona full of my "Torrot Technician" provides an area suggesting the inviting interior of any "Institute of Probatric Research". But which is morely a manikin and which is alive? Ha Ha Ha

POINT 3: ROOM CONCEPTS

Haunted houses are traditionally a series of "rooms" (haunted hayrides, a series of "scenes"). When planning your rooms, you must decide what will "happen" as the guests move through that particular area. This book by Mr. Osborne is full of wonderful illusions that can be adapted to your theme for your rooms. And don't be afraid to get ideas from rooms you've seen in other haunted attractions (as long as they are not trademarked or copyrighted!).

Even if your action in a room is simply a "monster" jumping out and saying "BOO! ", you should endeavor to design the room to fit your overall theme. Adding set elements, props and "motivation" for the action that is adapted to the story line of your theme will turn a series of generic and cliche rooms into a haunted extravaganza! For continuity and quality, you may even want to appoint an Art Director who has a complete grasp of your theme to have final approval of all sets, props and costumes if these elements are the product of many different persons.

Though hauntrepreneurs will always utilize the old tried and true scare tactics, don't be afraid to experiment with new ideas and concepts. But be sure that whatever you rig up or ask your performers to do is capable of endless repetition without breakdowns, mechanical, physical or mental! Keep the actors' actions and responsibilities simple. And some of your greatest new ideas will come from your performers, who are striving for the maximum effect of their scare. Listen to them!

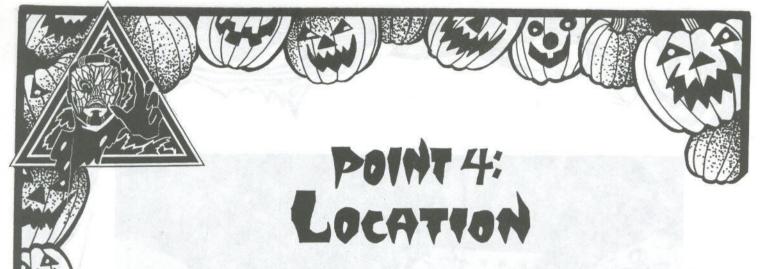
DR. BLOOD'S WORTHY COUNSEL: Don't waste your time and energy becoming angry when some other hauntrepreneur "steals" your general idea (unless you have it trademarked or copyrighted!) Hauntrepreneurs, on the whole, are an amiable and mutually supportive group who share their love and enthusiasm for Halloween, haunted attractions and scaring the pants off people! When I form "Dr. Blood's Horrorship of Hauntrepreneurs," you don't want the reputation of being a bitter old grump, now do you? I didn't think so.



This is a good example of my specialized themeing in soom concepts. My eases to please "Probiomaniacs" Live for jast the sight moment to shock, startle and alasm my guests!



I Do Blood, humbly pay homage to the traditional and classic themes in my experiments as well. My dear hunchback "Extlyone always dotes upon my gueste!



Three things are vital to the financial success of a haunted attraction. These are, as they say, location, LOCATION and LOCATION! If you have already possession or access to a spot then check it against this list of considerations. If you are looking for a location, use it as a guideline:

DR. BLOOD'S WORTHY COUNSEL: Besides searching for existing buildings suitable for your haunted attraction, look also for vacant lots. Haunted attractions housed in tents do very well when fronted with an appropriately attractive facade and given adequate security.

ZONING - Is this location zoned for haunted attraction use by the Local Building Code?

EXPENSE - How much will it cost you to be at this location?

SIZE - How large will your attraction be at this location'.?

ACCESS - Is this location easy to reach by major roadways? Is it simple to explain to the public how to get there?

VISIBILITY - Can this location be easily seen by those who are approaching and looking for it? Can it be seen by lots of people who are just driving by not looking for it?

PARKING - Once people drive to this location, can you conveniently and safely accommodate their cars?

QUEUING - Assuming that you will be mobbed by excited guests dying to get into your show, does this location allow for a long queue line and holding area for crowd controls?

DR. BLOOD'S WORTHY COUNSEL: If you find that your queue lines are long and/or slow, entertain your guests as they wait to get in. Make sure this entertainment is themed with the entire experience of your show!

NEIGHBORHOOD - Is the immediate vicinity of this location positive? (Avoid areas perceived by the public as "bad" and stay out of residential areas.)

SECURITY - Can your show be secured at this location? (You might persuade a local "Crime Watch" association to volunteer to include your show in their jurisdiction.)

UTILITIES - Does this location provide you with basic electrical and water utilities?

SAFETY - What are the opinions and recommendations of the local Fire and Police Departments concerning your show at this location? (See Point #1.)

DR. BI_OOD'S WORTHY COUNSEL: Be sure to consider rest room facilities for your guests. Portable units can be rented if permanent facilities are unavailable.





In the Dallas Fort Worth Metroplex, The Palace of Wax...



... and Six ElaysOver Texas were both very fortunate indeed to have me, Dr. Blood, utilize their excellent, high profik locations for my "experiments."



A drawn plan of your proposed layout is necessary for building your show as well as for getting the Building Inspection and Fire Departments' enthusiastic approval (the elements required for the Fire Department are listed under Point #I). Make sure that your plan is capable of being reproduced. Numerous copies will be required. Drawing your layout will also ensure that you have given complete consideration to all elements of a good and well-run haunted attraction. These considerations are:

PASSAGE WIDTH

Most building codes require a minimum passage width of 42" in any area through which your guests must travel.

DR. BLOOD'S WORTHY COUNSEL: Lay out at least 48" passages on your plan to allow for partition width and you will have no trouble complying.

CAST/CREW AREA

You must allow a "backstage" area for your cast to dress and your cast and crew to take breaks. Restroom facilities, a source of drinkable water, costume/mask storage, a place for the cast to apply their make-up, seating and a large first aid kit are required.

DR. BLOOD'S WORTHY COUNSEL: Instead of putting the backstage literally in the back of your layout, try placing it in the center.

CAST/CREW ACCESS

It is wise to plan "secret panel" access doors throughout your layout to facilitate the movements of the cast/crew throughout the show and into sets. As long as you do not send guests through them, they can be as narrow as function will allow.

SOUND ROOM

Be sure to plan an area where the electronic equipment for your sound can be <u>locked up and secured</u>. This is also a good place to centralize lighting controls, emergency systems, show communications, battery charges and all valuables. Allow access by authorized personnel only and prohibit eating, drinking or smoking in this room.

HANDICAP ACCESS

Although haunted houses are not a major target for the Handicap Access Militant Hit Squads, it is good P. R. and just plain considerate to be able to proclaim that your haunted attraction is accessible to everyone, including those who are physically challenged. As a doctor and humble humanitarian, HA! HA! HA!, I <u>INSIST</u> that you do! Get the guidelines from the government and consider them when planning your layout. Usually, proper ramping at the entrance and exit and staying on one level/floor will suffice to comply.





My high profile security quards learned important lessons when they familiarized themselves with my superb "experiment" Layouts.



I, Dr. Blood, insist that my shows backstages are immoculately organized and well-sun. My favorite director, Driw Edward-Hunter, faithfully records my excellence on video for all posterity.



Whatever the theme of your show, the first place to start looking for props is in friends' and family's attics, storage buildings, junk sheds, etc., and see what perfect "treasures" people may simply wish to get rid of. Check thrift stores (Salvation Army, Goodwill) and garage sales, as well. To keep your show from looking like a family's attic, a storage building, a junk shed, etc., your furnishings and decor should be haunted by using paints, hanging cheesecloth/beef cloth/spider webbing all over everything. Spray everything!, including "corpses", with fire retardant. If you have the crew and budget to build your furnishings, so much the better. But you can still detail out your rooms with found objects.

"Corpses" are usually popular items in haunted attractions. Properly distressed clothing on display mannequins is great. "Bloated corpses" can be made very cheaply out of old clothes stuffed with fire retardant fiber fill. With an inexpensive mask attached to a stuffed ski cap sewed to the neck, you'll have a head. With stuffed gloves (with wire inside for posing) attached to the arms, you'll have hands.

DR. BLOOD'S WORTHY COUNSEL: Mannequins, once an old mainstay for propping out haunted houses, are now so expensive that stores don't throw/give them away any more. Your best source is to contact companies in larger metropolitan areas that specialize in refurbishing them to see if you can get a good deal on some of their "hopeless cases".

Now, let's talk expanding insulating foam. We all know that, straight out of the can and sprayed bloody red, it makes great "guts" and "gore". But smeared and worked with your hands (BE SURE TO WEAR DISPOSABLE LATEX GLOVES!!) on costumes, props, masks and sprayed green, brown, and gray, it also makes good slime, mold, scabs and rot. Experiment with it and see.

Finally, depending on your budget constraints, a few purchased "show pieces" can be focal points around which to design your themed room or as a grand finale for your entire show. For the largest selection of the latest haunted house display items (makeup and costuming, too), the Morris Costume Catalog can't be beat. For a nominal charge, get one from:

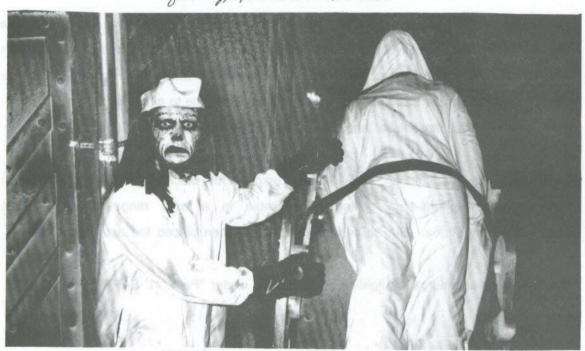
MORRIS COSTUMES 3108 Monroe Road Charlotte, NC 28205

TEL: (704) 332-3304 FAX: (704) 332-4443





My lovely "Midow Wheeds" vents has giref, allest somewhat malevoluntly, among a delightful setting of stone coupts, old coffins and dead treas.



In Dr. Blood, adore honor novies and often incorporate.

Them into my experiments." Here, my nod wax sulpter
"Keater Parsills" is about to use an actual body to
create his rest masterpiece in way!



Building Inspectors and Fire Departments are now insisting that, even in temporary haunted attractions, regular voltage wiring must be in metal conduits or ENT (electrical non-metallic tubing). EXTENSION CORDS ARE ABSOLUTELY FORBIDDEN! The use of strobes and black lighting require regular voltage electricity. Several strobes in a room set at different speeds produce a startling effect. (Be sure to post a sign warning persons with epilepsy and other disorders that a strobe light is in use in your show.) Black light is great for creature "camo." Try putting the same pattern on an all-black costume as you do on a black painted wall and see how the creature becomes invisible -- until it leaps out for a great scarel I, Dr. Blood, learned this little trick from my "Phobiopaths" who shun the glare of white lights and who delight in fright! HA! HA!

An inexpensive and actually safer alternative to lighting the rest of your show is to use low voltage-lighting, usually sold in kits for use as yard lighting. Or design your own low-voltage system using a transformer, appropriate wiring and small automobile bulbs. The bulb can be placed in the end of a small PVC pipe to aim and focus the light -- the longer the pipe, the smaller and more focused the beam of light.

Gels are great for coloring your lighting (except for black light, of course!). An inexpensive cellophane-type gelling is available in a wide range of colors from theatrical supply stores. But be careful; it will melt when placed too near a hot bulb!

Don't forget your emergency lighting as discussed under "Point #I: SAFETY!"





Je my unique version of the classic "dot room", my playful "Phobiopaths" pander to my punicked guests.
Can you count how many there are ? He Helff! Le



Dozens of staspe lights animated my contearing "Ecto Skeletons" from the lettere in a phantasmazoria of sight and sound!



"Soundscaping" is VERY IMPORTANT! My "DR. BLOOD'S PANDEMONIUM PRINCIPLE" insists (among other things) that guests in a haunted attraction should be terrified even if they go through with their eyes closed! This, of course, means that your soundscape should be as good as the rest of your show. Get as good a player and speakers (strategically placed high, if possible) as you can muster and make sure that the playback system is secured in a lockable room! When using cassette tapes, try "endless loop" tapes or "auto-reverse" on your playback equipment to minimize silent time. And always keep several extra dubs around. Haunted soundscape cassettes will often wear out through repetitive playing.

If you must buy your soundscape pre-recorded, then look/listen for one that may fit your theme. And I wish you good luck. Most are generic, cliche and poorly done. If you are fortunate enough to have the capability to compile your own soundscape, pick music and sounds that reinforce your theme. If you have recording capability, then be sure to add your cast and crew screaming and moaning. Psychologically, nothing is more unnerving than the sounds of other humans in distress. And I, Dr. Blood, should know. My neighbors around my "Institute of Phobiatric Research" complain constantly. HA! HA! If you can, put your host character voice on a soundscape that plays outside the show, both welcoming and warning your guests of the horrors they will experience inside!

Don't play your soundscape too loudly, but don't play it too softly either. The ideal level should make normal conversation among your guests difficult but not impossible among your cast and crew. Provide inexpensive foam ear plugs for any cast or crew member that you assign to a location near speakers. Guests don't need to worry, but anyone subjected to loud sounds for a number of hours can sustain permanent hearing loss. And,

as a doctor, I am DEADLY SERIOUS about your taking good care of your guests,

your crew and your cast!





Even if you go through my shows with your eyes covered, my supers sound scapes will instill shivers and screams!



of my cute "Grubbies", is on effective tool for intlicting - I mean inspiring - tenor! He Hall



Dependent on your theme, haunted costuming is usually a conglomeration of elements from many sources. Costumes can be purchased, of course, with latex masks being particularly popular despite their fragility and the discomfort of wearing one for extended periods of time while exerting oneself in performance. The venerable black hooded robe will never go out of haunted style. Discarded and used clothing often can be used, with custom pieces constructed by a sewing person at your disposal. Costuming can be distressed with foam, spray paints and tattered cheesecloth like the props and decor in my Point #5.

Presenting:

BLOOD'S ONE-SIZE-FITS-NOBODY COSTUME CONCEPT!" "DR.

Developed over the years to provide inexpensive, long-wearing, customized, comfortable, easily storable, backstage organizationally friendly, quick-to-change, sex-concealing, eerily anonymous and show-effective costuming for the real world, I, Dr. Blood developed my "One Size Fits Nobody Costume Concept". Please feel free to try it and add your own refinements! Simply follow these succinct instructions:

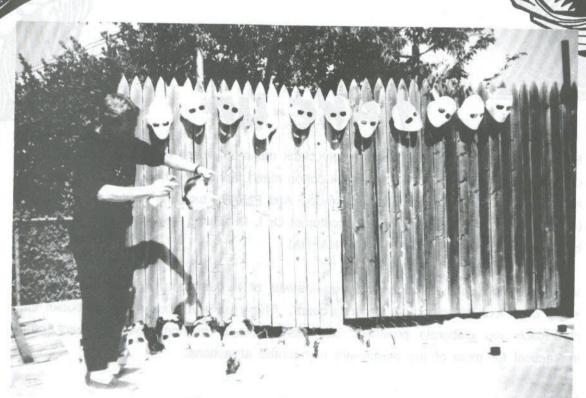
Mass-produce large black jumpsuits that zip up the back. Attach accessory costume elements permanently to the jumpsuits, including gloves on the sleeves. Make sure every element of the costume is machine washable. Iron on a label with creature/character "name" inside each jumpsuit. Distress the entire costume or add special decor touches. Write the corresponding creature/character name on a storage box. Toss the corresponding jumpsuit into the box. Cast mostly medium-sized persons as your performers, if possible.

Buy white "vacuform" plastic blank masks (male) from your costume supplier. Cut out the eyes and mouth with scissors and X-Acto knives. Attach a wide elastic band to hold on the face (stick a large safety pin on the band to make it adjustable). Attach dark cloth to cover the back of the performer's head and under chin to cover the neck. Distress the mask with foam and spray paints. Add torn-up wig pieces to the head cloth and "additional touches" (plastic worms, spiders, etc.) to the mask. Write the creature/character name inside the mask with a permanent market. Toss the mask into the storage box with corresponding jumpsuit.

Line up the opened storage boxes backstage for performers' access (no hangers!) and ask performers simply to throw their costumes and masks back in the appropriate box at the end of each performance. The box may be used as a "locker" for the performer's personal nonvaluables while he/she is in the show. Use large safety pins or Velcro insets to adjust cuff lengths for short people.

Wash the costumes and clean the masks nightly. Keep spray disinfectant or hospital grade liquid disinfectant (available from beauty salon suppliers) backstage for wiping out the insides of the masks. (One actor's respiratory infection can become a cast epidemic without proper

attention to cleanliness.) Store costumes and masks in their boxes at the end of the show, ready and waiting for next year!



My devoted semont, Charles Edison Chapman, taithfully pursues the pragnetic process of turning blank vacutors masks into my famous custom custions



My truly inspired "One Size Fits Nobady Contume Concept"

Nevolutionized the expense and effectiveness of
haunted fashion forevar



Even those who wear masks need to apply black make-up where their flesh can be seen, usually around the eyes, at least. (Black cotton mesh fabric stretched and glued over the eye holes can eliminate even that make-up.) And <u>PLEASE</u> tuck the bottom of your mask (or neck cloth) into the neck of your costume! Or I, Dr. Blood, will personally seize you by the neck and tuck it in for you! HA! HA! HA!

Wearing simple, easy-to-apply make-up instead of a cumbersome, hot mask gives a whole other look of being only "recently dead". There are numerous reference books that can teach you elaborate prosthetic and latex make-up methods that are very often impractical for most of the performers in haunted attractions.

Presenting:

"DR. BLOOD'S ONE-APPLICATION-SUITS-EVERYBODY MAKE-UP CONCEPT!"

I have developed a simple and quick standard make-up procedure that looks good up close and is highly customized due to the individuality of each performer's facial features. It also has the advantage of self-application after your performer has practiced it some. Try this:

Using water-based clown white make-up, sponge a LIGHT coating (not a heavy "clown" application!) on your face so that there is still some flesh glowing through. Using dark gray/black make-up applied lightly with a sponge, "hollow out" your eye sockets, temples, cheeks, under the jaw line and between the chin and the bottom lip. **BLEND!** Take moldy greens, sickly yellows and putrid purples and blot lightly in various patches on your face for dead-like discolorations. With a dark gray/dark brown/black sharpened make-up pencil, enhance the natural wrinkles, furrows and creases of your individual features. **BLEND** and smudge these lines so that they are not hard-edged. Finally, darken your lips. To give your mouth a permanent, evil twist, simply darken your upper lip higher on one side and your lower lip down on the other. Blend corners of mouth downward.

DR. BLOOD'S WORTHY COUNSEL: The most important and expressive feature of your face are the eyes. To appear ferocious and forbidding, angle all of your eye make-up DOWN to the nose.



"Tommy Tomb" and "Patty Heave" make a fetching pair when decked out with cobusels, moss and appropriate props!



My advable 20mbies "RipBot", "Fauniet Turvel" and "Deathro" at Six Flags Maximized their superb make up with fautastic facial expressions and powerful performances.



Casting my haunted attractions, as Dr. Blood, is easy. Performing in these shows is the best form of "Fearapy" that I practice on my most disturbed patients at my Institute of Phobiatric Research. If they occasionally get out of control in my shows and we "lose" a few guests, well, that's all part of my "Fearaputics"! HA! HA! HA!

First, appoint a definite **CASTING DIRECTOR** (who can later be your show manager, see Point #12). For your show, community networking is by far the best way to get a cast. Getting friends to commit to performing as a group is good. If your show benefits a charity, ask this organization if they can commit some of their people to help you out. Do try to get a core group of mature adults for every time you are open. Teenagers are enthusiastic and energetic, but many lack stamina and emotional consistency. And they have an annoying habit of being "grounded" or "having to study for a test" on those nights you are depending on them the most. Commit far above the number you expect to need -- many will disappear during the run of your show. If you put an ad in the paper, be prepared. Haunted entertainment attracts some very scary persons who don't need special costuming, make-up, lighting and soundscaping to be terrifying, and you probably don't need them!

If you have the budget to pay your performers (something, anything), it helps. It is commonly accepted that when you are paid, no matter how little, you are expected to do your job. Remember that, when you hire people, you must take care of the proper paperwork including applications, tax forms (W-4 & I-9), etc. If your cast is all volunteer, then it is even more important to impress upon the potential performer the fun, the unique experiences and the rewarding sense of belonging to a special group that working in a haunted attraction always brings.

Finally, be organized from start to finish. Have a set of conditions, performance guidelines and safety rules to give out to each potential performer. Get each cast member to fill out a form giving basic information and a signature that they will abide by the rules and not hold you accountable for their personal, and possibly foolish, actions (a disclaimer). Schedule performers for specific places, schedule extras and be prepared to adjust constantly. I have found that when performers sense that all is well-run and that there is an atmosphere of order and discipline, they do their job better. Therefore, the show is better and everyone is happier.

DR. BLOOD'S WORTHY COUNSEL: Don't hesitate to cast seemingly shy and retiring persons. Once their tremulous identity is lost behind a costume and make-up/mask and they are placed in positions where <u>they</u> rule, they often explode into your most vicious and effective performers.

A haunted attraction is as much a catharsis for your performers as it is for your guests! Just ask the inmates who perform in my shows! HA! HA! HA!





Drew Edward Hunter, my director, James I. Bruce, my show manages and Charles Edwar Chapman, my backstage manages, always inspire my cast and can just before any of my "experiments" opens.



My casts and crows are always dead serious about tright. HA FIX HA





It is vital that you promote your haunted attraction and get others to promote it for you. After all, no one will come if no one knows that you're there. Bought advertising is expensive. The best bought advertising is television and it is the MOST expensive. For major haunted attractions, a"tie-in" with a local television radio station often brings down the expense but requires that your show is of superior quality with an image, reputation and host/hostess character which are well-established and high profile. For haunted attractions of modest means, aggressive self-promotion is the key to getting the word to your audience. I, Dr. Blood, can modestly assure you that I am the world's greatest host character solely through aggressive self-promotion! HA! HA! HA! Here are some ideas:

PRESS KIT

Assemble in a nice looking packet/folder/envelope some good photos of your attraction, both inside and out, color and black-and-white. A photo of your host/hostess character is in order, for sure! Label the back of each photo with precise pertinent information in case they get separated from the rest of the press kit. Also include several interesting possible news stories you've written which showcase various aspects of your attraction. End them with the specific facts of name, location, dates and cost. An interestingly unique logo slapped on everything adds professional pizazz. Include a video press release for the TV stations, if your budget allows. Mail this press kit to every newspaper, radio station and television station in your audience area. Be as outrageous and bizarre as you like but NEVER, NEVER, NEVER BE IN BAD TASTE!!! Follow-up the delivery of your press kit with a telephone call or personal visits to "VIP media". If the media shows interest and responds, let your host/hostess promote the show. Whomever speaks to the media must radiate absolute enthusiasm and be totally informed and prepared to respond glowingly to any questions.

POSTERS

Print a graphically arresting poster with specific facts of name, location, dates and cost. Scour your audience area for every possible place to display it. Approach businesses (their windows are great!) and schools, both high schools and colleges. DON'T BREAK LOCAL ORDINANCES AGAINST THE DISPLAY OF ADVERTISING POSTERS ON PUBLIC PROPERTY!

PRESS NIGHT SNEAK PREVIEW

Plan to run your show an hour or two the night before you open to the public. Send invitations to all of the media that you sent press kits to and, once again, use your host/hostess character for delivery to the VIPs. Give a number of tickets to each of your cast and crew members for distribution to their families and friends for that night. Have a full-dress technical rehearsal and allow everyone invited to go through the show.

CHARITY TIE-IN

Find a charity willing to lend their name to your haunted attraction promotions in exchange for a very modest percentage of your show profits. This will make your show seem an asset to the community, get you supplies/services donated/discounted and perhaps some of your best and most dependable performers.

BOUGHT ADVERTISING

TV is the best and, of course, the most expensive, often far out of the reach of a struggling hauntrepreneur. The production cost of the ad itself can be prohibitive, much less buying air time to broadcast it. Radio stations will often offer "deals" which make them affordable and their remote broadcasts are often looking for a unique location. A strategically placed billboard or two can be well worth the money spent. Newspapers often "rate" haunted houses in their area for free. And don't forget to put ads in the local high school and college papers. These are often extremely affordable and target your particular market.

INFORMATION "HOT" LINE

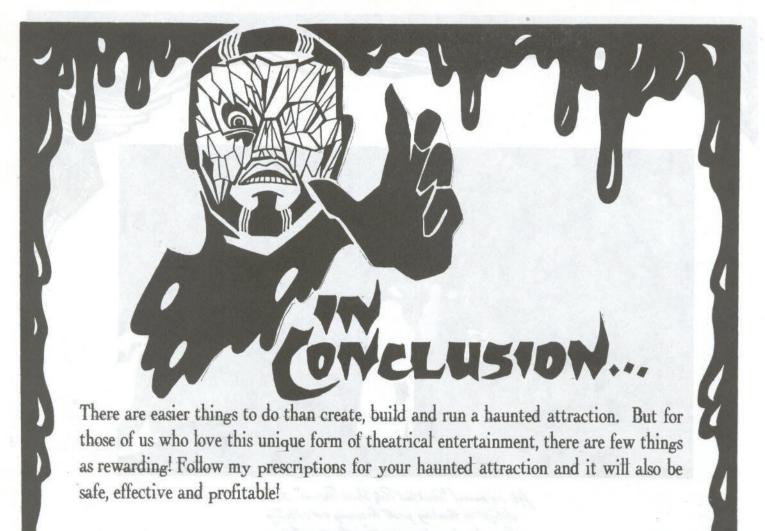
If possible, provide a telephone number which potential guests with questions can call for information. An answering machine with a good, theatrical message is adequate but a live person to answer the phone who has good "presence" and voice is far preferable, if possible.



At my annual "Shock tail Party Shrick Previous", I delight in thanking gurots for coming and subjecting. Themselves to my "experiments" in teas—all for the sake of scientific study, of course Mathet HAT



Iscorted by a Wax Muxum official, "Nurse Noria", I and "Particoon Pravia" personally deliver media press kets to an appropriately appreciative Dallas Morning News staff.



Listen to ME. for I am Dr. Blood! And remember, my friends . . .

T 15 ALL IN THE MIND, T.M.

Dr. Blood comes to you courtesy of VORTA, Inc. VORTA is a design and consultation company which specializes in Halloween and haunted entertainment. The distinguished Doctor welcomes your questions and comments concerning 'Dr. Blood's Prescription For Your Haunted House'. You may contact him at:

VORTA, Inc.
6058 Fox Point Trail
Dallas, Texas 75249–2805
TEL: (214) 780–5550 FAX: (214) 780–5553
VORTA: WE PUT THE SCREAM IN HALLOWEEN'

PLEASE NOTE: "Dr. Blood's Practitioners", "Dr. Blood's Deathro", "Dr. Blood's EctoSkeletons", "Dr. Blood's Fearaputics", "Dr. Blood's Ghoul School", "Dr. Blood's Grubbies", "Dr. Blood's Horrorship of Hauntrepreneurs", "Dr. Blood's Institute of Phobiatric Research", "Dr. Blood's 'It is all in the mind!"", "Dr. Blood's Keater Parsillo", "Dr. Blood's Nurse Noxia", "Dr. Blood's One-Application-Suits-Everybody Make-up Concept", "Dr. Blood's One-Size-Fits-Nobody Costume Concept", "Dr. Blood's Pandemonium Principle", "Dr. Blood's Phobiatry", "Dr. Blood's Phobiomaniacs", "Dr. Blood's Phobiomaniacs", "Dr. Blood's Professor Pravus", "Dr. Blood's Shocktall Party Shriek Preview", "Dr. Blood's TerrorTechnicians", "Dr. Blood's Widow Wheeds" and "Dr. Blood's Worthy Council" are all trademarks of VORTA, Inc., 1996, all rights reserved.





THE JACK O'LANTERN GIRL

An illusion not seen often, yet a prop that can be very effective in the right situation.

EFFECT

A simple platform is wheeled out on stage and three latticework panels are brought out and attached to the base. The entire unit is rotated to show all sides. In keeping with the season, a giant Jack-O-Lantern is brought out on stage and set on top of a decorative center column of corn. A young lady is introduced and steps up onto a ladder and into the pumpkin. Miraculously, slowly but surely she contorts into the seasonal vegetable. The pumpkin is removed from its pedestal and brought forward. A quick peek into the mouth reveals her face looking out. Can this be? The door is shut, opened again and she is gone--even the top is removed and the interior is presented. She is nowhere to be found.

METHOD

The tried and true 45-degree mirrors come into play on this one. They are at first concealed within the side walls as they are brought out. The walls are attached to the base and each other. When the unit is rotated, the mirrors are swung out and into position as the audience inspects the back of the container. Soon the front is brought around for all to see, and the dirty work has been done. The mirrors are in place and reflect the side walls behind the cornstalk upright. Next the pumpkin is brought in and placed on the upright. The pumpkin top is removed and the girl enters. She releases the trap door with her feet and as she descends into the Jack-O-Lantern, so she is in reality descending behind the mirrors. Once in, she folds up the traps and is relieved of her job.

The magician and his assistant next remove the pumpkin from its pedestal and carry it forward as the lattice unit (and girl) is removed from the stage. One final look as the mouth is opened and "poof" she is gone.

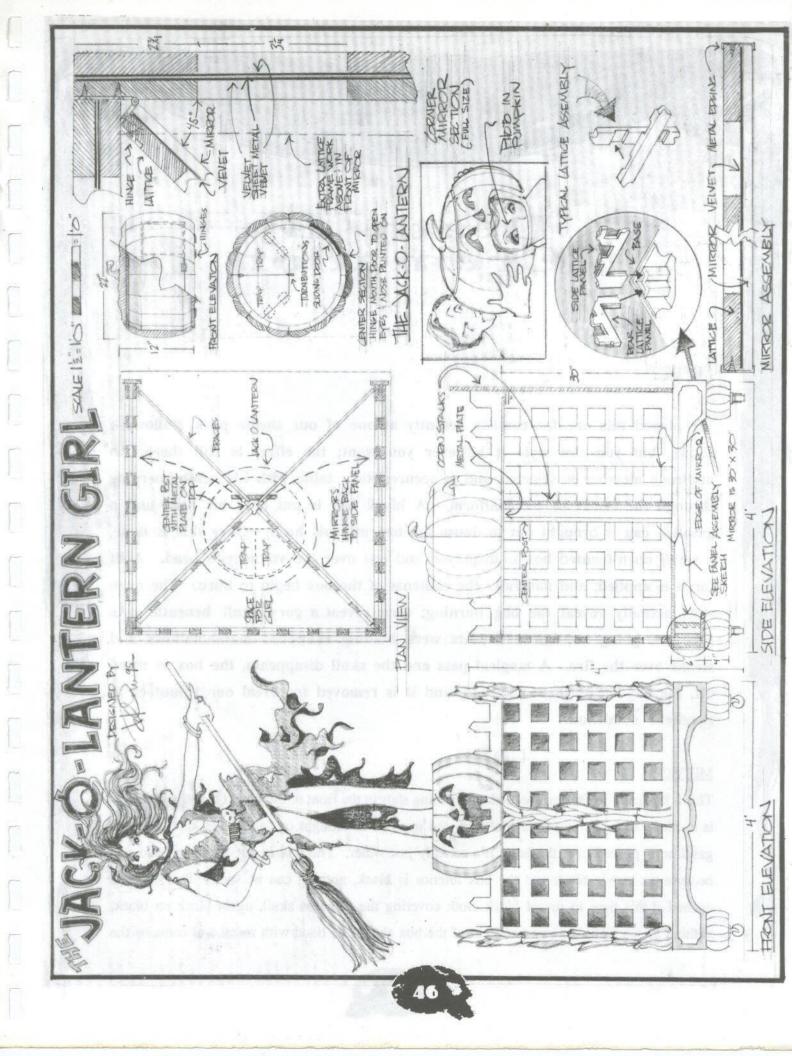
Our top left drawing shows the basic set up with the girl in position to descend within the pumpkin. Next to that is the side elevation that shows the position of the pumpkin on the cornstalk pedestal. Above that is our plan view that shows the crossbraces and the position of the pumpkin.

For a durable pumpkin we recommend it be made of wood as shown in our plan. For a less durable version the same effect can be achieved with a foam rubber castiong, or sculpture upholstered in fabric and airbrushed. Our drawings show the basic measurements of the Jack-O-Lantern, front elevation and center section. Notice the position of the trap doors. Notice also the sliding door that has the girl's face replicated on it.

Our circled sketch shows the detail of the lattice panels as they fit into the base and next to that the basic lattice construction. Notice our top right full sized detail that shows not only the mirror hinging configuration but also the construction method of the lattice panels. The lattice itself sandwiches the black velvet and sheet metal. Our bottom drawing is a full sized center section of the mirror assembly showing once again the lattice, the velvet and the mirror. All is encased within a metal edging screwed and glued to the lattice.

Be aware that any mirrored illusion must be performed at the right angle. This prop needs to be on a stage where the sight lines are directed at the center of the mirrors or roughly between 2'and 3' up from the casters. Any higher and you are looking down into the hiding area and any lower the mirrors overcome the back wall. This necessitates that the prop be performed on a raised platform. Up close is fine if your mirrors are clean but watch your angles and you will





Death By Cremation

EFFECT

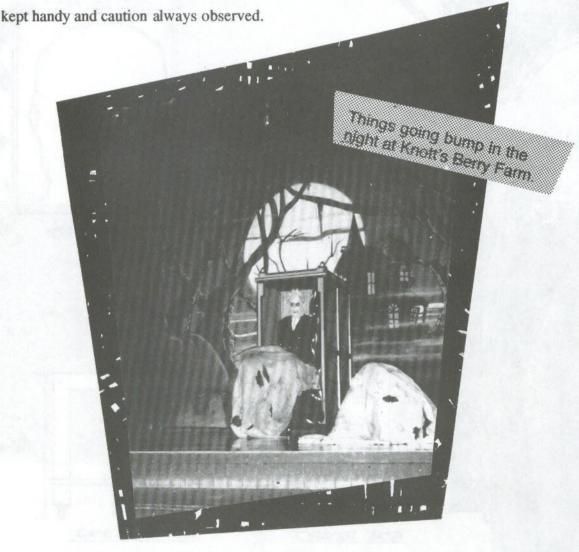
We played this one for comedy recently at one of our theme park Halloween shows, but you can style it however you want; the effect is still there. An audience member is selected and is secured to a table with his head emerging through the center of the platform. A black bag is put over his head and a gasoline can is brought out to douse the bag and his head. Once this is done, a small open-fronted box is displayed and put over the volunteer's head. A lit torch is applied, and naturally the contents of the box begin to burn. The open slats actually reveal the bag burning; then reveal a gory skull beneath. As this was going on, our assistants were holding skewered marshmallows and steaks over the fire. A magical pass and the skull disappears, the box is lifted off, the bag seems to be restored, and it is removed to reveal our volunteer in excellent condition.

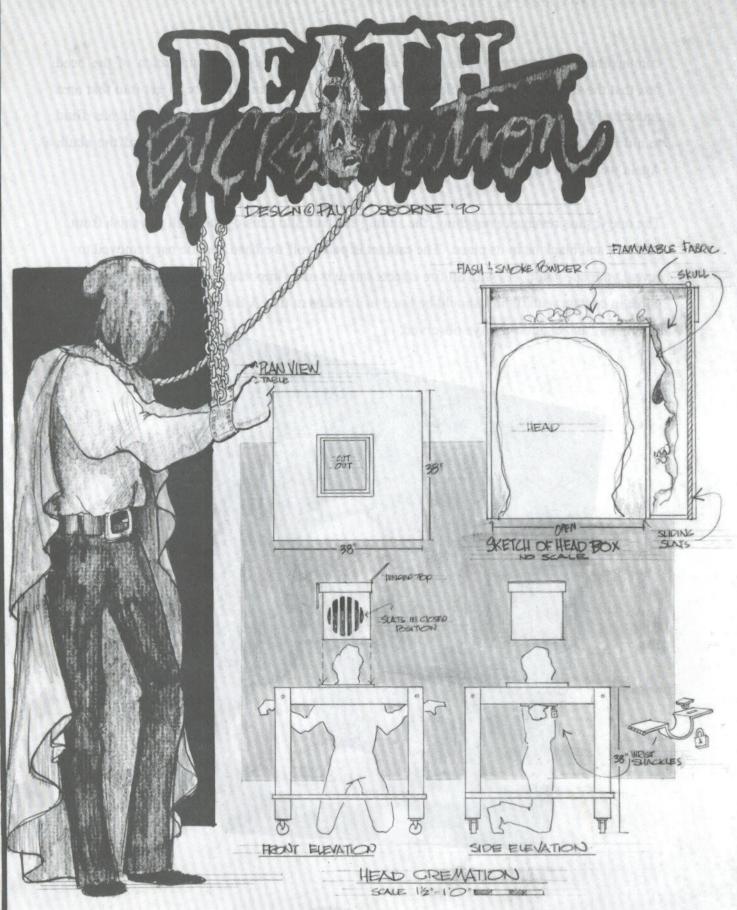
METHOD

This is basically a black art method with sliding slats in the front of the box. Once the spectator is in place with the bag over his head, the gas can is brought out and what appears to be gasoline is poured over the bag. It's actually just water. The box is put over the head and because the bag is black and the box interior is black, nothing can be seen. The slats are opened at this time to reveal black cloth covering the asbestos skull, again black on black, nothing to see. The top compartment of the box should be lined with metal and contains the

combustibles; flash paper, lighter fluid, soaked towels, etc. Notice in our sketch of the head box that the skull area is accessible from the top. This is to permit the fire to get into that area and actually burn the fabric from the skull. It is advisable to soak this fabric with lighter fluid to aid in burning. It really looks super when you see the fabric burn from around the skull. Again we played all this for comedy but your presentation should suit your style.

The magic pass reverses everything, the sliding slats are slid causing the skull to vanish from the front and black be in its place. The cabinet is pulled off the head and the bag removed to reveal your spectator. As with all fire effects safety is most important. Any areas that will come in contact with flames should be lined in asbestos or tin. A fire extinguisher should be





of Digo

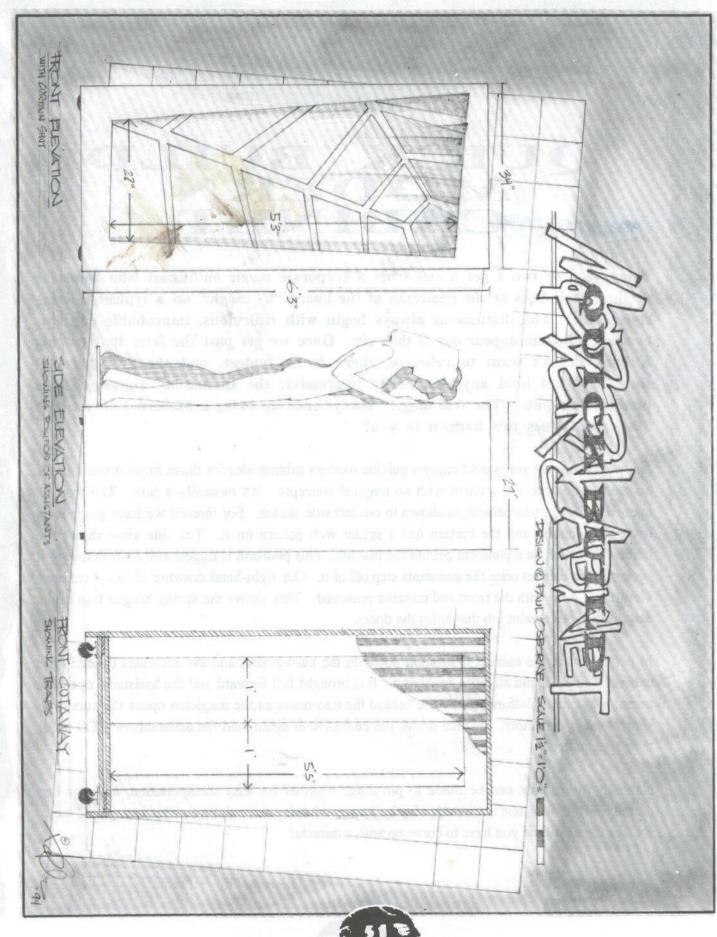
QUICK BUILD MODERN CABINET

Every year or two I get a call from a corporate magic enthusiast who wants to produce their boss or the chairman of the board "by magic" on a typical meeting style stage. The discussions always begin with ridiculous, improbable concepts to make a human appear out of thin air. Once we get past the facts that the big Kahuna doesn't want to rehearse, there is no budget, and the \$25.00 rental stage may not hold anything really impressive, the discussion digresses to a predictable point. "The real magic" always ends up being a Modern Cabinet or a Stack Box...Does this happen to you?

Anyway, I thought you would enjoy a quickie modern cabinet idea for those times when there is no money, no time and a client with no magical concepts. It's basically a box. The front is opened with a curtain behind, as shown in our left side sketch. For interest we have given it an irregular opening, and the curtain has a spider web pattern on it. The side view shows the hidden assistants on a platform behind the illusion. This platform is rigged with springs to pull it back into the cabinet once the assistants step off of it. Our right-hand drawing shows a cutaway view of the prop with the front and curtains removed. This shows the spring-hinged trap doors and the deceptive paint job that hides the doors.

In performance, the cabinet is brought out with the curtain shut and the assistants inside. The cabinet is rotated, and all sides are shown. It is brought full forward and the assistants open the traps, pull out the platform, and stand behind the trap doors as the magician opens the curtain to show the cabinet empty. He then draws the curtain shut again, and the assistants or CEO make their appearance.

Naturally the cabinet can be made to pin-hinge together for easy transportation, and you can literally "whap" this one out in a day for building and a day for painting. This is a great "quick fix" for the next time you have to come up with a miracle!



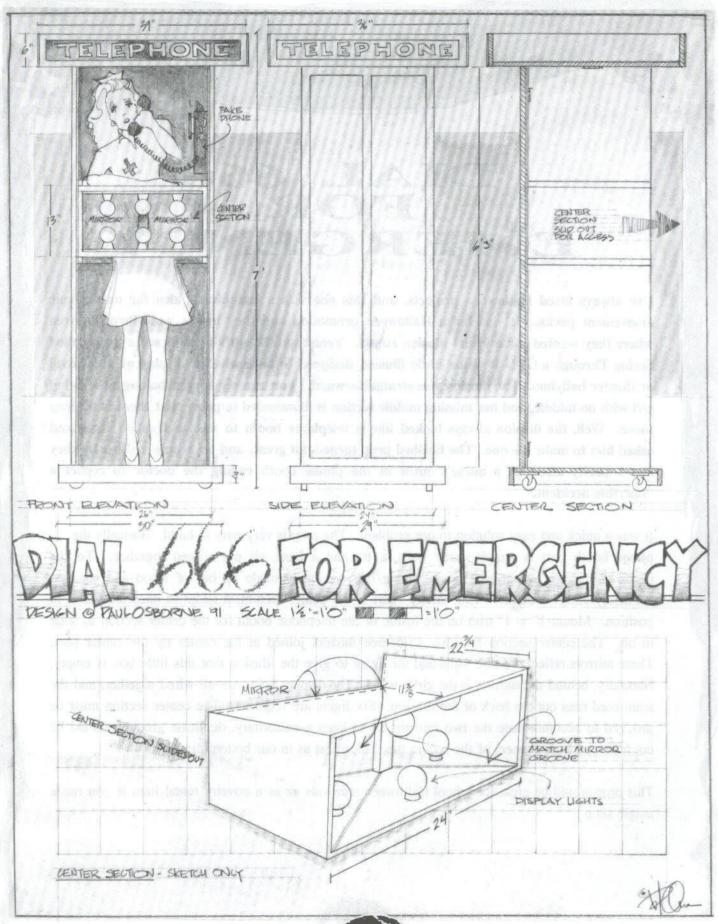
51 6

DIAL 666 FOR EMERGENCY

I've always loved Halloween projects, and this one was a last-minute idea for one of our amusement parks. It was for a Halloween promotion and they had a walk-through area where they wanted some visual illusion stunts. Years ago Abbott's used to sell a prop called Seeing Through a Girl. It was a static illusion designed to be a window display or a carnival or theater ballyhoo. The illusion was straightforward. You are seemingly looking at a living girl with no middle, and her missing middle section is illuminated to prove that there is nothing there. Well, the illusion always looked like a telephone booth to me, so I called Greg and asked him to make me one. The finished prop turned out great, and as people walked by they saw a pretty model in a nurse's outfit in the phone booth calling the doctor to report a "horrible accident."

It was a quick and easy solution to our problem. The prop is very easy to build. Basically the phone booth part is simply three walls, a top, and a base, all pin-hinged together. To the inside of the box we affixed a pay phone that we easily made up out of wood and attached a "Phoney Ring" receiver. The "tricky" part is the center section, it slides in once the girl is in position. Mount 1" x 1" trim on the inside of the telephone booth for the center section to slide in on. The center section has two 45-degree mirrors joined at the center by the center post. These mirrors reflect the side walls and the lights to give the illusion that this little box is empty. Naturally, behind the mirrors is the girl's waist. The display lights are all wired together, and the main cord runs out the back of the illusion. Six lights are required. The center section must be grooved to accommodate the two mirrors, so to keep a uniformity, duplicate grooves should be cut from the front corners of the box to the center post as in our bottom drawing.

This prop would be great for school Halloween carnivals or as a novelty rental item if you run a magic shop .



THE ARM AMPUTATION

EFFECT

The stage is dimly lit as the magician enters with his assistant. The powers of hypnotism are explained by the miracle worker as he slowly puts his assistant under his spell. She is guided back to a wicked-looking buzz saw and sits at its side. Her right arm is extended, prepared and sterilized. She lays it to rest on a small stand located on the table. Her arm is held in place by two chrome shackles. The buzz saw is started and is slowly guided through her wrist, then slid over and guided through her upper arm. The arm is now removed and displayed. The sight of her hand and upper arm resting on the table with the center section removed is an eerie sight. The magician gestures, and she is slowly brought out of her trance. He asks her to move her fingers. She does, yet when she looks down, she screams. Quickly she is put back in a trance, her arm replaced and covered. Once again she is brought out of her trance, her arm uncovered and the chrome shackles removed. She has been restored!

METHOD

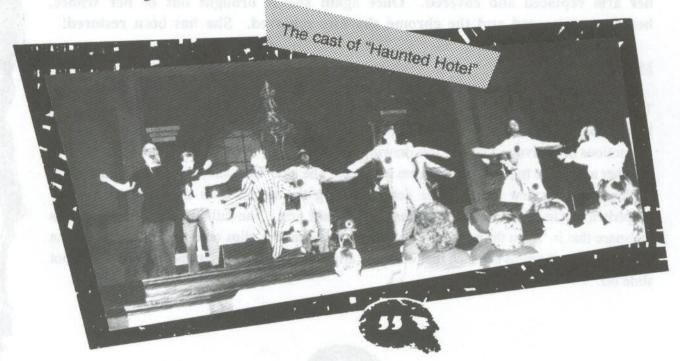
This clever prop is naturally a smaller version of the famous Buzz Saw Illusion that severs the human body in two. This smaller, more practical setup is ideal for spook shows or Halloween promotions or festivals. Our top left drawing shows the unit in practice with the girl in place with her arm in the trap and the fake arm in place. The side view shows the saw pulled back. Within our back view is a full-size detail showing the stop sleeves that position the saw properly to cut in the exact locations through the fake arm. The full-size arm drawing shows the space that is "sawn through." Notice that the wooden arm clips onto the steel trap and can be slid off, but the clips are such that when the arm and steel trap are returned, the arm does not slide off.

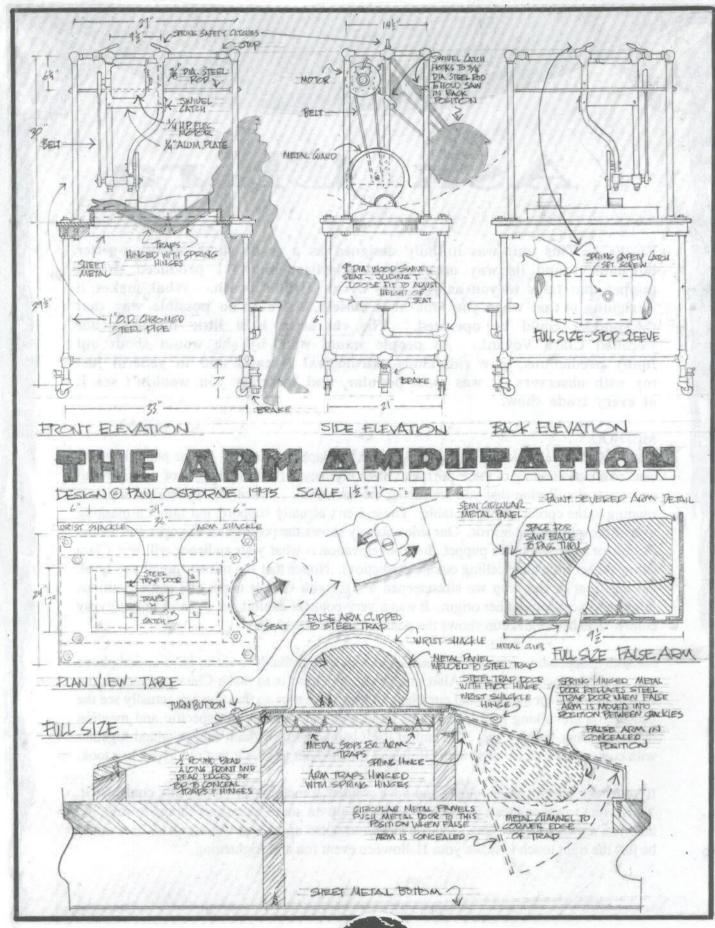
The plan view of the table shows the arm shackles in place and the traps below. Also shown is the steel trap door to the back. The shackles are held in place by the turn buttons that we have illustrated to the right of our plan view.

The full size cross-section at the bottom of our plan is the most revealing. With this drawing you can see the position of the steel trap, the false arm, the shackles and the table construction.

In working, once the girl has been seated at the illusion she lays her arm across the traps. The shackles at this point are opened and behind her arm. The assistant brings the shackles over the girl's arm and fastens them down with the turn buttons. As the magician briefly passes in front of the illusion, the girl lowers her arm as the assistant lifts and swings the fake arm into place. The swivel catch is lifted, the saw is started, and the first cut is made near her wrist shackle between the semicircular metal panel and the wooden arm section. The saw is then slid over to the next stop sleeve and is in position to make the second cut through the semicircular metal panel and the upper part of the fake arm. The saw is shut off, and the fake arm is removed and displayed. After returning it to the steel trap, it is covered by the assistant with a cloth. Under cover of lifting the cloth, the fake arm is returned to its original position as the girl brings her arm back up to rest in full view.

As with any tool, extreme caution should be exercised in the performance of this illusion. The prop should always be pre-checked for any potential hazards, and the magician should be careful in the handling of the saw. It should be turned off at all times when not in use. In that the saw actually does not cut, the safest of all situations would be to utilize a chromed disk with teeth painted on. From a stage situation this would not even be noticed, and the safety factor would be much greater.





Ask Clara

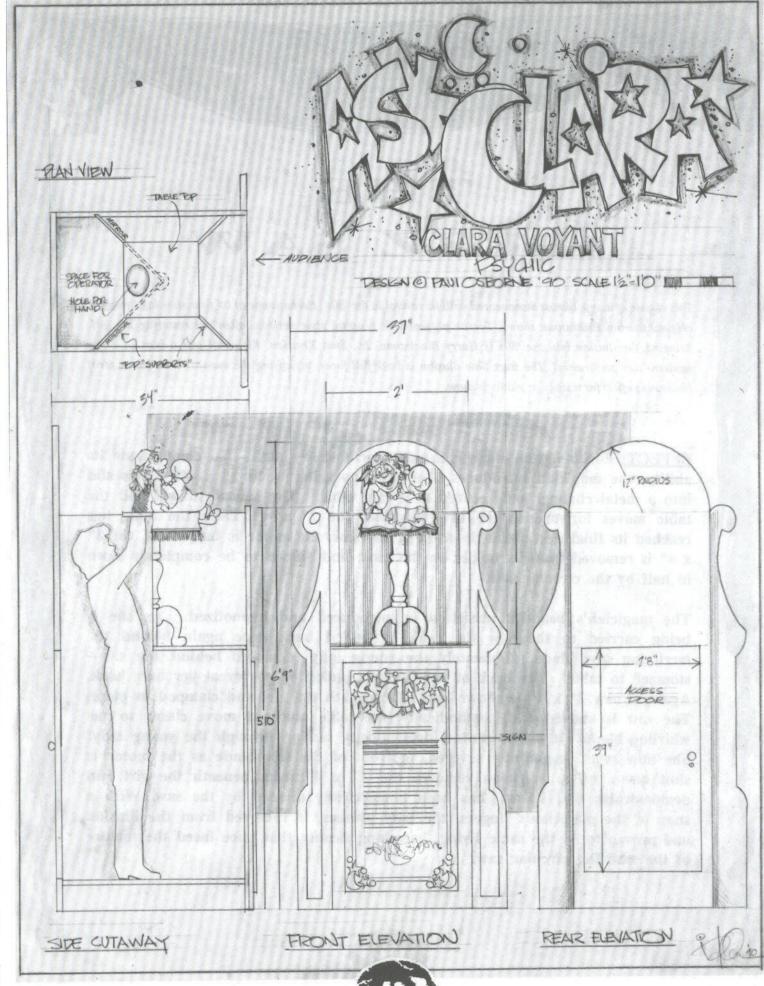
EFFECT: This unit was initially designed as a trade show attention-getter but later found its way onto several television shows I produced. It's a puppet that talks to you as you pass by an exhibit booth. What makes it intriguing is that when you look at it closely, there is no possible way that the puppet could be operated. The character is a little fortune teller wecalled Clara Voyant. As people would walk by she would shout out funny predictions, give ridiculous astrological forcasts and in general just toy with observers. It was most popular, and certainly you wouldn't see it at every trade show.

METHOD:

Double 45 degree mirrors are used here to hide the puppet operator. In our plan view you can see the positioning of these mirrors. Basically they reflect the images of the side wall and create the illusion that you are seeing the back wall. Notice the top corner supports running to the corner of Clara's table. These aren't actually supports but rather a masking to hide the edge of the mirror. Our side cutaway shows the position of the operator behind the mirror as he works the puppet, the front elevation is what your audience will see: Clara sitting on her little table calling out the predictions. Notice that the mirrors are at eye level. On the front of the prop we silkscreened a sign with Clara's name and some fictitious information concerning her origin. It was a very colorful exhibit, all done in bright gypsy colors. The back elevation shows the position of the access door.

Naturally, depending ory your surroundings, you will probably want to have amicrophone and properly placed speakers. Also, another fun addition is to make Clara's tablecloth out of semi-transparent material and cut a hole in the mirror tops so that you can actually see the people you are talking to. With this in mind, you can actually get specific and mention clothing colors, hairdos, etc. The puppet itself is made out of foam rubber, glued together with contact cement, covered with fabric and finished out to give it that old gypsv hag took.

If you work a lot of trade shows and have wanted something different, this could be it. You'll want to get an insult joke book and bone up on some humorous things to say. To help you remember your lines, you can tape your notes up behind the mirrors. Clara could be just the right touch to make your Halloween event fun and frightening.



THE BUZZ SAW

This classic of magic almost disappeared until its revival in the '80s. Perhaps one of its first showings was the original touring Blackstone show. Sorcar presente his hospital style version, often not restoring the girl. Bringing the illusion into the '80s is Harry Blackstone, Jr., Stan Kramien, Richiardi and a host of other modern- day performers. The Buzz Saw illusion is back full force, mystifying the masses. It makes a great Halloween effect for a stage or platform show.

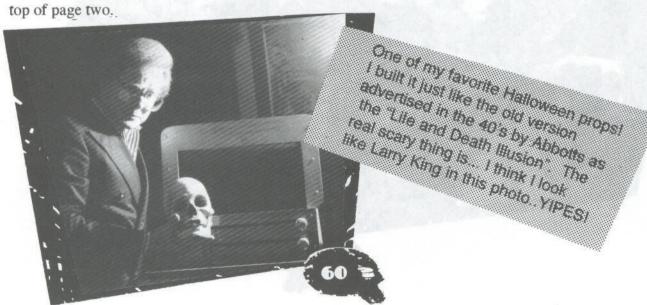
EFFECT: Positioned on stage is a giant portable saw unit. To demonstrate its ability, the magician introduces a normal-appearing wood 2" x 4". It is slid into a metal channel and secured to a thin table. The saw is started and the table moves forward as the saw rips into the 2" x 4". Once the table has reached its final destination in front of the saw, the motor is turned off, the 2" x 4" is removed from its holder on the table and shown to be completely sawn in half by the circular saw.

The magician's beautiful assistant is introduced and hypnotized. As she is being carried to the saw the table is pulled back once again behind the terrifying saw blade. Delicately the young lady is placed behind the saw-stomach to table. The back of her dress is pulled up to reveal her bare back. Again, a new 2" x 4" is shown and slid beneath the girl and clamped in place. The saw is started and, methodically, the table and girl move closer to the whirling blade. It makes contact dramatically sawing through the young lady! She now rests, apparently severed, in front of the saw blade as the motor is shut down. The magician removes the 2" x 4" from beneath the girl and demonstrates that it, too, has been unmercifully divided by the saw. With a snap of the magician's fingers, the lady awakes, is removed from the illusion and proven to be the same living, breathing beauty that once faced the torture of the whirling circular saw.

METHOD

There's no way around it, this is a massive illusion. Beginning with page one you will see a front elevation depicting the illusion fully assembled as the audience would see it. The basic framework is constructed from 4" x 4"s, cut and carriage-bolted together as shown. The overall illusion is 6' 8" tall by 6'3" wide. The front elevation shows the position of the table as it rests on the two iron "L" braces screwed to the side 1" x 4"s. The table travels from back to front, sliding on these "L" braces. Notice the cables running from the spin rod to the pulleys to the front corners of the table. As the motor turns, belt C rotates the spin rod, winding up the cables and pulling the table forward through the path of the saw. Page two's detail sketch showing the upper saw assembly depicts the position of all belts, braces and the overall configuration of the saw. Back again to page one and take note of the brake that keeps tension on belt B. Releasing the brake puts slack in the belt and slows the revolution of the saw blade. Page one also shows the back extension which permits the table to be pulled back behind the saw. The table is on this back extension when the girl is put in position. Notice also on page one the sketches of the 2" x 4" with its pre-sawn groove. This 2" x 4" is placed in the iron channel saw track and slid into the front wood brace (on the table), then clamped into position at the back of the table as shown. Not only does the sawing of the 2" x 4" add to the effect, but it also adds another measure of protection for the girl.

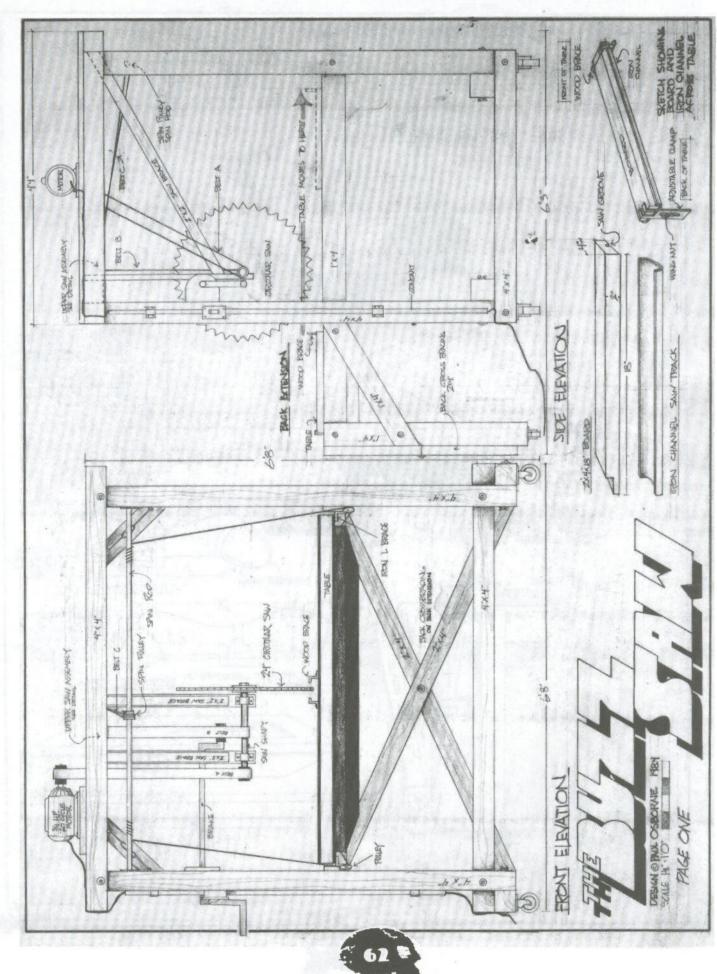
The top of page two shows the actual position of the girl and her body form during the saw cut. Notice how the 2" x 4" and iron channel are between her and the saw. The bottom right sketches show the body form. It is constructed of metal and covered with hardware cloth and then flesh colored cardboard, which is what the saw actually cuts through. Our dotted lines indicate the position of the flesh-colored cardboard. Her dress should be of a stretchy material. At the bottom of page two is a drawing of the table itself. The top of the table is painted flat black and beneath the 29" x 13 1/2" cut-out is the black roller shade material. Obviously when the girl is placed on the table, she sinks down into this well as shown at the top of page two

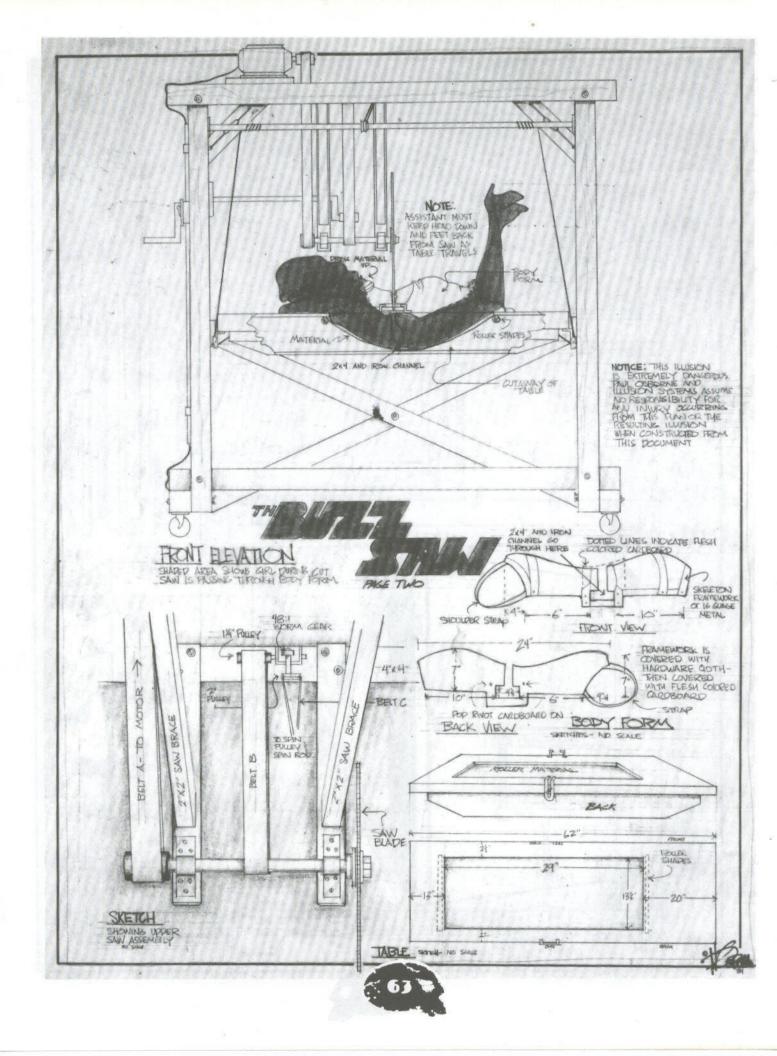


FINAL THOUGHTS

This is a very dangerous illusion for all parties involved. Any time a power tool of any type is activated, care and caution should be observed. This illusion should only be built by an experienced illusion craftsman and it should only be performed by a well rehearsed magician and assistants. Only after several test run-throughs should the girl be used. Care should be taken that her legs and feet are in the correct position. Watch also that the wind from the saw does not disturb the dress material. Obviously, her hair and costume should be well away from any moving belts, etc.

Neither Paul Osborne nor illusion Systems assume any liability for injuries resulting from this plan or any illusion constructed therefrom. GOT CONTRACTOR OF THE STATE OF or che soldier (199





DRACULA ESCAPES

INTRODUCTION

I've always regretted that I never have enough room in my Genii columns to get more into illusion performance and presentations. After all, once you get the prop built, your job is just beginning. With that in mind, I am going to vary slightly from our monthly fare and provide you with an idea that is just a seed of a concept now but could really open up some new presentation ideas for you. It's just right for the Halloween season, and we call it...DRACULA ESCAPES!

EFFECT

The magician has just completed a skit with or caused to appear the prince of darkness himself, Dracula ... "Quickly! Dracula must be contained!" Out comes the familiar illusion, The Assistant's Revenge and old Drac is locked into position in the illusion. The cloth is pulled momentarily around the front by the magician, who displays a wooden stake and, grabbing the cloth, pulls it around the illusion only to loudly call out that Dracula has escaped! ... And in his position is the magician --- as a never- before- seen, beautiful assistant pulls the cloth around the rest of the illusion! While the magician is being let out of the illusion, a small trunk is brought out and shown empty. It is tipped back into position and out pops Dracula once again!

METHOD

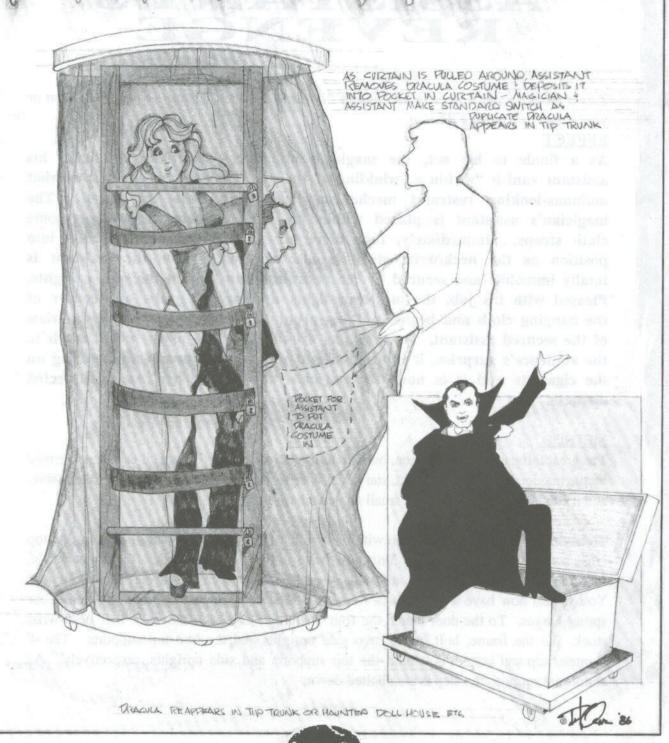
Without going into detail about how the escape is made from the illusion known as The Assistant's Revenge, (Illusion Systems sells the plan for \$25.00 or a description of its working

can be found in the Art of Illusion by Will Ayling available through many magic dealers) we will assume that you are familiar with the prop. What we have done is simply add a large pocket on the inside of the curtain and costume your assistant as Dracula. This costume is most special in that it should be a one-piece costume fastened together by Velcro, so that one pull and it's off. She is also wearing a mask. Once Dracula is locked into the illusion and the curtain is pulled in front, the magician buys a little time to pull out the wooden stake as Dracula is removing the costume (see illustration) and putting it in the pocket of the curtain. From then on it's just a simple matter of executing the standard exchange, leaving the magician in the prop with the girl assistant pulling the curtain around to not only reveal that Dracula has vanished but that the magician is in his place ... A three-way mystery! ... Where did Dracula go?... How did the magician get in there?... Who's the girl? As the magician is quickly being released, the tip trunk or similar prop is brought out, shown empty and Dracula (a duplicate

mask and costume on another assistant) is produced. Waiting to hang Freddy Kruger ere Ron Fitzgerald and the hangman. This prop once belonged to Kirby Van Birch and was located at the last moment by David Mendoza for me, then flown in from Malaysia for our Halloween promotion. If now rests in two huge crates in our warehouse. Check out pages 67, 68, 69 for the prop you'll need to

accomplish this effect.....

AN ILLUSION CONCEPT FROM PAUL OSEORNE NO SEME ALL SKETCHES DESIGN OPAUL OSEORNE 1486



ASSISTANT'S REVENGE

This is the prop you'll need to accomplish "Dracula Escapes". It's great for Halloween or year round as a closing illusion.

EFFECT

As a finale to his act, the magician announces his plans to make his assistant vanish "within a twinkling of the eye." As he speaks, a somewhat ominous-looking restraint mechanism is ushered onto the stage. The magician's assistant is placed within the oak uprights and against some cloth straps. Immediately, four more straps are raised and locked into position as the neck/wrist stock is also secured. Now the assistant is totally immobile and secured by the restraints built within the oak uprights. Pleased with his job, the magician lights a cigarette, grabs one corner of the hanging cloth and begins walking around the unit, obstructing the view of the secured assistant. As he walks around the back of the prop, much to the audience's surprise, it is the assistant pulling the curtain and puffing on the cigarette and it is now the magician who is secured! An unsuspected miracle.

METHOD

The great thing about this illusion, other than its audience appeal, is that it can be performed by the magician and one assistant, can be built from scrap lumber, stained to look massive, and it can break down almost as small as you want.

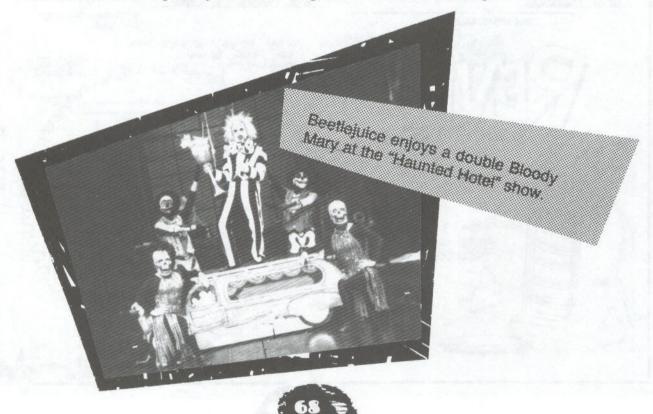
To begin building this prop, begin with the two 2"x4"x6'5" uprights. Join these to the top cross bar and the bottom step. You now have the basic framework. To the backside, frame in the 1" thick door (as indicated by dotted lines on the front elevation drawing.) You should now have a 4"x3" thick frame. Attach the door to the frame by using four spring hinges. To the door attach the four webbing straps and the back half neck/wrist stock. To the frame, bolt on the two side uprights and the two top supports. The 4' diameter top and bottom bolt onto the top supports and side uprights, respectively. As additional support, the step is also bolted down.

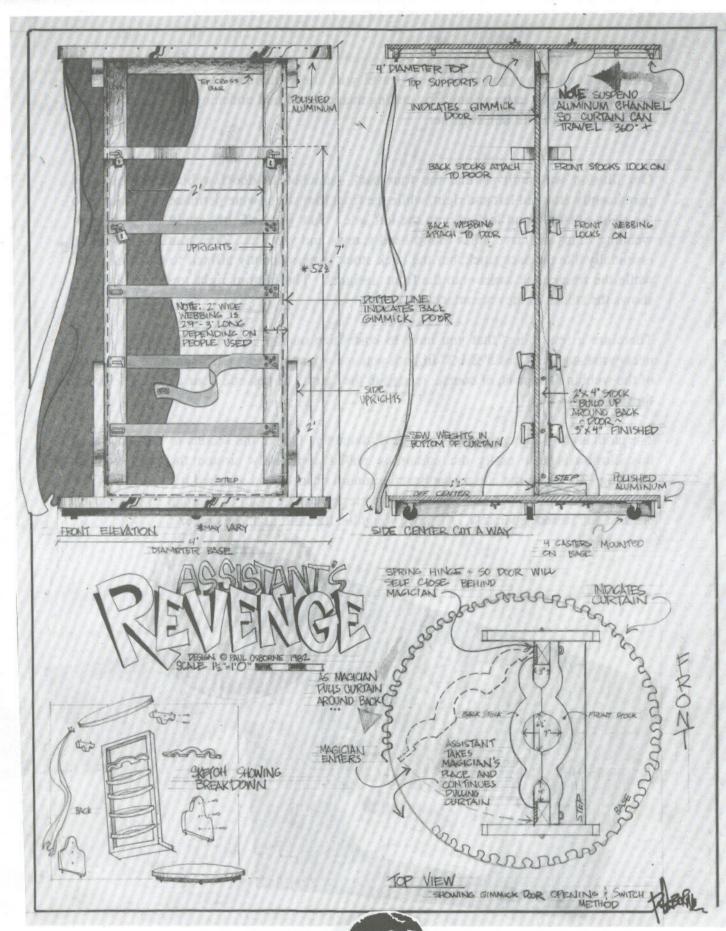
Although it was no problem for us to travel with the 4' diameter top and bottom, these could also be made to break down by cutting them in half and attaching cross support bars which, in turn, would bolt together.

Our illusion was built so that the four back (attached to door) webbing straps were permanently attached left and right, while the front four straps were permanently attached to the right side only and locked onto the left side. Suit yourself, but apply the four front webbing straps with five brass round-head screws and washers. The front stock is made essentially like the back stock, but the back stock is permanently affixed to the back door, while the front stock locks onto the front uprights. The bottom right top view drawing shows the stocks as they are attached.

There are a few things that you have to customize on this illusion. The height of the neck/wrist stocks. Does 5' 2 1/2" fit both you and your assistant? Check it. Also the length of the webbing straps is, of course, related to the "girth" of you and your assistant. Check those.

The cloth is 6'9" long and made to fill the 4' diameter. One of the secrets to the success of this illusion is how easily the curtain is pulled completely around this unit without stopping. To secure the curtain we bent aluminum channel and attached it to the top. The curtain holders fit within this channel and were removable from the curtain so it could be cleaned and stored separately. Also, we weighted the bottom of the drape.





THE CHOPPING BLOCK

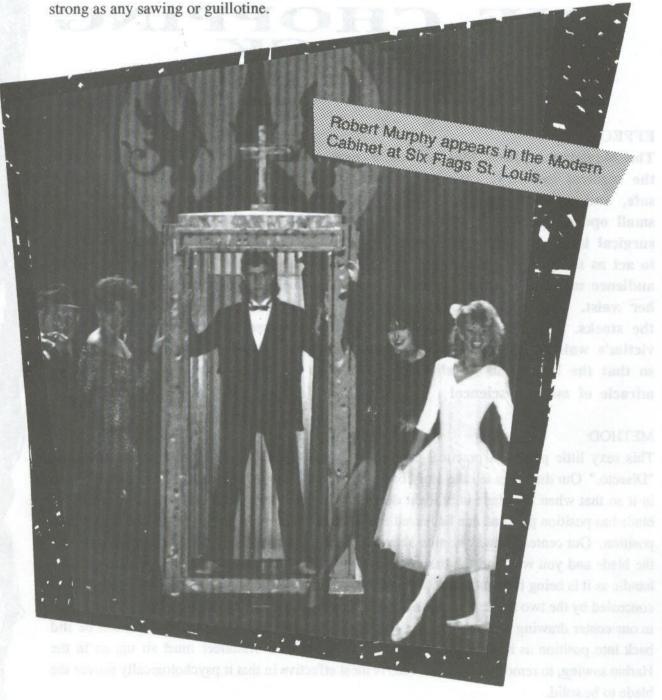
EFFECT:

The Magician explains that he has a new invention designed to revolutionize the medical industry. It's a surgical blade that is completely painless and safe, and to show off its capabilities a little demonstration is proposed. A small operating table is brought out and shown on all sides. The impressive surgical knife is also brought out. The magician selects an audience member to act as the patient and she also verifies that the blade is solid and sharp. The audience member is asked to recline on the table as two stocks are put around her waist. The blade is put into position so that it can swing down through the stocks. After some by-play the blade is pushed all the way through the victim's waist. The stocks are removed and the audience member must sit up so that the blade can be slid up and shown to be in a solid state. A true miracle of modern science!

METHOD:

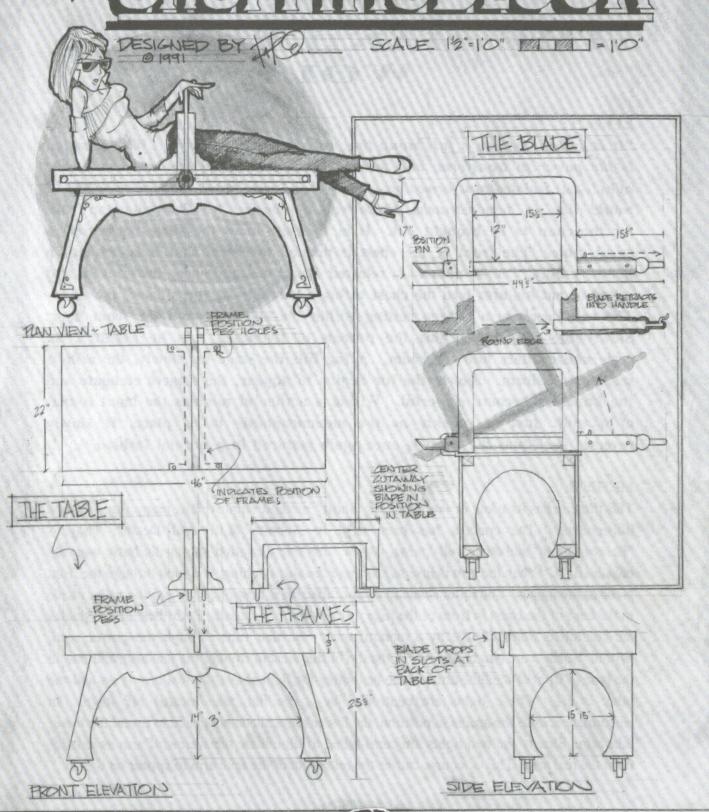
This sexy little prop is a practical combination of the Harbin sawing and Abbott's popular "Disecto." Our drawings tell the story basically. The table is ungimmicked and has a groove in it so that when the blade is brought down it can rest below the volunteer. Notice that the blade has position pins and can be seated at the back of the table so that it merely swings into position. Our center cutaway section shows this action. Look closely at the drawings detailing the blade and you will find the basic secret of this illusion. The blade can be pulled into the handle as it is being brought down, apparently to slice the volunteer in half. This movement is concealed by the two stocks that are placed around the volunteer. We have shown this action in our center drawing of the blade section. Once the blade is all the way down it can be slid back into position as it rests in the groove of the table. The volunteer must sit up, as in the Harbin sawing, to remove the blade. This is most effective in that it psychologically proves the blade to be solid.

This prop can obviously travel very easily and set up can be minimal with the table legs bolting on to the top. The stocks and the blade are small enough and can travel easily enough. One final thought would be to add a small hole in the top center of the two stocks to insert a carrot. This way the blade could be brought down, cutting the carrot and then apparently passing through the volunteer. In any event, I hope you'll consider making this prop. I know you'll find it easy enough to build and, depending on your presentation, I think you'll find it as





WEIDPINEBLOCK



THE HAND OF THE WOLF

EFFECT:

"It is legend that on a full moon the wolves begin to howl. Within us all is the power to transform, and within this little chest rests the secret of the ages...an isolatedtransformation chest that, with your kind permission, I would like to demonstrateas Halloween approaches." The magician calls for the chest to be brought out. It is wheeled on to the stage resting on a small table. The front of the chest is opened to reveal that it is, without a A volunteer is selected from the audience, introduced and doubt, empty. asked to put his arm into the chest through the hole in the side of the chest. The volunteer's arm is seen resting within the chest through the front door. Slowly the magician begins the process of hypnosis. As he gestures, an eerie music filters into the room. A fog fills the stage as, slowly, the arm is seen to transform. Slowly the fur begins to appear, the fingers elongate and the knuckles become powerful. Within a matter of minutes the hand is that of a wolf. Just as quickly as the metamorphosis takes place, it slowly reverses itself and the hand is once again restored in a normal fashion.

METHOD:

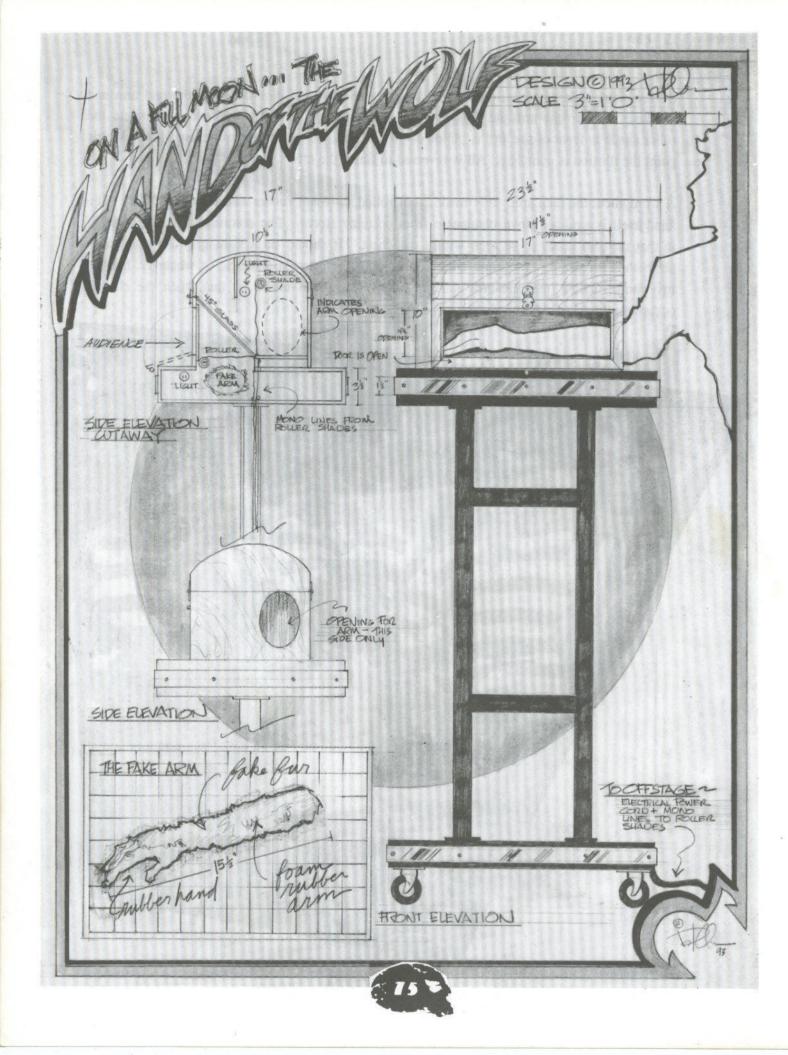
This illusion has its roots in the "Pepper's Ghost" method employed in many illusions and illusionettes. The concept has been used in Abbott's "Life and Death", Thayer's "Reincarnation" and other well-known props. Our side elevation shows the basic working of this effect. When the arm is inserted through the side opening, it is seen through the front piece of plexiglass. The roller shade in front of the arm is postioned up and the roller shade in the base of the chest in front of the fake werewolf arm is closed. Both these roller shades are controlled from offstage by a monofilament line that runs through the power cord. Within the chest are two lights, one in the top of the chest in front of the real arm, and one in the base in front of the fake arm. In the beginning the light above the real arm is on and the other is off. These lights are controlled by a rheostat, also located off stage. In performance, once the arm is in position, the lower roller shade is opened to reveal the lower fake arm. Slowly the two lights are cross-faded to illuminate the werewolf arm as it fades from the real arm. This of course causes the reflection of the fake arm to appear on the 45



degree slanted glass in front of the real arm. As the lighting diminishes on the real arm and increases on the fake arm the illusion nears completion. Once the crossfade is complete the roller shade in front of the arm is pulled down blocking the real arm totally from view. At this point the illusion is complete. All is reversed to finish the effect.

A word about the fake arm. It is made from rolled up foam rubber and covered in fur. The hand itself is a rubber glove obtainable from costume stores. The coloring is most important in that the arm needs to be seen within the chest. It should be a light grey fur and hand, airbrushed for detail. The inner chest can be black or covered in fabric or whatever, but the two compartments (the real arm and the fake arm) should match so that when the change occurs the backgrounds remain the same.





THE BRIDE OF THE BLADES

EFFECT

As the bell tolls it is written the young maiden must enter the cabinet. Should she make good her escape before the blades do her harm, there will be prosperity among lands. If not, there will be conflict in the lands of the pyramids - so goes the legend of The Bride of the Blades. Your assistant ritualistically steps into the upright cabinet. The door is closed and the unit is revolved. As the blade is inserted into the cabinet a puff of smoke is seen to rise from the decorative urn high atop the illusion. This signals that the girl's mysterious escape is made complete. Five blades are now inserted to prove her absence. The front door is opened and, lo and behold, she is gone! Only the five sporadically placed blades remain in the empty container. The door is again closed and the five blades are removed. Once again a puff of smoke from above signals a godlike guarantee of wealth and prosperity for the people of the land. Slowly the front door is opened and out steps your beautiful princess unharmed by the danger of the blades.

METHOD

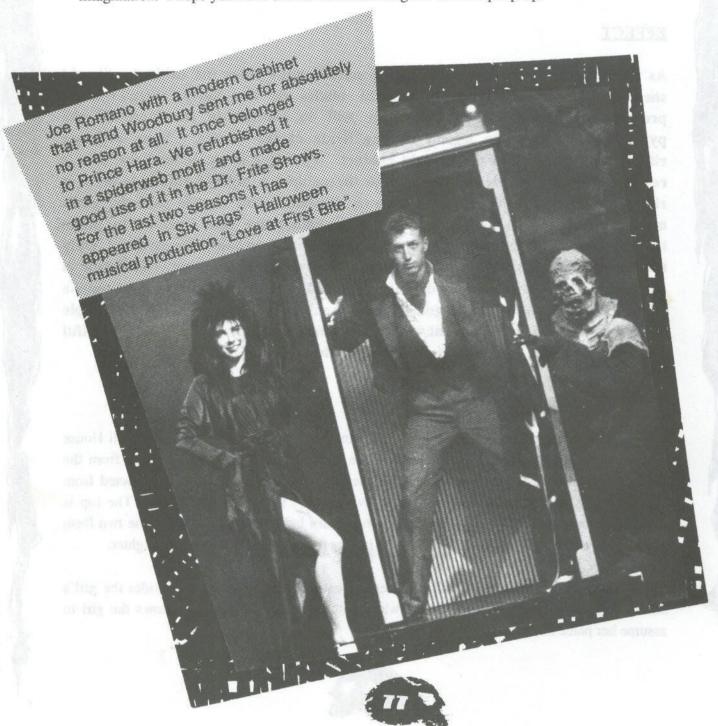
Our plans are relatively self-explanatory. The hiding place for the girl is somewhat Doll House in nature with the bottom two blades forming the wall and the small black-art cloth from the base to the bottom blade also serving to hide the girl. The cabinet itself is constructed from 3/8" plywood, reinforced as needed. Our drawing shows the door cut-out size. The top is also made from braced 3/8" ply with the decorative urn bolted in place. Notice the two flash paper loads resting on thin mesh wire that she ignites from within by using a Bic lighter.

The 7" deep base is made from 1/2" ply, beveled as indicated. This base provides the girl's sitting position as shown in our side cutaway. Notice the hinged trap that allows the girl to assume her place in the base.

Each blade has its own measurements and different look. Notice our positioning of the various blades as depicted in the side cutaway. This is the real secret to her disappearance.

Although this illusion can be themed to fit any style, the Egyptian ritual look seems to fit the concept best. By gridding off my indicated artwork you can duplicate by hand or stencil the Egyptian princess design in colors of your choice.

The Bride of the Blades is a unique illusion lending itself to theatrics limited only by your imagination. I hope you have time to take advantage of this unique prop.





THE LUMBERJACK'S DREAM

EFFECT:

This is a new alternative to the old and popular guillotine routine and can be styled along the same way in presentation. A volunteer is selected from the audience and brought on stage to witness a demonstration of what the lumberjacks call a "sawdown stock." The magician explains this device is used to trim down the smaller limbs of a tree to use as fire logs or kindling. To demonstrate that the rig is genuine, a head of lettuce is put where the log would be, and the saw is brought down easily sawing through the lettuce. Now it's time for the volunteer to test the magic of our performer by putting his head in the stock. A front door is lowered in front of the opening, the saw is brought back up, two support pegs are put into place below the saw and the spectator inserts his head through the rubber slits in the front door. On the count of three the saw is brought down, literally sawing through the two support pegs and the volunteer's head! All is reversed and the volunteer is released intact!

METHOD:

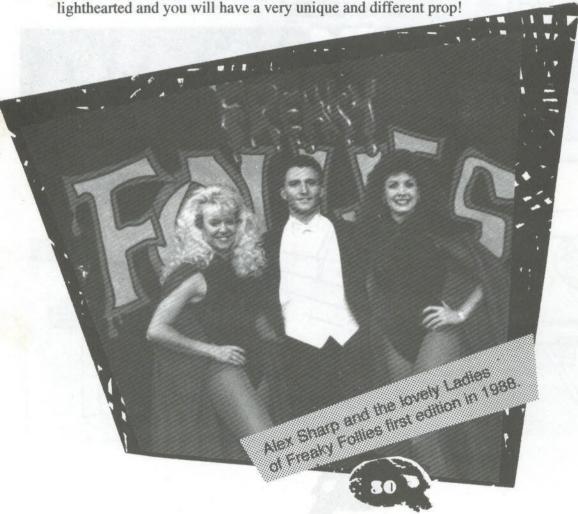
As you can see, the illusion is accomplished by a metal span that bridges the saw left and the saw right. This metal piece arches up allowing the saw left and saw right to move naturally in a sawing motion, but there is no center once the thumbscrews are loosened to remove the centerpiece.

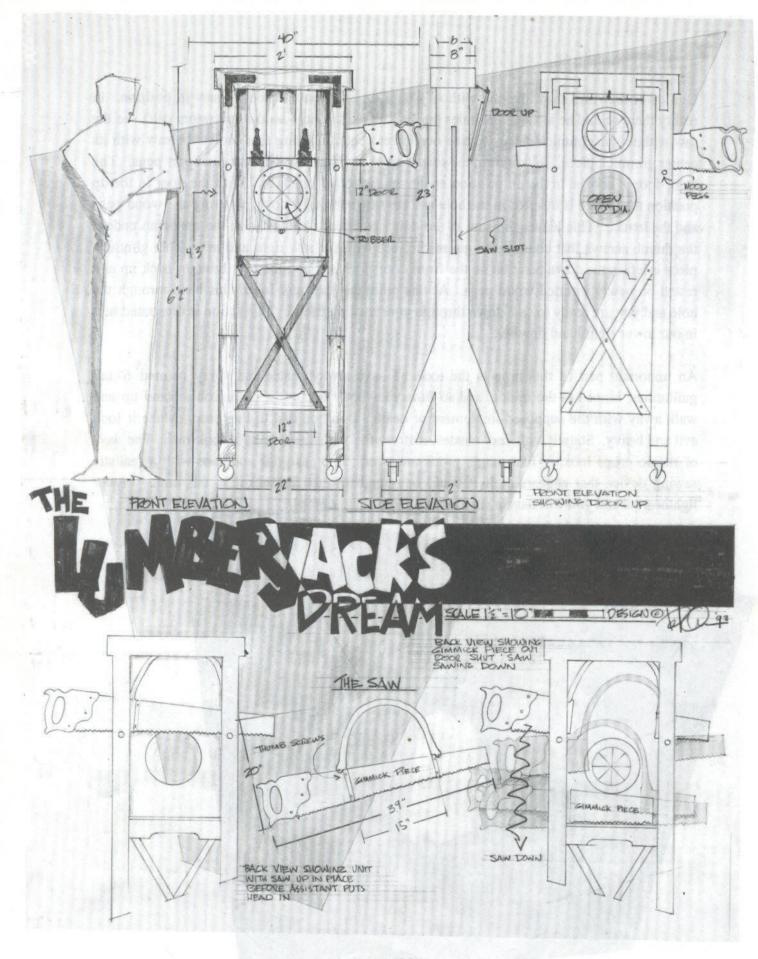
Our top left drawing shows the look of the entire prop. It should be made of heavy appearing woods, stained with black strap iron hardware corner braces, hinges and support braces. Notice the front door that the volunteer sticks his head through. It is outfitted with foam rubber that is pie slit as indicated to open out as the head comes through. This door hides the saw when it is brought back up after sawing through the lettuce.

Our lower drawings show the unit without a back on it so you can see the saw in position. In

Our lower drawings show the unit without a back on it so you can see the saw in position. In reality there should be a panel that hides the saw above the hole so the spectators can't see the saw without the gimmick piece. Notice our lower center drawing that shows the saw with its center gimmick piece. In working, the saw is up in position resting on two support pegs. The front door is hooked in the up position as the unit is rolled on stage. With the door in the up position the lettuce is inserted in the hole and the saw is brought down severing the wood pegs and the lettuce. This leaves the saw in the down position. At that point the magician undoes the thumb screws that connect the gimmick piece with the saw right and left. This gimmick piece is left in the down position as the front door is closed and the saw brought back up and rested on newly inserted wood pegs. At this point the spectator inserts his head through the hole and you are ready to saw down through your trusting friend. This action is illustrated best in our lower right hand drawing.

An important part of this prop is the look. I have always hated red spray painted 6' tall guillotines, hinged at the midde, and so flimsy anybody locked in place could stand up and walk away with the supposed implement of death. Don't do that to this prop. Make it look evil and heavy. Stain it with dark shades, distress the wood and make it look real. The days of magic props looking like magic props are over. Impress your audience with a realistic sawing device that appears as if it could be very harmful. Present it in the same way or





PAUL OSBORNE'S SPIRIT POST

EFFECT

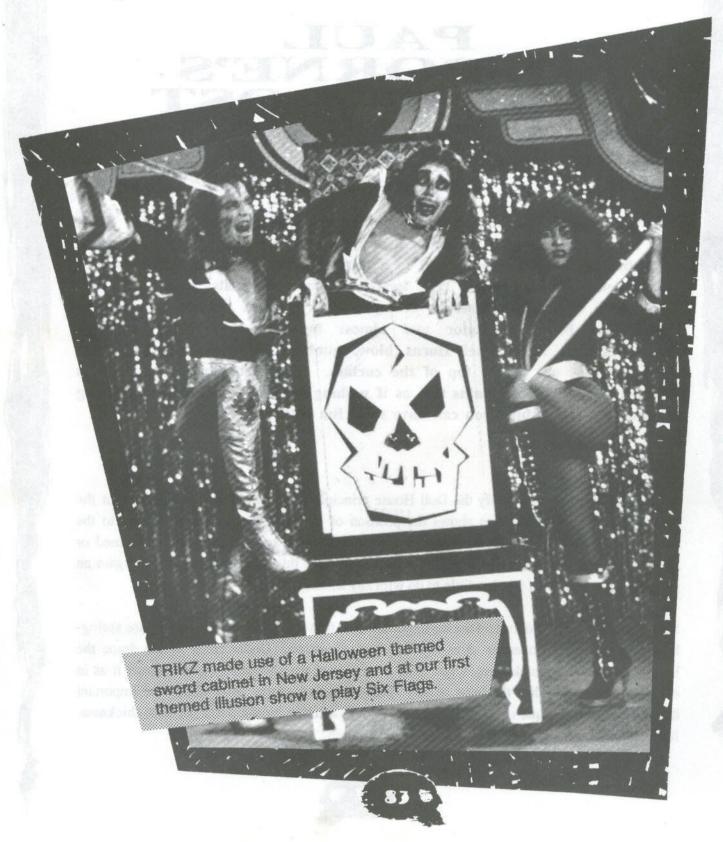
Here's a fun prop that's just right for your creative touches! Imagine being able to pick a fun-loving spectator from the audience to participate in some "ghostbusting." He or she is tied to a thin, innocent-appearing post and then blindfolded. Several seance type items; tambourines, bells, horns, etc., are placed on a tray and then set on the spectator's lap. A curtain is pulled up around the bound spectator and almost instantly the spirits manifest themselves time after time! Horns blow, tambourines sound off and some items fly right out of the top of the curtain. But each time the curtain is dropped the spectator remains tied as if nothing had happened. The routining is up to you and I think you can have some fun with it.

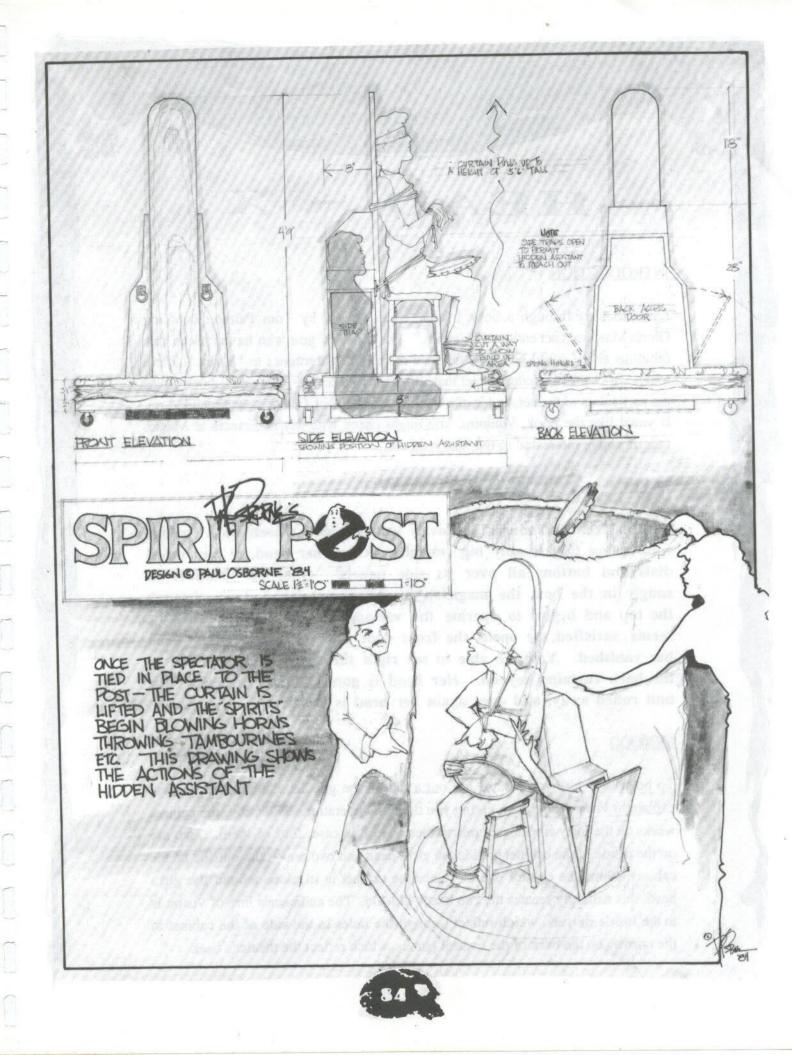
METHOD

The method on this is basically the Doll House principle with the girl assistant hidden in the post itself. Our side elevation shows the position of the hidden assistant in relation to the spectator. The post itself can be constructed from 3/8" birch and can probably be stained or aged to resemble just a simple prop. It's best to not make this look like a trick, but again an innocent-appearing post that has little to do with any trickery.

Notice the back access door and the all-important side trap doors. These trap doors are spring-hinged to the base to open as shown in our back elevation. Under cover of the drape the hidden assistant can quickly reach out, grab a prop from the spectators lap and throw it as in our bottom sketch. Then the traps rapidly spring back into place. Also notice the important illusion design technique of the folded-down curtain actually hiding 3 1/2" of base thickness. It's really a marvelous method of disguising table depth.

Don't let this simple prop fool you. It can be done by two people and a spectator surrounded, close-up or even on a night club floor. It's simple to build and does not require much space to transport. Why not sit down and work up a routine on this one. It's a trick that not everybody is doing!





HEAD - X

INTRODUCTION

I was looking through a book I have, once put out by Tom Palmer, detailing Gloria Marcom's act entitled "Vampira." For those of you who haven't seen this fabulous act, it could best be described as magic's forerunner to "Elvira." It's a tongue-in-cheek magic/horror act that still stands up today. The small book gives the particulars of the act, and in the back is an idea that I have now expanded on. If you'd like the book, *Vampira*, you might check with Jay or Francis at Magic, Inc. If you're interested in the idea read on....

EFFECT

The magician introduces his lovely assistant and wheels on a strange contraption that is only big enough to cover her head. It has weird dials and buttons all over its side panels. Once her head is fit snugly in the box, the magician inserts a metal rod down through the top and begins to operate the various control knobs. Once he seems satisfied, he opens the front door and the young lady's head has vanished. You are able to see right through the cabinet and to the back curtains beyond. Her head is gone! All is reversed, the unit rolled away, and once again her head is intact.

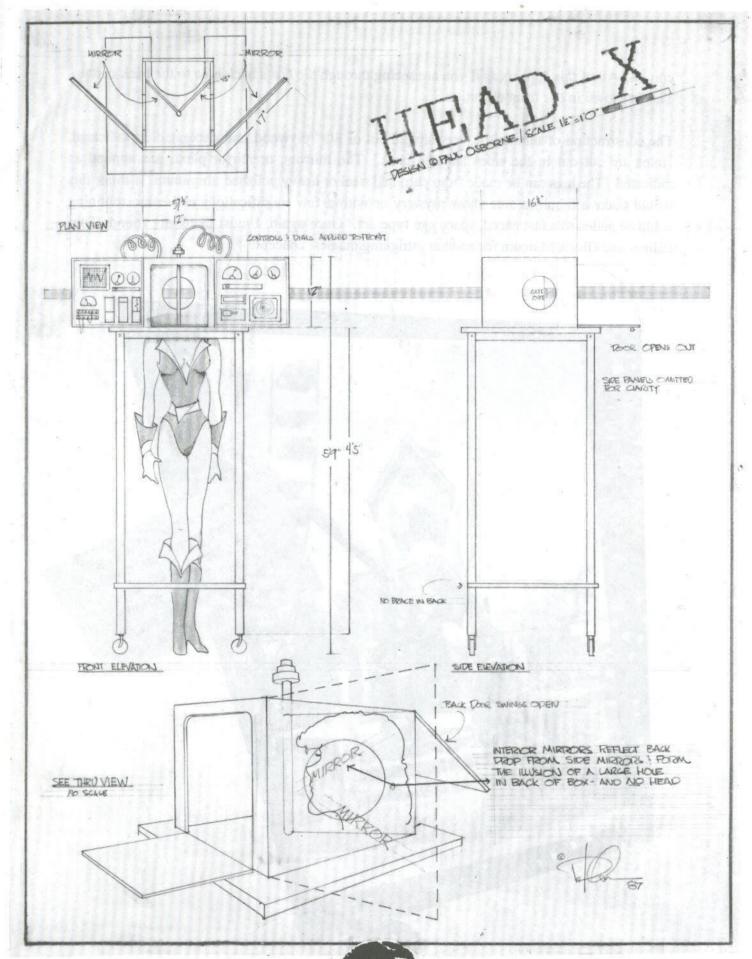
METHOD

To be honest with you, I have left out a few of the goodies Palmer and Marcom explain in *Vampira* but I am giving you the basic operation. Naturally, the cabinet works on the forty-five degree mirror theory; in this case, four of them. Two are on the inside of the cabinet to hide the girl's head and two are on the outside of the cabinet behind the control panels. Once the cabinet is in place around the girl's head, this naturally creates the "no head" illusion. The audience's line of vision is to the inside mirrors, which reflect through the holes in the side of the cabinet to the mirrors on the back of the control panels, which reflect the theater's back

curtain. All of this appears as if you are seeing through the box's back hole to the back curtain. This is shown in our front elevation.

The construction of this unit is very simple out of 3/8" plywood and decorated as indicated. Holes are cut out in the sides and the back. The mirrors, or mirror plexi, are applied as indicated. The legs can be made from chromed steel or heavy polished aluminum. I think this would make a fabulous side show mystery or with a few modifications and some routining could be added to a fast paced, space age type act. Once again, I must thank my friends Tom Palmer and Gloria Marcom for another intriguing magical concept!





SWORD CABINET

INTRODUCTION-

This Is really a great illusion. One of those that has stood the test of time without requiring much in the way of design change. Fans of this prop can still probably locate an original Thayer blueprint through any number of reputable dealers. I have a copy of the 1943 Thayer catalogue, and this prop is listed as the "No. 1466-Latest Sword Cabinet Mystery." Item No. 1467 was the "Regular Sword Box Mystery" and featured no vanishing girl aspects, just the swords Into the box and basically you have to guess where she is. Well, this is greatly improved from that. You can perform It close up and even surrounded and it's still as baff ling as it was back In 1943!

EFFECT-

Your assistant is introduced and escorted into a small decorative box. The top and front doors are closed, and almost immediately 14 swords are inserted into the cabinet at all angles and a large, nasty-looking spear is thrust down through the top and potrudes out the bottom. The front door is opened and there is no trace or the girl! The cabinet is totally revolved, and still there is no trace of the lady- All is reversed, once again the doors open, and out steps the beautiful young lady totally unharmed

METHOD-

This illusion features the double 45-degree mirrors that do such a perfect job of hiding your assistant by reflecting the side walls. The basic prop is constructed from 3/8" materials framed as indicated by I "x3", and this one can be constructed to break flat for packing. The can also be made to unscrew from the base, allowing this illusion to be very economical, space-wise.

Our side elevation shows the girl in the sitting position as she is hidden by the mirrors. The

plan view into the box shows the mirrors swinging in place. Notice our full-size detail drawing at the bottom right of the plan, and you will see the method of mounting and constructing the mirror. The mirror is actually framed to the wood by a metal frame stop, as we call it. Another method that has been successful for some is to utilize mirror plexiglas in place of the glass mirror. This has many benefits over the breakable glas,s but you must also remember that the plexi will scratch, and certain weather conditions will cause it to expand, contract and, in some cases, even warp, Even if you choose the plexiglas method, you should still frame it to the wood for durability.

Running along the far right side of our plan is a full size detail showing the basic construction of the box and the base. The interior of the cabinet should be covered in a contrasting color stripe to make it as confusing inside as possible. Obviously, you will want to also cover the back of the mirror and all interior surfaces with this material. Note the upper left design can be grided off on our plan and transferred in larger fashion to your completed illusion.

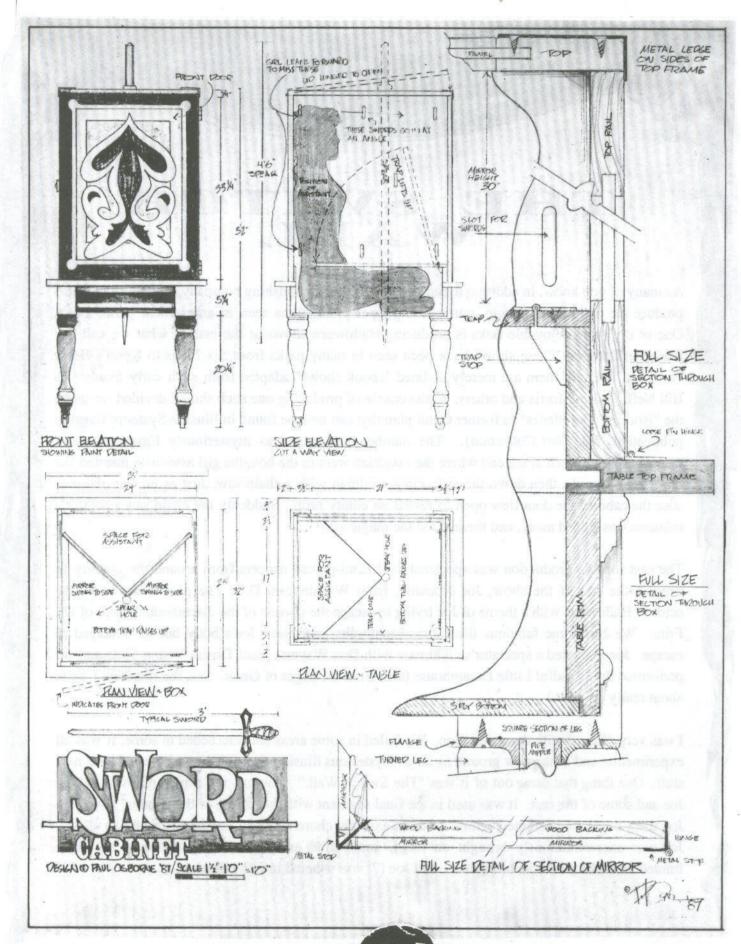
The swords are made from aluminum with wood handles as per our dimensions. Our side elevation shows the position of the sword holes.

Mark Tripp told me of an interesting variation he saw where the center wood spike also had a slot in it corresponding to a slot in the back of the cabinet. During the performance, once the magician has inserted all the swords and the center spike he goes to the back of the cabinet and inserts this final sword (the slot would be placed just above the girl's right shoulder-near the center so she can lean over to miss it) all the way through the center spike and causing the front door to open. Although I have never seen this done, I can see where it would be a real "seller" an definitely something you might want to consider.

CONCLUSION

Don't underate this illusion, it's almost the type of prop your audience expects and because it's so versatile it still can be a real fooler! It's also a great illusion for the beginning builder, and if you want to get a little experience building this type of illusion them you might want to first try your hand at the head box or our "Chest of Nefertari" from our first illusion book. Theme it out as you like for the Halloween season!





THE SWITCH WALL

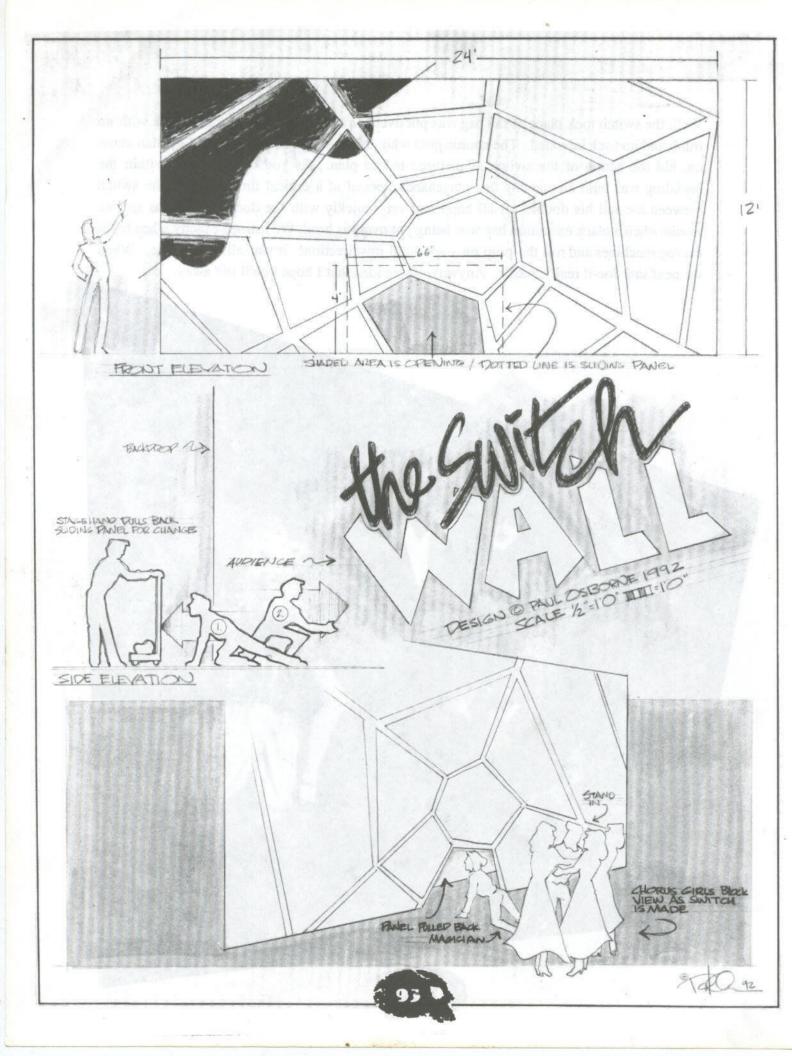
As many of you know, in addition to our Illusion Systems publishing company Michelle and I also produce the majority of magic, music and puppet productions seen in amusement parks today. One of my more enjoyable tasks is producing Halloween shows at the end of what we call our season in October. These shows have been seen in many parks from Six Flags to Knott's Berry Farm and many of them are merely updated "spook shows" adapted from such early masters as Bill Neff, Phillip Morris and others. In the course of producing one such show I decided on using the "Bride of The Blades" (a former Genii plan that can now be found in Illusion Systems' flagship publication, *The First Collection*). The number was staged as mysteriously Egyptian, and I wanted to do a switch at the end where the magician went in the box, the girl assistants inserted the blades and swords, then down the aisle ran a madman with a chain saw. Just as he was about to slice the cabinet, the door flew open to reveal an empty prop. Suddenly the chain saw operator's costume was ripped away, and there stood the magician!

The cast for this production was spectacular. I hand-picked dancers from around the country to support the star of the show, Joe Romano, from Washington, D.C. The production was very eclectic Halloween with a theme of Joe trying to escape the powers of the disembodied voice of Dr. Frite. We had some fabulous illusions: Lightbulbs penetrated Joe's body but he managed to escape. Joe recreated a spectator's nightmare with Don Wayne's giant Dream Vision Slate and we performed the Dreadful Little Dreamhouse (also from the pages of Genii. See, the illusions I write about really do exist.)

I was very pleased with the production. We failed in some areas and succeeded in some. It was all experimental and broke new ground as far as mysterious illusion shows are concerned. I love new stuff. One thing that came out of it was "The Switch Wall." You can see it pictured here behind Joe and some of the cast. It was used in the final segment with the "Bride of the Blades" to switch Joe for a duplicate costumed actor. After an expertly choreographed number of Egyptian dance, Joe was unceremoniously brought on stage, handcuffed and a black bag put over his head. Immediately the prop was brought on, and Joe (?) was ushered into the illusion.

Well, the switch took place as the bag was put over Joe's head. It was like a sub trunk with no trunk and no trick intended. The chorus girls who, by the way had wide flared Egyptian skirts on, hid the action of the switch as pictured in our plan. As you can also see, within the backdrop was built an opening that stagehands opened at a critical time to allow the switch between Joe and his double. It all happened very quickly with Joe ducking down as anyone would when a black execution bag was being put over his head. We learned exactly when to hit the fog machines and roll the prop on - good old misdirection! It was all very subtle. When we next saw Joe-it really wasn't. Anyway, it's an idea that I hope you'll file away.





THE SLATE OF FATE

EFFECT

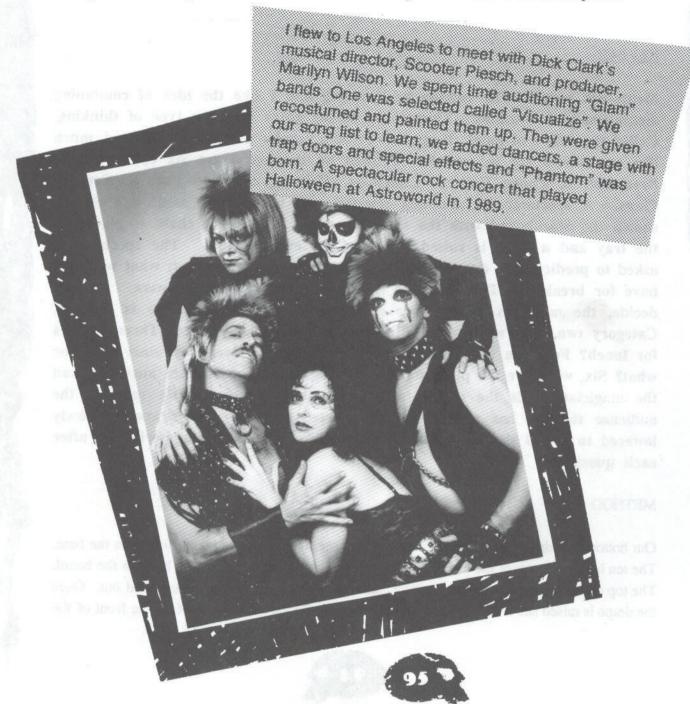
Mentalism seems to be coming back strong and I like the idea of combining mentalism with illusions. This would be my entry into this type of thinking. Called the "Slate of Fate", it appears to be a regular portable chalkboard, much like you would see in schools. Printed on the board are six categories: 1. Breakfast, 2. Phone Call, 3. Lunch, 4. Meeting, 5. Shop For, 6. Evening Plans. A spectator is randomly selected and brought on stage. shown the blackboard with the six categories. A piece of chalk is placed in the tray and a cloth is raised, covering the entire board. The spectator is asked to predict their day tomorrow. Category one is breakfast; what will they have for breakfast? The spectator is asked to give concise answers. As they decide, the magician writes their selection on a tablet that he is holding. Category two, what's the most important call they must make? Three, what's for lunch? Four, an important meeting with whom? Five, they must shop for what? Six, what are the plans for the evening? All questions are answered and the magician holds the paper tablet with the responses. He reminds the audience that he has never met the selected guest as the drape is slowly lowered to reveal that matching answers have mysteriously materialized after each question!

METHOD

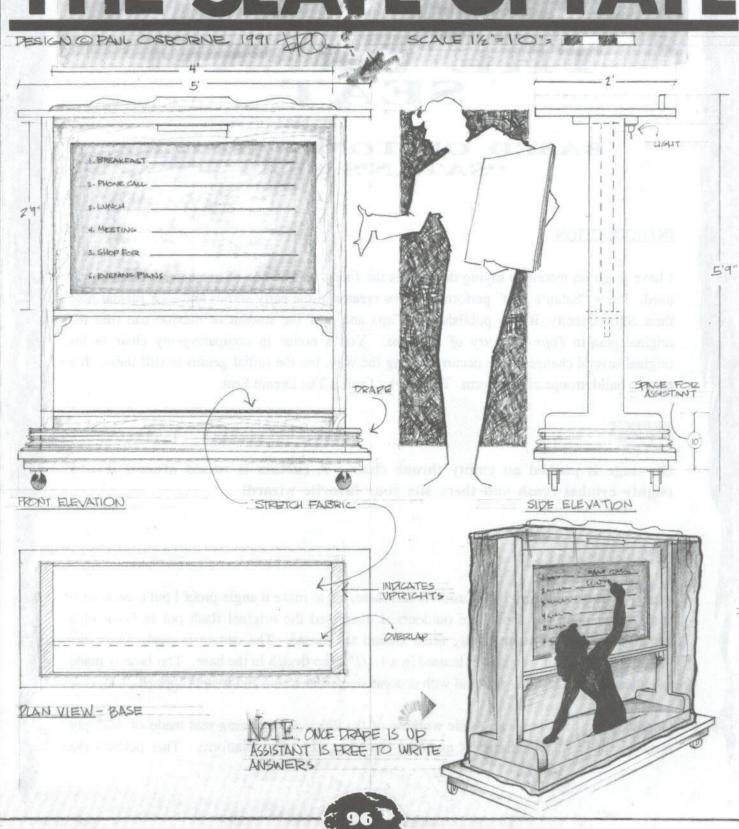
Our bottom left drawing says it all. As you can see, there is an assistant hidden in the base. The ten inch thickness of the base is mostly masked by the drape as it rests beneath the board. The top of the base is covered with stretch material allowing her quick access in and out. Once the drape is raised she is free to raise up and write in the answers. A light on the front of the

board illuminates it to allow her to see as she writes. Velcro tabs hold the drape up and in place. The drape has a PVC or light wood frame in the top so that it's a simple matter of raising the drape and connecting the velcro to keep it in place. The bottom of the drape is permanently attached to the base.

The chalkboard is unprepared although the lettering is pre-printed or silkscreened on the front. All can be made to pin hinge together so that it can be stored in a small space. One final thought would be in presentation to have the last materialized answer to be incorrect, the drape would be raised again and the spectator is asked to concentrate extra hard. As they do the drape is lowered again and the answer has been changed to reflect the correct response.



THE SLATE OF FATE



THE DREAM SEAT

BASED ON TOM PALMER'S "SATAN'S SEAT"

INTRODUCTION

I have to go on record as saying that this is the finest appearance of a magician I have ever used. I saw "Satan's Seat" performed by its creator in the early sixties and took mental note then. Subsequently, it was published in *Tops* and now the student of illusion can find the original plan in *Tops Treasury of Illusions*. You'll notice in comparing my chair to his original several changes have occurred along the way, but the initial genius is still there. It's easy to build, troupe and perform. That's why I call it The Dream Seat.

EFFECT

On stage is pushed an empty throne chair. A curtain is raised around it -- a mighty cymbal crash and there sits your favorite wizard!

METHOD

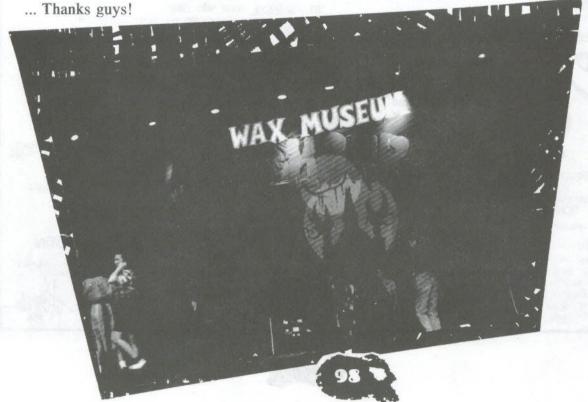
Again, Tom Palmer's original illusion is still there, but to make it angle-proof I put a back on it and because often our shows are outdoors, I dismissed the original flash pot in favor of a curtain that could be momentarily lifted around the throne. The curtain is made much like today's Sub Trunk covers and is housed in a 1 1/2" deep trough in the base. The base is made as indicated from 1/2" ply material with decorative quarter-round and casters applied.

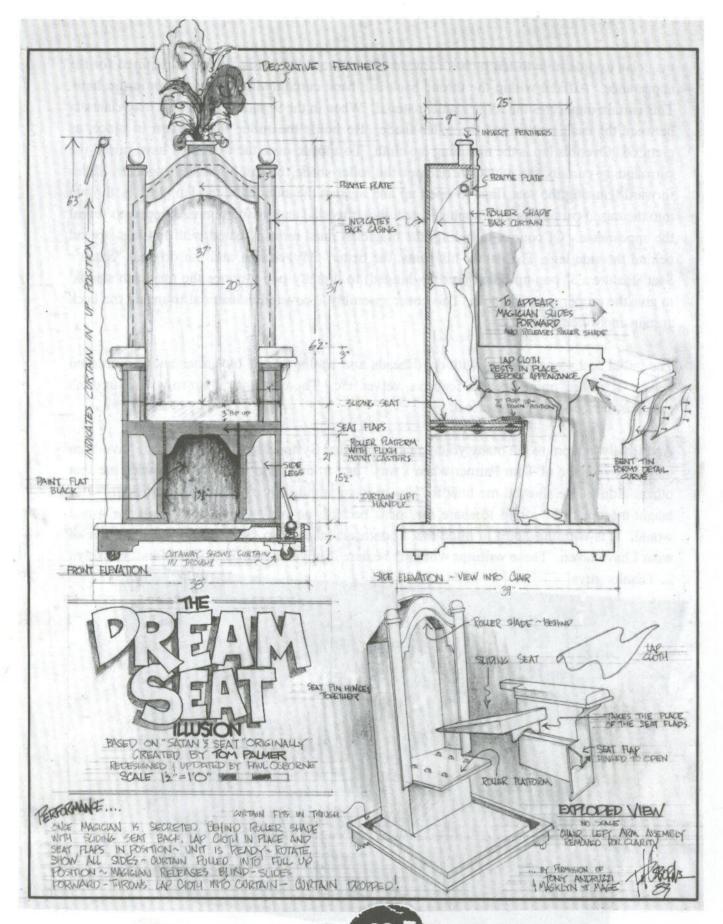
Our side elevation shows the basic working of the illusion. A sliding seat made of 1/2" ply rests on six flush mount casters mounted into the 1/2" roller platform. This permits the

magician to slide nine to ten inches forward or backward, which is all that is required for the appearance. Affixed within the throne back is a back curtain with weights sewn in the hem. This curtain duplicates the roller shade material. When in the 9" hiding space, the magician sits between the back curtain and the roller shade. He holds the roller shade down in place, as pictured. Over his lap is the matching lap cloth. To appear, once the assistants have raised the surrounding curtain, the magician releases the roller shade, brings his knees together, slides forward (causing the seat flaps to open up and against the side legs), the lap cloth is thrown into the raised curtain (not too sophisticated - but it works) and the curtain is dropped to reveal the appearance. Of course, in hiding, the magician must remain seated with his legs spread behind the side legs. The darker his pants, the better. My version and the original "Satan's Seat" feature a 3" pop-up board (spring- hinged) to literally pop up once the magician stands' to give the proper seat thickness. This entire assembly is covered in material to match the back curtain and roller shade.

The initial seat was decorated with devil heads and skulls set off by glitter and red crushed velvet. I "gooed" mine up with feathers, velvet, etc. The creativity is up to you. But don't pass this one up - it's a great effect!

And finally, a word to the many young readers Illusion Systems has. I am proud to have been under the tutelage of Tom Palmer when I was "just a kid." He took the time with me that others didn't. He showed me how to "dream it up, build it, perform it and publish it." He taught me not to be afraid to share my ideas because no one will perform them the way I would. It is with this spirit in mind that I contribute and try to give back to magic a little of what I have taken. These writings wouldn't be here if it weren't for Tom, Tony and Maskelyn





The Reconstructed Man

John and I were 12 and it was late in the summer of 1960 when my magic cohort and I were planning our favorite activities for the up-coming months: sitting next to Nani Darnell at the Labor Day T.A.O.M. convention; building a cardboard Disembodied Princess; lying to each other about who was going to get an Owens' Vanishing Birdcage for Christmas; and the annual backyard Halloween Spook Show/Haunted House. It was during this period of time we created "The Reconstructed Man" for our favorite October holiday. The illusion was built for under \$25.00 and with all the precision and skill two 12-year-olds and Dad's saber saw could muster up.

Actually, the idea is not new -- we saw it at some traveling carnival. But, if we lied to each other about Owens' equipment, why not tell people we invented it? The effect is the Headless Man, but no mirrors, and it can be seen from all sides.

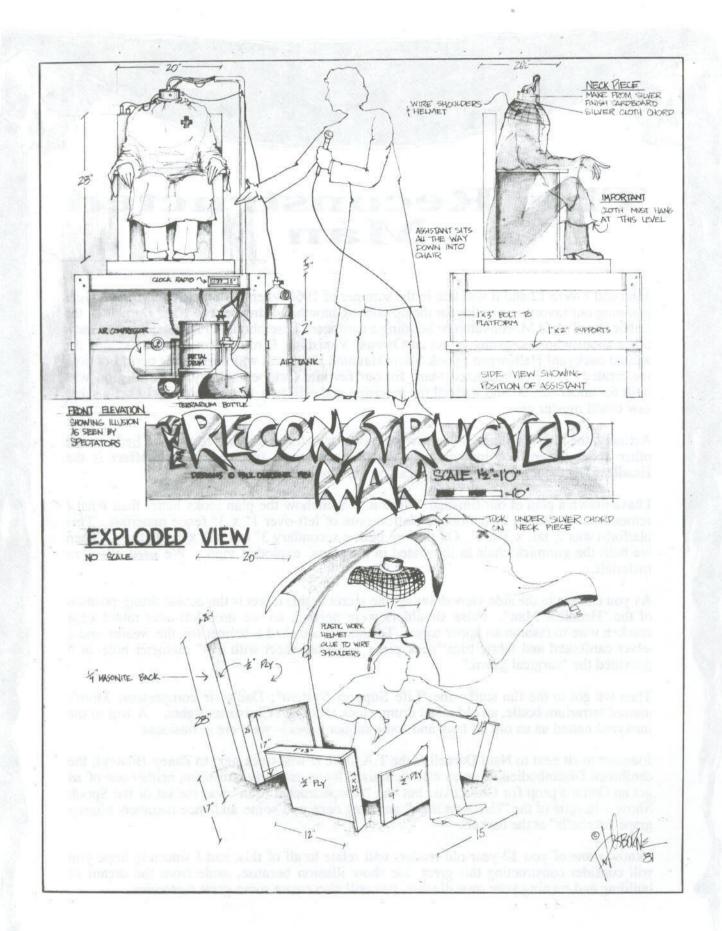
I have drawn a plan of our finished "illusion." Somehow the plan looks better than what I remember. We began by building a platform out of left-over 1" x 3" fence materials. This platform was 2' tall x 3' x 3'. On this we built a secondary 3" tall x 2' x 2' platform. Then we built the gimmick chair as illustrated in the plans' exploded view. We used all scrap materials.

As you can see in the side view drawing, the secret to this effect is the actual sitting position of the "Headless Man". False shoulders were needed, so we used left-over rabbit cage chicken wire to fashion an upper torso. To this we attached a helmet for the wearer and a silver cardboard and fabric trim "neck piece". An old sheet with a 4" diameter hole in it provided the "surgical gown."

Then we got to the fun stuff - the "Life Support System"; Dad's air compressor, Mom's unused terrarium bottle, an old metal drum, clock radio and Christmas lights. A trip to the junkyard netted us an old air tank and some rubber hoses -- we were in business.

John got to sit next to Nani Darnell at the T.A.O.M. (I was stuck next to Zaney Blaney), the cardboard Disembodied Princess was victimized by an untimely rainstorm, neither one of us got an Owen's prop for Christmas, but the "Reconstructed Man" was the hit of the Spook Show --in spite of the "Headless Man" sneezing once and some audience members tossing grape "eyeballs" at the barker.

I know some of you 12-year-old readers will relate to all of this, and I sincerely hope you will consider constructing this great side show illusion because, aside from the dream of building and owning your own illusion, you will also create some great memories.



THE LIVING HALF LADY

EFFECT

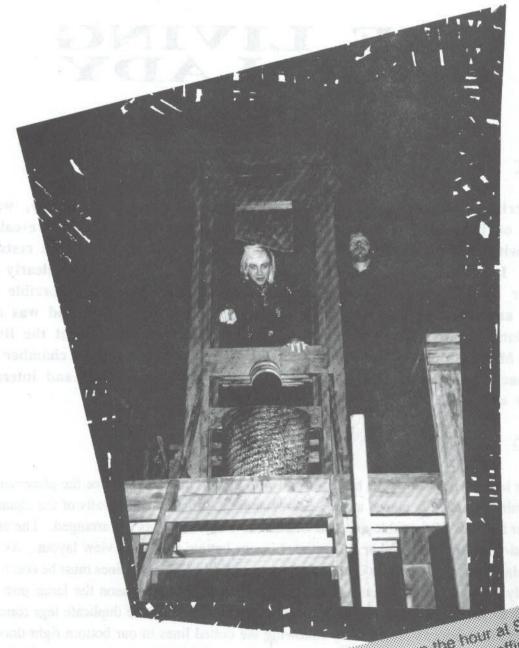
This terrific sideshow illusion has its place in any kind of display, walk-through or haunted house. Basically it's a scene or vignette that reveals a woman with only an upper body. She is placed on a small stand that rests on a table. It is easy to see beneath the stand and the table, and she clearly has no lower body. The story can be told that... "she was in a horrible car accident and kept alive by doctors until she miraculously healed and was able to function only as a half woman. Ladies and gentlemen we present the living miracle, Maleek Monroe, the living half lady!" The curtains on the chamber are pulled back, and the illusion is revealed. She answers questions and interacts with the audience.

METHOD

Our upper left drawing shows the basic illusion with the girl in place. Notice the placement of the four mirrors. Each is placed at a 45-degree angle to reflect the sidewalls of the chamber. Notice our top view of the table and you will see how these mirrors are arranged. The entire configuration within the chamber is illustrated in our bottom right plan view layout. As you can see, placement of the mirrors is critical to the overall illusion. Sightlines must be controlled to see only what the presenter wants the audience to see. For this reason the lamp post and wall block the side areas that have the duplicate reflective legs. These duplicate legs form the back leg in the audience's opinion. By following the dotted lines in our bottom right drawing you can see the various reflective points from the worst sightline observing areas. To further hide the mirrors, floor tiles are laid in the same pattern as the mirrors.

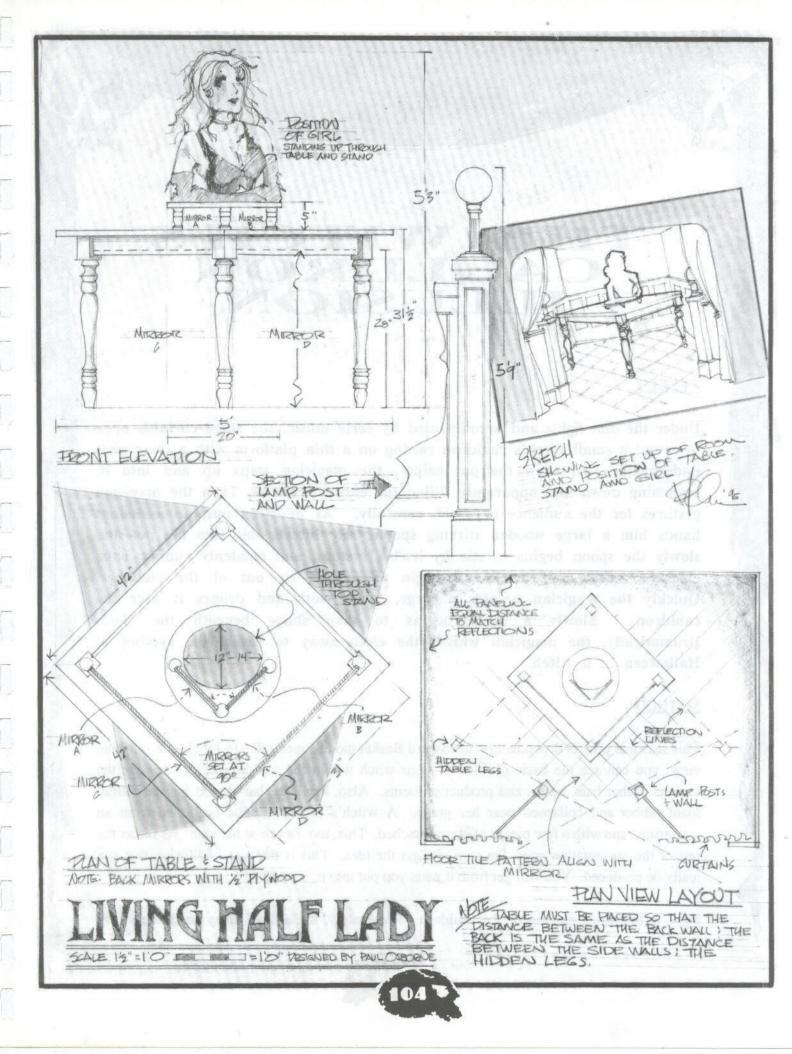
This is a sensational illusion, so do put some thought into the chamber themeing, her costume and make-up, as well a your storyline, and you will present quite a mystery to your patrons.

Oh, and one other thing, watch out for kids with squirt ketchup bottles from the snack stand. Condiments can be very revealing on a mirror - I know, I invented the concept at age ten at the Texas State Fair.



Sales and solid place and a selection of the hour selection of the hour selection of the hour selection of the hour selection of the average selec





THE WITCH'S CAULDRON ILLUSION

EFFECT

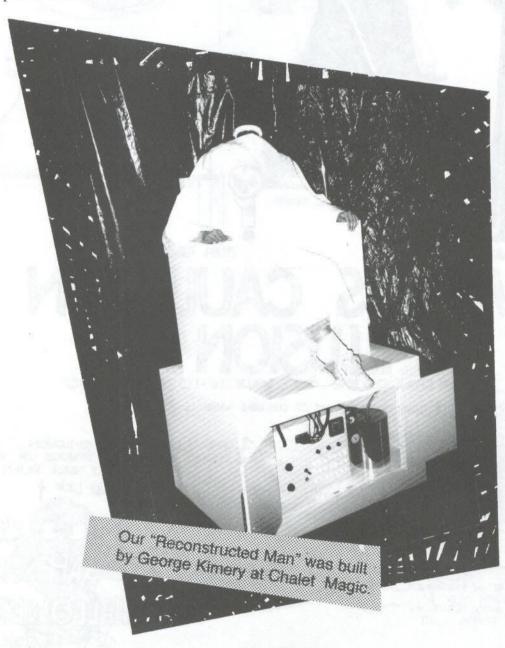
Under the dim lights and accompanied by eerie music, the stage curtains open to reveal a small witch's cauldron resting on a thin platform with a clear view underneath. To show the pot empty, the magician steps up and into it, crouching down and apparently filling the entire cauldron. Then the magician gestures for the audience to watch carefully. As he steps out, an assisstant hands him a large wooden stirring spoon. He inserts this into the pot and slowly the spoon begins to stir by itself. It stops, and suddenly rubber bats, chickens, rocks and bricks all begin to rapidly fly out of the chamber. Quickly the magician unfolds a large, black cloth and drapes it over the cauldron. Slowly a form begins to take shape beneath the cloth. Dramatically, the magician whisks the cloth away to reveal the symbol of Halloween ... a witch.

METHOD

This seasonal prop is dependent on the Sword Basket modus operandi. In looking at our plan view, you can see the basic position of your witch within the cauldron. With her are the various rubber bats, bricks and production items. Also, her large hat should be made from foam rubber and collapsed near her grasp. A witch's broom can be fashioned from an appearing cane with a few pieces of straw attached. This, too, can be at her side. As far as the rest of the presentation goes, I'm sure you get the idea. This is the type of illusion that can really be produced. You will get from it what you put into it.

Now, to the actual making of the cauldron. Fortunately, these days many hardware stores

carry Fiberglass resin, hardener and cloth. Once you have molded chicken wire (as shown in Figure #1) to resemble our cauldron, next cut the Fiberglass cloth into 6" x 6" squares. Check your Fiberglass instructions, but usually it's 30 drops of hardener per four ounces of resin. Usually this mixture will harden within 30 minutes. Using rubber gloves you can dip cloth into the Fiberglass mixture. Use a disposable brush to smooth down the Fiberglass on the chicken wire (as in Figure #2). One layer of cloth outside the wire and one inside the wire should be sufficient. Allow this to harden. Once done you can sand and paint (as in Figure #3) your newly formed Witch's Cauldron. The base is a simple platform, constructed to be 44 1/2" by 44 1/2" from 1/2" plywood, 1" x 2" trim and 3" x 3" legs. Decorate with straw, glitter and plastic skulls.





TORTURE CHEST OF BURHEE

EFFECT

The stage is dramatically lit as your assistant makes her entrance. Kneeling on the floor, she bows her head as if in prayer. From behind, you roll a table over her through which she sticks her head. Around her head you place a small pagoda-styled box. An opening in the front permits her face to be seen. Quietly, you induce her into a trance. By tightly holding the sides of the small box, you now revolve the container clockwise. The audience is amazed as your assistant's head seems to revolve 360 degrees as well.

Quickly, a second container is placed within the first box obstructing the view of your victim. A burning torch is introduced into box #2 -- a flash of fire, and out fly two doves! Box #2 is lifted, and the head is gone. At the appropriate cymbal crash, both boxes are lifted, and there she is ... restored.

METHOD

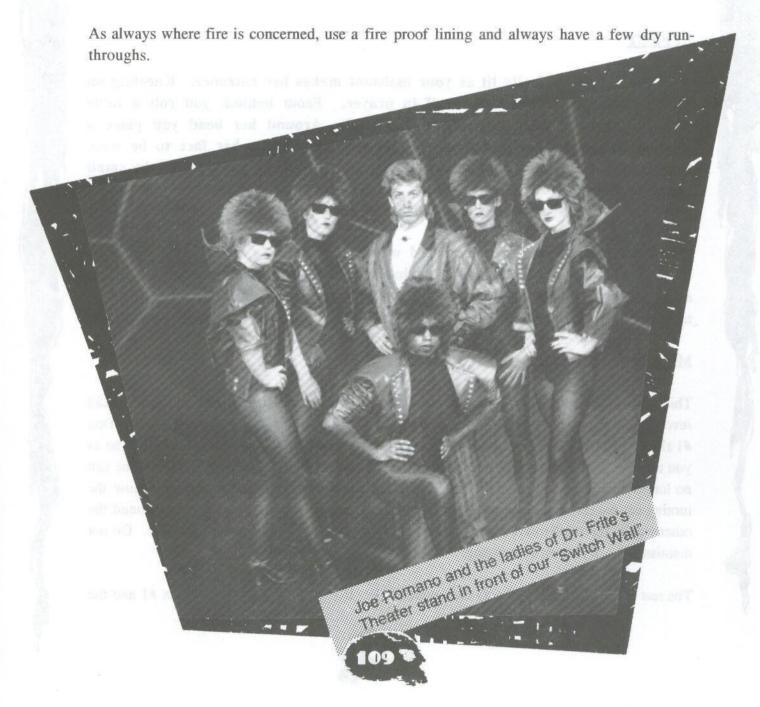
This illusion is based on a combination of several well-known techniques. First the head revolve: On the platform is a 1'8" diameter circle, 1" wide and 1" thick (see plan view). Box #1 should just fit within this circle. Remember, box #1 has an oval cut-out in the front - so as you turn the box clockwise, so does your assistant turn her head. The point at which she can no longer turn around is generally the same point that the audience can no longer follow the turning cut-out (provided you aren't surrounded). It is at this point that she turns around the other way to meet and travel with the cut-out as it approaches the audience's sight line. Do not dismiss this -- it is most convincing.

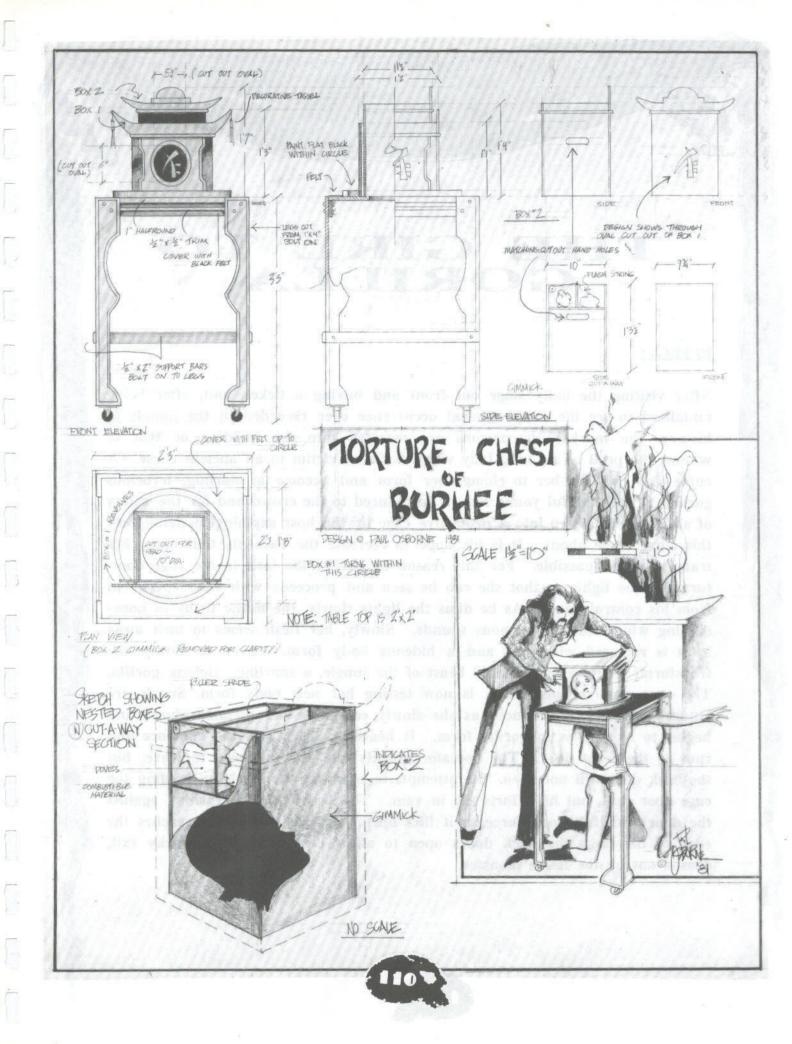
The rest of the illusion is basically the square circle. Box #2 fitting just inside box #1 and the

black gimmick fitting inside box #2.

A word about the gimmick box: It is generally 1/4" wood or sheet metal, with an open bottom and two compartments in the top. One houses the doves, with a black roller-shade above. The other contains flash paper and powder.

And now, a trick of the trade: Attach to the end of the roller shade 6" worth of "flash string". When closing the shade over the doves, wrap it around a nail imbedded in the dividing wall between the two compartments. Drape the string over the flash paper. When the paper is ignited, so will be the string - thus releasing your birds to respond to your hours of training and fly out.





THE GIRL TO GORILLA

EFFECT:

After visiting the bally stage out front and buying a ticket, and, after being tantalized to see the most unusual occurrence ever recorded in the annals of history, the marks, uh, patrons are escorted into the building or tent to witness the peril of a young lady who has fallen victim to an ancient curse. A curse that calls for her to change her form and become a snarling, ferocious gorilla. The beautiful young lady is introduced to the crowd and for the safety of all is asked to step into a protective cage as the host explains in detail how this curse came about. It is his hope to recreate the elements that make her transformation possible. For this reason he checks the lock to the cage door, turns on the lights so that she can be seen and proceeds with the experiment from his control panel. As he dims the lights slowly, the music turns to bonechilling wind and cacophonous sounds. Slowly, her flesh seems to melt away as it is replaced with hair and a hideous body form. Ever so slowly she transforms into the most feared beast of the jungle, a snarling, vicious gorilla. The once passive young lady is now testing her new body form. Snarls are louder and more pronounced as she slowly completes her metamorphosis and begins to move now in gorilla form. It beats its chest, sees the audience and runs to the front door. The operator quickly tells the audience to leave, but the back door will not open. He attempts to reinforce the lock by holding the cage door shut, but his efforts are in vain. The beast is now crashing against the door with full body force as it flies open. Just as the gorilla reaches the edge of the stage the back doors open to allow the audience to quicky exit, chased out by the fierce monster.

METHOD:

This classic among side show attractions has generated millions of dollars for midway operators, and the attraction can still be found in some casinos and boardwalks, just as popular as it always has been. The intrigue comes from the fun of seeing it once, then bringing your friends back to experience the surprise. One of the first ones I ever saw was in Wildwood, New Jersey, along the boardwalk. The showman had enhanced the effect by putting a strobe on the beast when it escaped. This gave just enough lighting delays to have "the monkey on your back" before you knew it! A strong sound track and system and a good "talker" and you have a classic super attraction.

Our first page shows the basic setup in front elevation form. Page two is the floor plan showing the layout of the two compartments and the positioning of the lights and glass. On ours we had the glass built into a frame that slid back into the rear of the chamber. This allowed the girl to enter the unit with absolutely no reflection visible. Once she is in, the host pulls the front curtains and she pulls out the glass, sliding it in place. She then takes her position in compartment A. Situated in compartment B is a female mannequin that has been airbrushed with fake fur attached to resemble a midway transformation. Depending on your budget this can be another person, but the carneys operated this one with as few people as possible, and so did we.

When ready, the host pulls back the curtain and checks the "lock" on the door. The lights are brought up from the dimmer board on his control panel to reveal the young lady in some type of trance. Slowly, as he adjusts the lights the light on her in compartment A is crossfaded to the light in compartment B to reveal the halfway transformed figure. Soon all the light power is on compartment A. Now comes another budgetary consideration. Another person wearing a gorilla suit enters compartment A through the side door and changes places with the girl, or the girl makes a quick costume change as the light is on the dummy. In any event, the host again fades back the lights from compartment B to compartment A to reveal the monster who is snarling and jumping around. Quickly the host shuts the curtains and asks everybody to leave, but a hand comes through the drapes as he pulls them back to reveal that the ape is now at the door and trying to escape. Eventually the door flies open and out comes the gorilla, who takes a run at the audience as the back doors open just in the nick of time.

Our third page shows a layout sketch of the unit, and our fourth page shows the control pedestal that the host uses to control the lights and sound. Our fifth page shows the bally platform used to promote the event and take the tickets out in front of the tent or building.

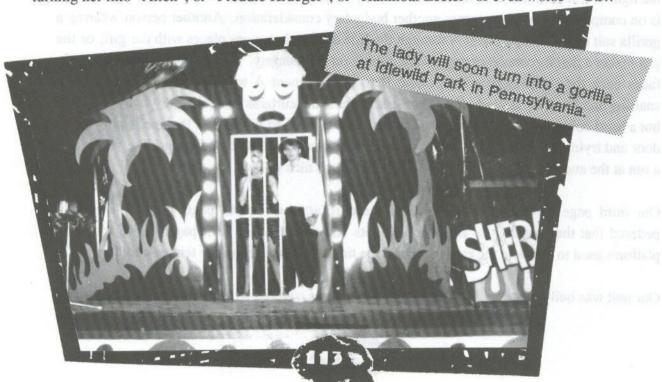
Our unit was built theatrically out of flats (wood frames covered with muslin fabric and painted

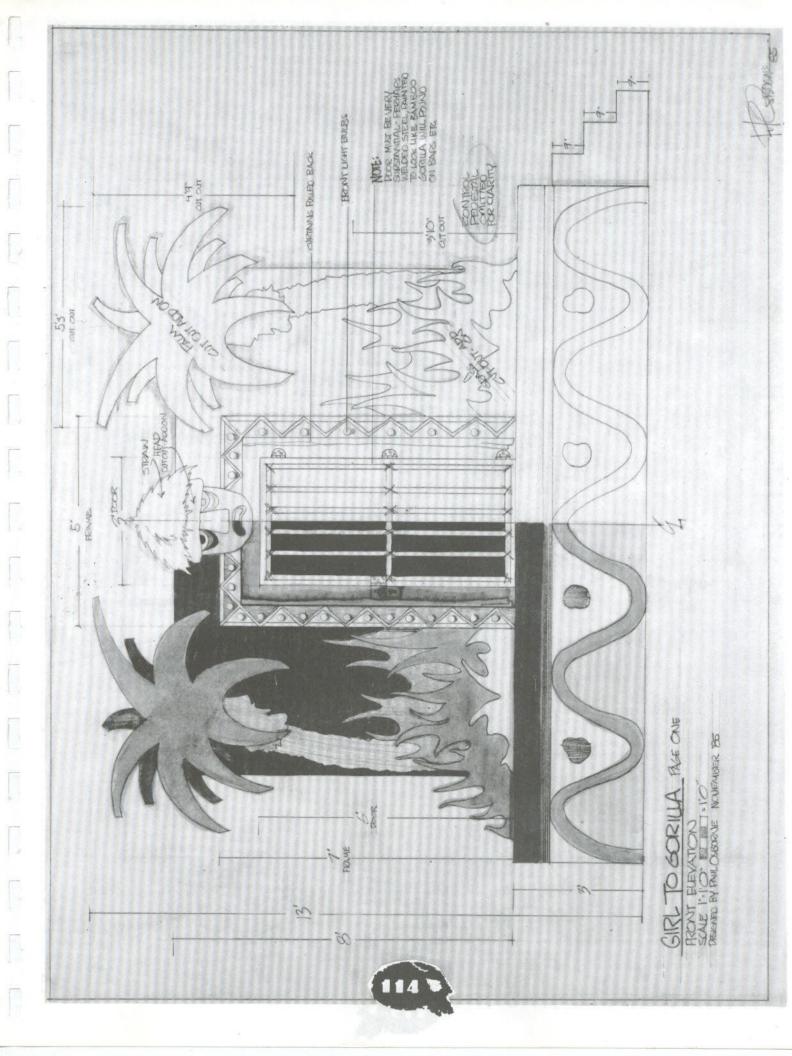


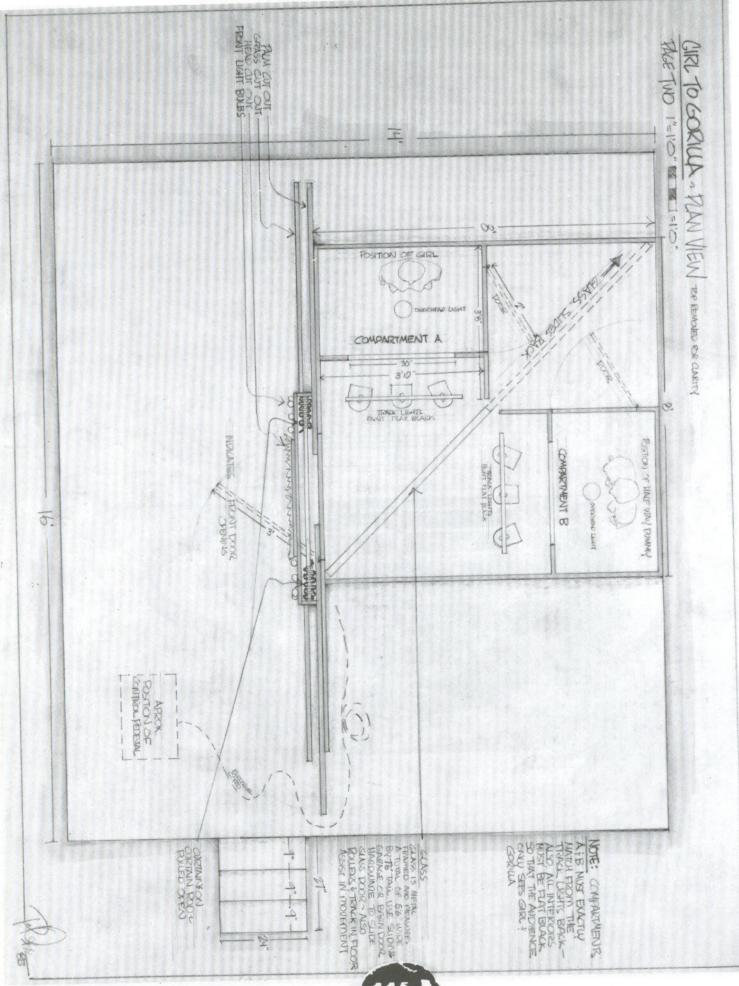
flat black and pin hinged together.) The interior walls were solid and all interiors were painted flat black. The roof was solid and the glass was hung and tracked from ceiling to floor. As you can see from our front elevation, all was raised on a 3' platform. Some things to be aware of with this illusion: The angles are extremely bad. It can really only be presented properly with the audience looking straight on. That means about 16'-18' across is about it, but you can line them up as far back as you want. This makes for an unusual shaped space, but at least everybody can have benefit of seeing the stage. In some situations the stage floor is raked up for better visibility and in some cases the room or tent is actually very small, holding only 50 people or so. Our version was in a long tent and we cordoned off the side areas that would result in poor visibility.

Also, remember that this illusion is dependent on lighting situations. Do not attempt to do it in any location that can't be totally blacked out. Any uncontrollable light sources could interfere with the illusion. Finally, do not underestimate the importance of your actors. The host must be captivating and sure of his speech; the girl, sweet and demure; the gorilla, an energetic personality; and never underestimate the value of the person at the back door. They have to open it at exactly the right time to let all the people run out afraid of the gorilla. Any lag time of even a few seconds will throw the timing off. Remember, too, that your next ticket sales are dependent on your future patrons seeing the last crowd running out screaming. An important sales trick on the midway of life!

Now, how do you make money with a show like this? By doing what the carneys called "grinding" it out. Do as many in an hour as you can. Six to seven minutes is tops. I hope you'll consider this old friend as an attraction for your next event. It's fun and safe. It even makes a great "blow off" for your haunted house or walk-through. You can update it by turning her into "Alien", or "Freddie Krueger", or "Hannibal Lecter" or even worse -- O.J.!

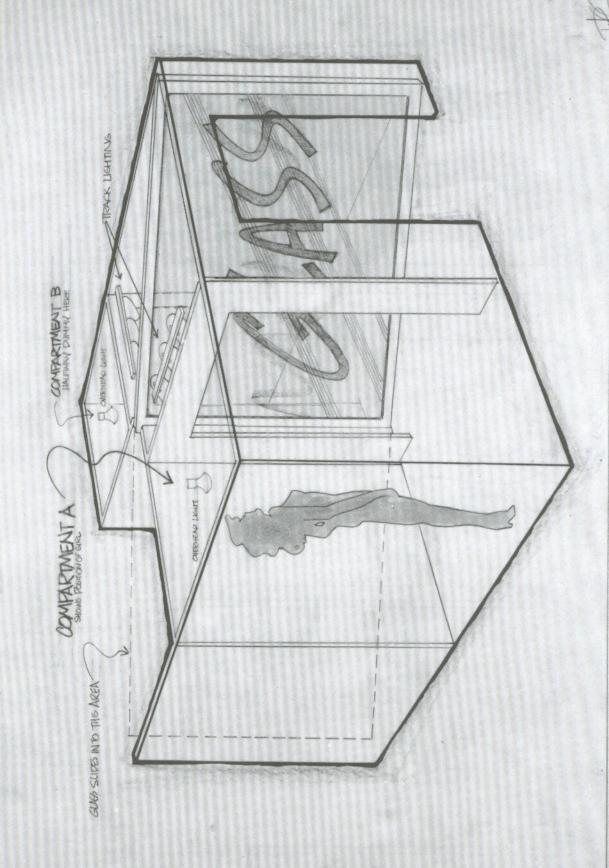


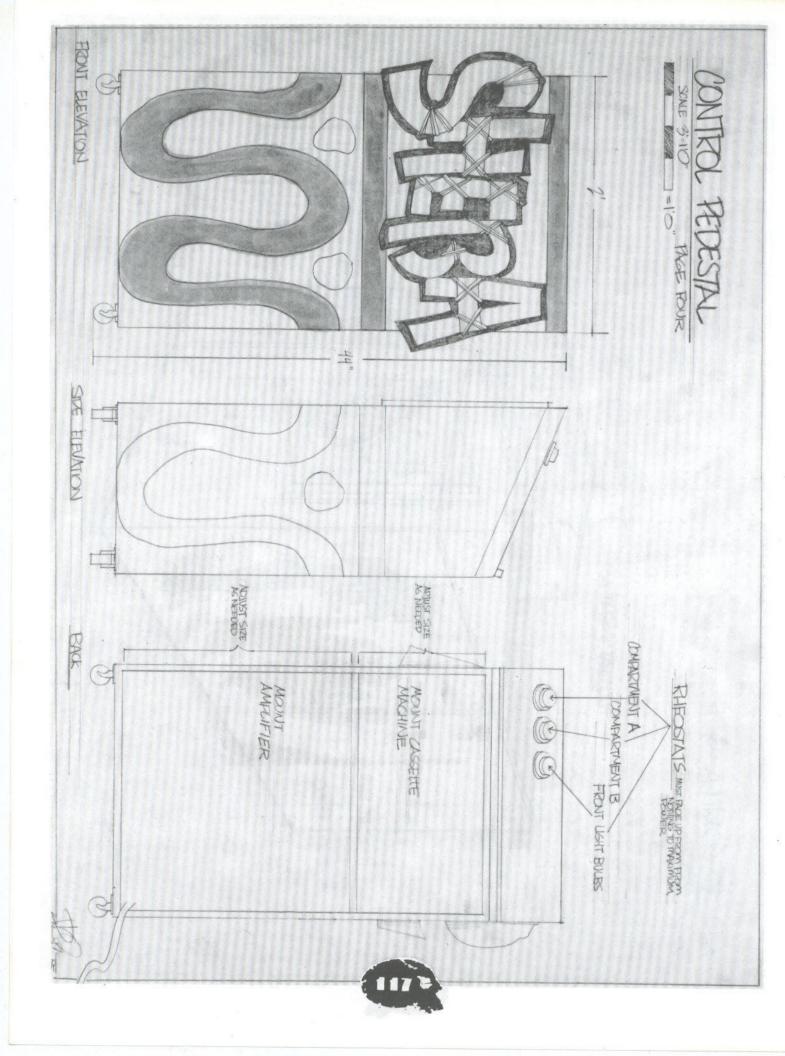




115 "

SKEY O ORWA WE THEE





118 6

THE DREADFUL LITTLE DREAM HOUSE

Remember back when you were a kid reading the catalogue descriptions of illusions? Remember the one that showed the "complete black-art outfit"... everything you needed to make tables appear, girls float, things disappear? Boy! Now that's real magic! Didn't you want one of those? I know I did. Well, here it is in miniature!

EFFECT

The magician related the story of the infamous haunted Hill House: "Located on the east coast this Victorian house was inhabited by a typical American family of some wealth. The father had commissioned a local model maker to duplicate their house in miniature to act as a doll house for their young daughter. The smaller scale copy was constructed and hidden away to be brought out on Christmas Day as a holiday gift for their beloved little girl. It was during this time that the actual Hill House was taken over by, at first, harmless spirits. But soon the dwelling was overcome by more and more bizarre manifestations including the mysterious rapid decaying of the house itself. When the miniature house was secretly brought out to be prepared for Christmas morning, the parents were horrified to see that the once beautiful Victorian doll house had in some way aged just as its larger predecessor. None of the family survived the haunting to enjoy Christmas that year because the house and its occupants burned in a mysterious fire. Ironically, the one memento that somehow escaped the ravages of the blaze was this ... (Prop is brought on stage). . . Dreadful Little Dreamhouse!"

At this point the magician begins a demonstration of how the tiny house is still

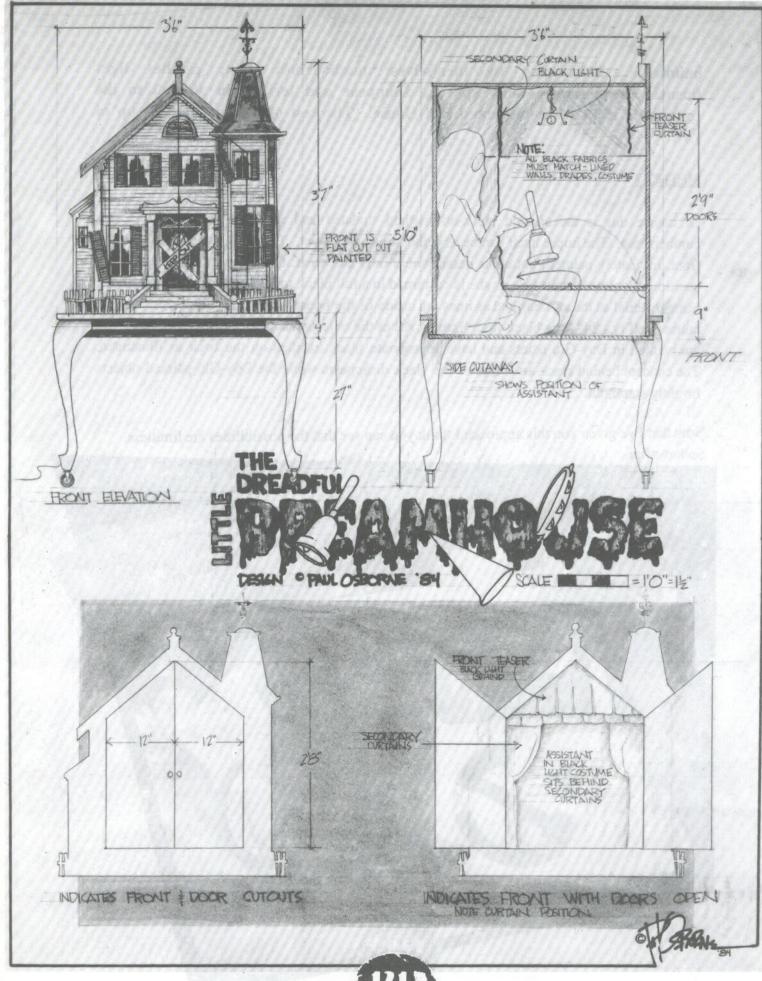
haunted. Bells ring by themselves; tambourines float; candles themselves; miniature dolls appear, disappear and levitate in air, all to the continuing story of the Haunted Hill House. The rest of the creativity is up to you.

METHOD

Of course this is the age-old black-art method updated and modified to be a little less cumbersome. The house itself can be as elaborate as you want. I have designed it with a flat front, intricately painted; but some detail would only add to it. Our side cutaway shows the position of your assistant. He or she is costumed in a full black robe and gloves made from the same material as the curtains and as lines the inside of the house. The only illumination in the house itself is a 24" long black-light fixture. All of the objects which are to float, appear, etc., are painted in Day-Glo paints and have appropriate black handles on the back as illustrated. The concept behind black-art is that all the black disappears while the Day-Glo painted objects brightly stand out.

Now that I've given you this approach I think you can see that the possibilities are limitless. So have fun.





THE EGYPTIAN TABLE OF DEATH

EFFECT

In the mysterious, darkly lit stage, the Pharaoh lays his beautiful princess to sleep in an ornately decorated oblong cabinet. The container is revolved to show all sides, then the lid is removed and the case is wheeled directly below a suspended spike rack. The razor sharp spikes are demonstrated to be real and dangerous. Slowly the spikes are lowered into the beautiful young princess' resting place until the tips of the spikes extend beyond the bottom of the Egyptian case. Then dramatically, the front of the cabinet is removed and there are spikes, but no girl. A cymbal crash is heard and the beautiful princess runs to the stage from the back of the auditorium, thus climaxing a death defying mystery.

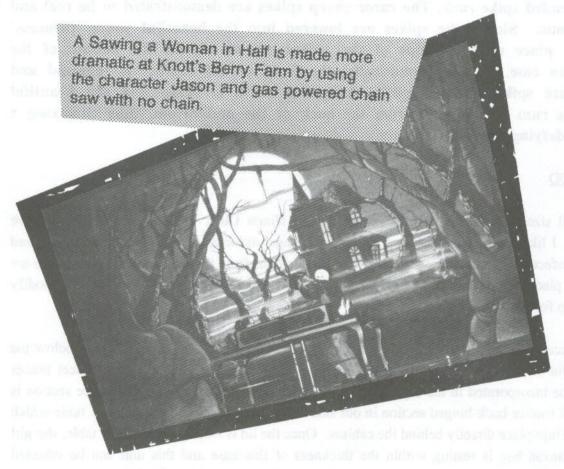
METHOD

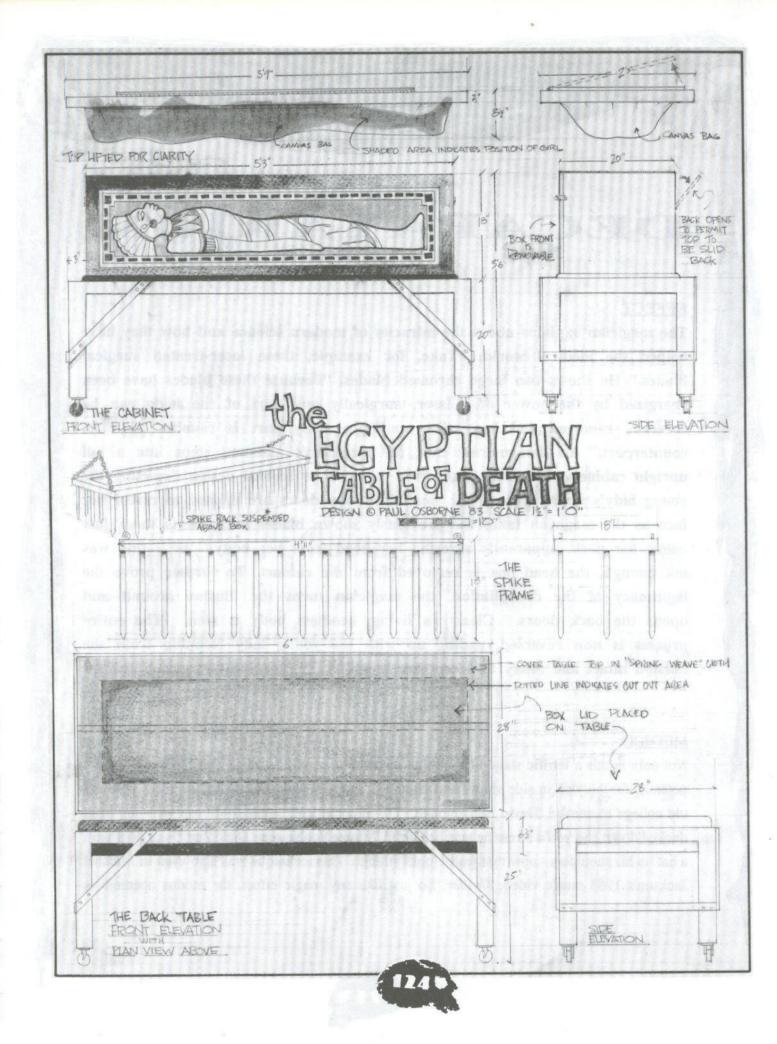
This full size illusion has its roots in the classic Nixon Duck Vanish and Nightclub Dove Vanish. I like it because it has that element of danger associated with other spike tables, and yet is perfectly safe in that the girl to be "pierced" is gone from the illusion before the spikes are even in place. Our plans should give you the basic idea and your own creativity can modify this prop for your own needs.

The critical area is the top of the lid section which rests on the cabinet sides. Directly below the hinged lid is a canvas bag glued and bolted in place to receive your assistant. Steel braces should be incorporated in the top section since once your girl is in place, the entire section is slid back (notice back-hinged section in our side elevation) and placed on the back table which is rolled into place directly behind the cabinet. Once the lid is resting on the back table, the girl in the canvas bag is resting within the thickness of this base and this unit can be wheeled offstage. Then your assistant can make her preparations to run down the aisle.

The spike frame is suspended throughout the presentation. Once the lid is removed from the cabinet, the illusion is rolled under the spike frame. Slowly the frame is lowered into the cabinet. Of course, the bottom of the cabinet and its base have corresponding holes to the spike, rack so the tips of the spikes slowly appear coming through the bottom of the illusion. Once the rack has been lowered as much as possible, the front of the cabinet is removed and the girl has vanished, leaving only the spike rack. By now she should have had enough time to make it to the back of the theater for her surprise appearance. I would suggest making the cabinet from 3/8" ply, painting as shown. The cabinet base should be made from good 1/2" ply covered in polished aluminum or a metallic formica. The spike rack can be made from aluminum framing and tubes, pop-riveted and screwed together. The back table can be constructed from 3/8" and 1/2" ply. Notice the cut-out area on the top. You'll want to cover the table top with spring weave or other elastic type material. The legs and frame can be made from I " x 3" ply, again covered with polished aluminum or metallic formica.

This is a new twist on a familiar stage trick. It could be just the thing you'll want to add to your act.





THE DECAPATARIUM

EFFECT

The magician explains about the miracles of modern science and how they have helped the medical world. "Take, for example, these laser-treated surgical blades." He shows two large chromed blades. "Because these blades have been energized by the power of a laser, surgically any part of the body can be severed, removed and kept alive until the body part is reunited with its counterpart." To demonstrate this, the magician's assistant steps into a tall upright cabinet. The unit is revolved to show its frontal design depicting the young lady's upper torso. The small front top doors are opened to reveal her face as the magician takes the previously shown blades and inserts them just below her neck, apparently severing her head from her body. As if this was not enough, the head box is removed from the cabinet. To further prove the legitimacy of the decapitation, the magician turns the illusion around and opens the back doors. Clearly a living, headless body is seen. The entire process is now reversed, ending up with the young lady stepping from the illusion intact and ready to accept her bows.

METHOD

Not only is this a terrific stage illusion, but also I'm sure you "carnies" out there can see the potential for this one in side shows and circuses. Actually this illusion has its roots with my old college roommate, David McDonough. David could walk away from you with his head ducked down and you'd swear he was headless! Maybe you've seen Dick Van Dyke do it with a hat on his shoulders - now that really looks strange. This technique was also used in Michael Jackson's 1983 music video, *Thriller*. So just like any magic effect, the modus operandi is

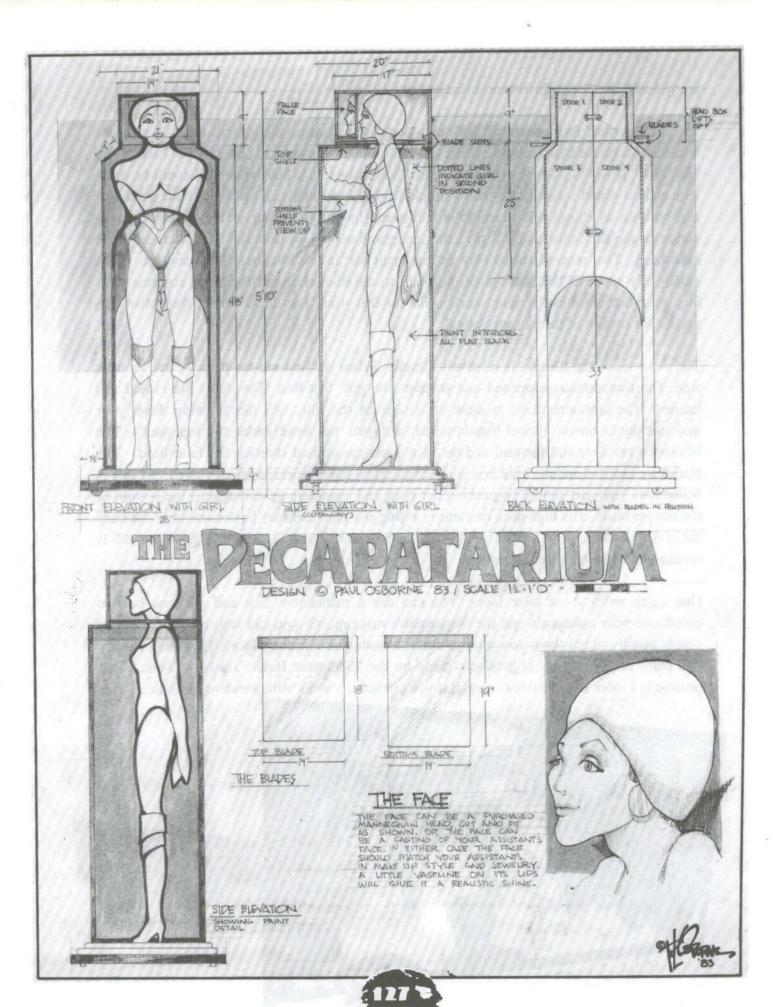
pretty basic. It's the embellishment that sells it.

The cabinet itself is made from 3/8" plywood cut and assembled as shown. Notice the headbox sits on the basic cabinet. There are piano-hinged doors on the back of the cabinet and head box. It would be best to build the head box as one unit, but the cabinet could be made with quarter-round corner braces and a simple pin-hinge assembly. The base is built from 1/2" ply, built up as shown with decorative half-round molding. In our side elevation cutaway notice the top shelf (made of 1/2" ply), the configuration of blade slots and the placement of the false head. Two other elements play an important part in this illusion: The paint job which continually suggests the position of the body to the audience, and the girl's costume. It is important that she have a raised neck collar so that when she ducks down, the collar lays against the bottom of the bottom blade.

The sequence to the illusion is relatively simple. When we first see the prop we see its back side. The four doors are opened and in steps the girl, feet first. The doors are closed and latched. The unit is revolved to show the design on the side. As this is being done, your assistant ducks down, almost hunchbacked, and puts her head under the top shelf. The illusion is revolved full forward and the face doors are opened showing the false head. The blades are inserted and the head box is removed. Now the cabinet is again revolved. As this is being done your girl should be pushing her back and shoulders up and against the bottom of the bottom blade. Her high neck costume is hiding any gaps that may be noticeable as the back doors are opened. This view from the audience's standpoint is astonishing. Then all is reversed to reconstruct your assistant

One quick word about false faces. You can use a mannequin face and do your best to coordinate your assistant's and the mannequin's makeup. Or you can stop by your local art supply house and tell them you want to make a casting of a friend's face. They undoubtedly will point you to a series of products made by the "Sculpture House" in New York. This process is a more involved, but worth it if you continually work with the same assistant.





THE HEAD ON SWORD

INTRODUCTION

This illusion has been featured in side shows and illusion shows for years. It is a fabulous novelty prop that can be used in conjunction with a vanishing head illusion or a mind reading act or simply displayed as a freak of nature. It's a great illusion, but it is best to build it only if you have a purpose in mind for it. Otherwise you might only find yourself utilizing it for special occasions like Halloween or special promotional activities. It's not one of the most versatile illusions in the world but it certainly is one of the most novel.

EFFECT

Simply enough, a head is displayed resting on a sword which is laid across the arms of a richly appointed throne type chair. One unique presentation I have heard of calls for the magician to have a black bag attached to a pole. He comments that there is an invisible head floating around and he wants to catch it. He waves the bag around then apparently catches something and dumps it onto the sword which is resting on the chair. Sure enough, when the bag is lifted there is a beautiful young lady's head. He asks a young man in the audience if he would like to have the head. The young man responds yes, so the magician covers the head and passes it out into the audience. When the young man opens the bag he finds a head all right, but it's a head of lettuce! So as you can see, this prop is only limited by your imagination.

METHOD

Our two pages graphically explain the construction of this illusion, but before building it, please look at our second page that shows how this illusion should be elevated if not presented on the proper stage. The prop has well defined angle problems especially from the top, and should only be presented in a fashion where the mirror is eye level.

Page one shows the front and the side cutaway elevation of the unit. The basic chair is made from 1/4" and 1/2" plywood decorated as richly as you deem necessary and it can be assembled with pin hinges for easy breakdown. Ours is decorated with padded velvet lined with cording and appointed with gold painted wood turnings and mouldings as indicated. Note also the side uprights that are not only decorative but act to stabilize the back of the chair. Our side view shows the girl in position behind the mirror. The space allowing her position behind the mirror should be dictated by the size of your assistant. We are only indicating a typical measurement. You may be able to cut the back up or down more. Look at our second sheet for more information on the back cut out.

As in our drawing, the mirror is backed with 1/2" plywood and the mirror should fit into grooves on the sides of the chair. These grooves should also have matching cross notches to form a decorative "x" once the mirror is in place. Our sketch on the second page shows this.

The sword can be obtained, made from aluminum and sheet metal, or Owen Brothers makes a very nice sword that would look good with this prop. The sword is kept in place by two bent aluminum pieces fastened to the arms of the chair again, the placement of the sword will need to be regulated based on the size of your assistant.

The back of the chair is shown on our second page. This detail shows the back cut-out and the

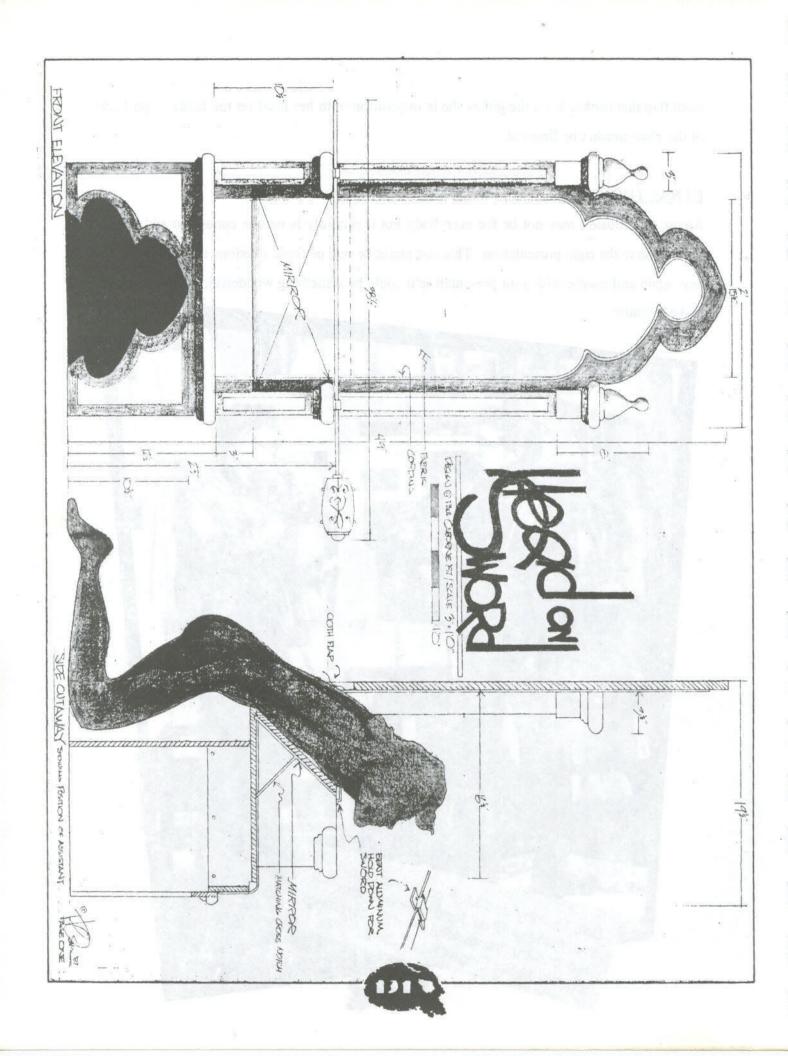


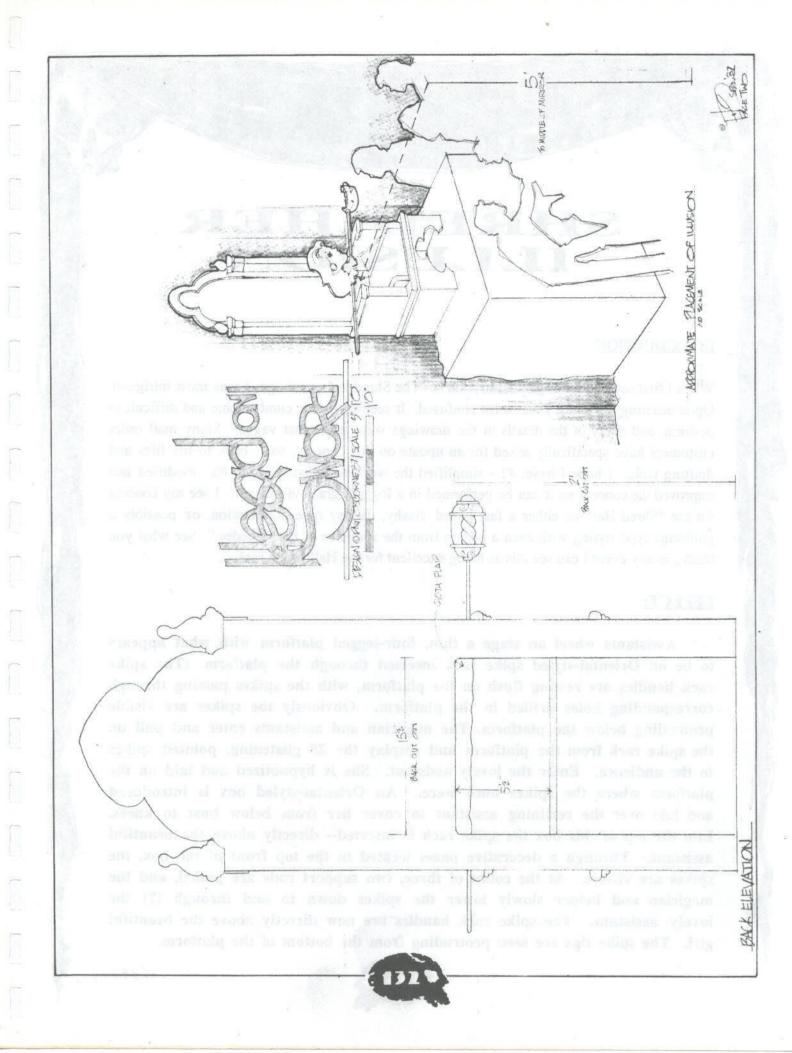
cloth flap that further hides the girl as she is in position with her head on the blade. The back of the chair needn't be finished.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Again, this illusion may not be for everybody but it certainly is unique enough to add a new dimension to the right presentation. This just might be one of these illusions that is so old it's new again and maybe with your presentation it could be something wonderful. If you make it,







SHRED HER ILLUSION

INTRODUCTION

When I first saw the catalogue description of "The Shredder" years ago, I was most intrigued. Upon ordering the plans, I was most confused. It seemed bulky, cumbersome and difficult to perform, and many of the details in the drawings were somewhat vague. Many mail order customers have specifically asked for an update on this concept, so ... back to my files and drafting table. I hope I have, #1 - simplified the working drawings, and, #2 - modified and improved the concept so it can be performed in a logical, graceful manner. I see my concept for the "Shred Her" as either a fast paced, flashy, dancey type presentation, or possibly a guillotine type styling with even a person from the audience as the "shredee." See what you think., in any event I can see this as being excellent for the Halloween season.

EFFECT:

Assistants wheel on stage a thin, four-legged platform with what appears to be an Oriental-styled spike rack inserted through the platform. (The spike rack handles are resting flush on the platform, with the spikes passing through corresponding holes drilled in the platform. Obviously the spikes are visible protruding below the platform. The magician and assistants enter and pull up the spike rack from the platform and display the 25 glistening, pointed spikes to the audience. Enter the lovely assistant. She is hypnotized and laid on the platform where the spikes once were. An Oriental-styled box is introduced and laid over the reclining assistant to cover her from below bust to knees. Into the top of this box the spike rack is inserted—directly above the beautiful assistant. Through a decorative panel located in the top front of the box, the spikes are visible. At the count of three, two support rods are pulled, and the magician and helper slowly lower the spikes down to and through (?) the lovely assistant. The spike rack handles are now directly above the beautiful girl. The spike tips are seen protruding from the bottom of the platform.

The front door is opened and the spikes are seen passing through the young lady. Now, quickly, all is reversed - spike rack pulled up and out of box, box removed, girl arises, all bow - a miracle!

METHOD

In reviewing our blueprint, the top left drawing is a top view of the spike rack. You will notice that this rack has a lift out section. This section is obviously the 15 spikes that could cause your assistant harm. The handles for the spike rack are cut from 1" stock and connected by two 1" dowels which form the handles. The spikes are 1/2" o.d. polished aluminum with machined tips. As you read down on our plan you will notice the spike rack fits tightly into the box. You will also notice that the upper front of the box is open with a decorative Oriental masonite cut-out mounted within. Behind this cut-out (see front elevation - box front removed) is a smaller gimmick box covered in black felt. It is upon and in this box that the lift out portion of the spike tray rests.

When the spike rack is lowered into the box, it is held in the up position by two support rods. When these are removed, the spike rack is lowered (?) into the box. Actually, the handles and the first and last row of five spikes each are lowered into the box. The lift out portion of the spike rack remains in the up position resting on and in the gimmick box. The spike rack handles and first row of spikes passing past the decorative cut-out enhances the effect.

Again reading down the plan, you will notice the box rests on a table. Within the base of this table is a sliding fake spike tack that has 25 spike tips attached. This frame is held tightly to the underside of the base top by 2 bungie cords attached to the bottom of the base top. Also, the fake spike rack has three springs attached to one side and two springs on the other side, with 25 holes drilled next to each fake spike. Remember, in presentation the spike frame is brought out resting on the table with the spikes going through the table. At this point the fake spike rack is slid over and the real spikes are going through the 25 holes in the fake rack (position #I). Upon pulling the spike rack out of the table, the fake rack is pulled back into position automatically by the springs (position #2).

When it comes time to penetrate the girl, the lower fake spikes are naturally in position above the

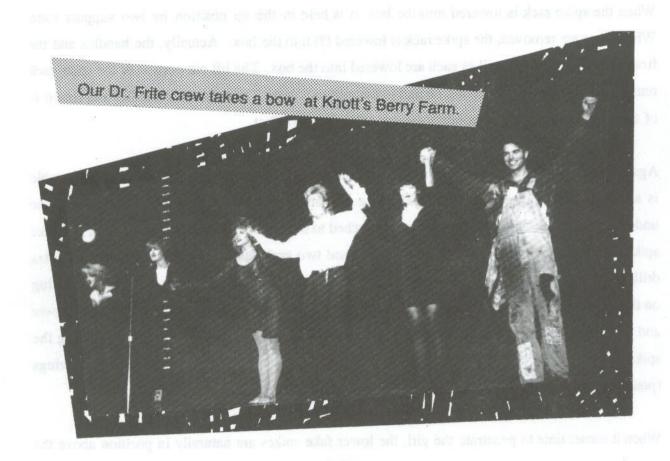


holes in the base bottom. The girl is on the table, the box is around the girl, and the spike rack rests on the poles. These two support rods are removd, and the magician and assistant lower the rack through the girl. As the first and last row of spikes (the only ones to be lowered) pass through the top holes in the base, they touch the fake rack, the bungee cord gives, and the 25 spike tips are pushed through the holes in the bottom base—a miracle! Briefly the front door to the box can be opened showing the spikes passing through (?) the girl. Actually what you see is, of course, the first row of 5 spikes passing in front of the girl. The effect is most baffling.

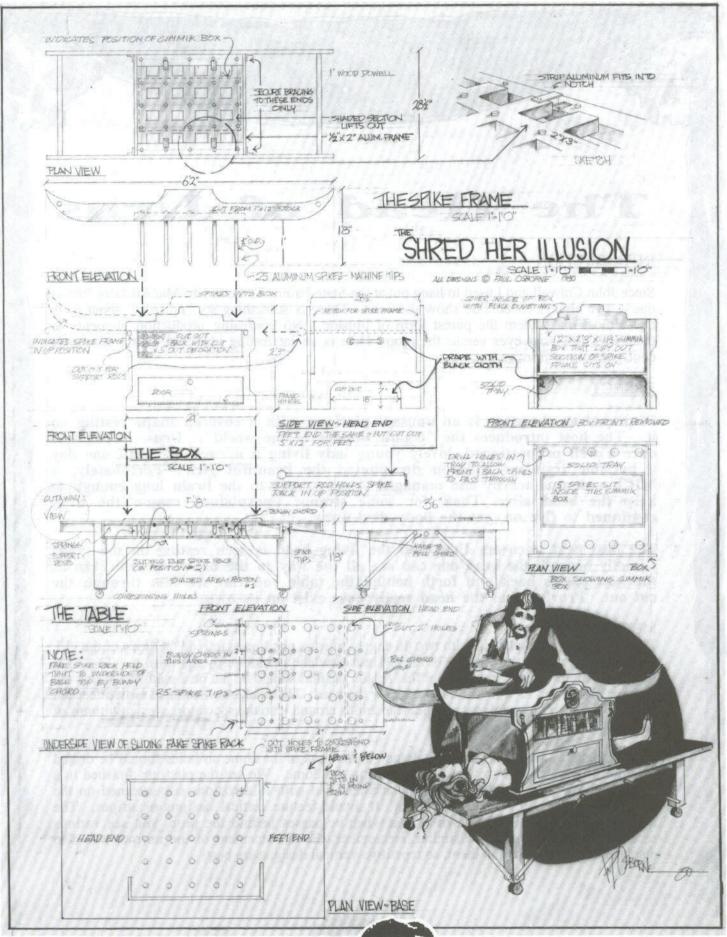
Final Notes

In building this illusion, I suggest you first begin with the spike rack and gear the box, table and fake spike rack to it. This way all dimensions will accommodate the rack exactly.

As always, use only the best woods and building techniques. I think this illusion is much more workable than the old Shredder version, and I hope you will include it in your act.







The Head of Urus

INTRODUCTION

Since John Colwell and I used to hang out at the State Fair of Texas at Mr. MacAlistairs "ten in one", I've always loved side show illusions. There is something so "no frills" about them that almost make them the purest form of illusion. No confusing production elements or theatrics. Just your eyes versus the prop. Here is an interesting idea that uses a telescopic configuration of mirrors.

EFFECT

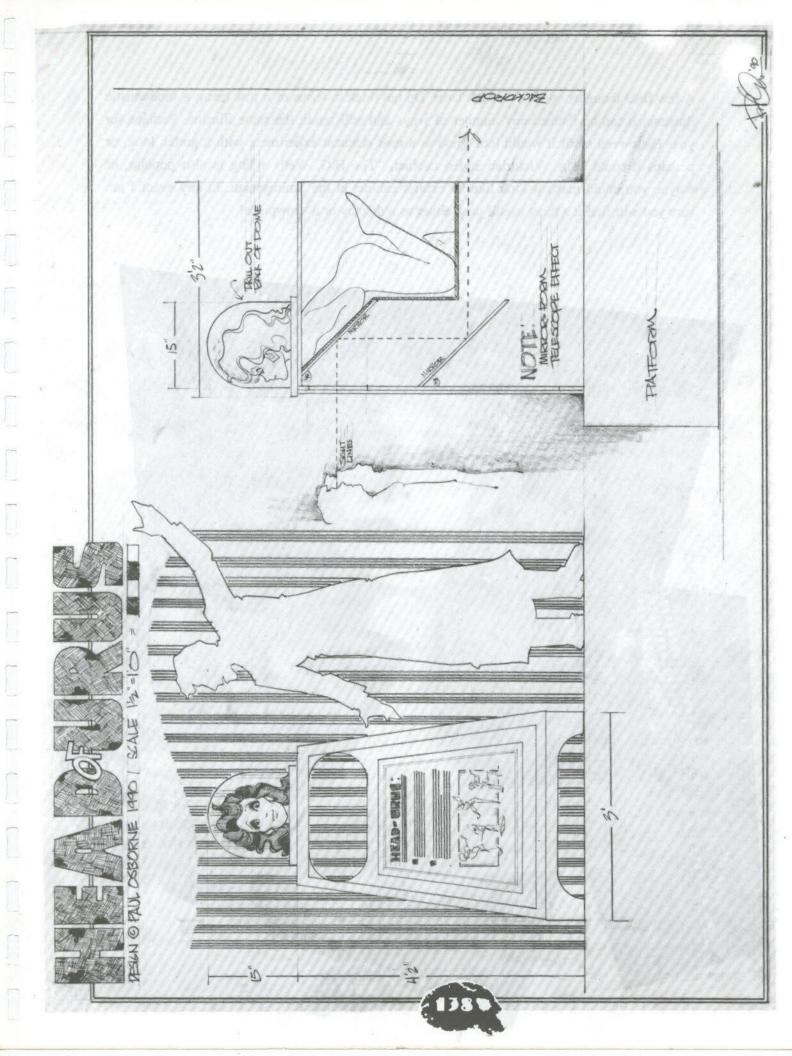
Displayed on the stage is an unusual platform with a covered shape resting on it. The host introduces the "eighth wonder of the world", Urus. Urus was once a well proportioned, lovely young lady living a normal life until one day a horrible train/car collision decapitated the beautiful girl. Fortunately, a MICU unit was nearby and managed to get oxygen to the brain long enough to keep the head alive. Then, for some strange unexplained reason the head continued to five on, yet the body died away.

The host next uncovers Urus and the living head is seen resting on the table. Directly beneath the head one can see all the way to the backdrop and even as the host passes back and forth behind the table you can see him through the cut out. Proving that the head really does exist on its own.

METHOD

The illusion is accomplished with two 45 degree mirrors positioned to hide the body of the girl. Our side view shows the position of the girl and how she is hidden by the mirrors. The sight lines are extremely important and for that reason the unit should be put on a platform so that the average person can see into the cut out below the head. The platform illustrated is two feet tall and we would recommend that you put stanchions around it so the spectators are a minimum of four feet away.

Around the girl's head is a vacuform dome. In the back of the dome air holes should be drilled to allow air passage and prevent fogging within the dome. We see the platform finished in a copper color, with an explanation of the accident and with illlustrations silk-screened on the front. The background is also important. It should feature vertical designs or stripes. The host should wear a surgical gown so that when he passes behind the prop, you see various sections of his gown that are similar. Remember, the displacement of the mirrors will also displace whatever is behind them, so repetitive vertical designs are best.



A few final thoughts on the Head of Urus. Do not think in terms of it just being a modernistic illusion. It can be themed any number of ways and still retain the same illusion. Perhaps for your Halloween motif it would look good as a mad scientist experiment with a gothic look, or perhaps it could be a Victorian styled cabinet. The H.G. Wells syling is also popular, or maybe you could make it look like an exhibit cabinet at the Smithsonian. In any event I am sure you will find it a most useful prop either as a display or a showpiece!



CHEST OF NEFERTARI

INTRODUCTION

One of my favorite effects has always been the Sword Box. In many ways, I feel it's even more effective than the Sword Box, primarily because part of the girl stays with us and part of her vanishes.

I suppose this illusion was derived from the Sword Cabinet, although I really don't know who was <u>first</u> to introduce it. Also, there have been many versions with black art bags, panels and mirrored gimmicks. Its themeing can be space age, Oriental or voodoo, making it a most versatile illusion.

EFFECT

Once introduced, your lovely assistant takes her position beneath a framework-supported box. Her face is visible through the opened front door and a sliding back panel is inserted to keep her in place. Next, you introduce fifteen shining knives and quickly close the front doors. Begin inserting the daggers into the box with the fifteenth sword plunged down the middle of the small cabinet.

As the front doors are opened, the mystery continues...the head is gone. All that remains are the glistening sword tips. The front doors are quickly shut and all swords removed...voila (!) ... the head returns and your gal emerges unharmed.

METHOD

This illusionette has the distinct advantage of being a Sunday afternoon special. It's easy to build and lends itself to a lot of stage production.

It's best to begin building this prop by ordering the two 1/4" x 10" x 11 1/2" mirrors from your local glass company. Many magicians prefer to use mirror plexi, in that it won't break. But in any event, get this done while you are planning the other building aspects.

The top of the box is made from 1/4" masonite and has slots for mirror pegs, a slot for the top knife and four small holes, one in each corner, which enable it to be bolted to the sides. The sides are cut from 1/4" ply. On the insides, lay out the position of the mirrors and on either side, face the ply with two other sheets of 1/2" ply. This forms the 1/2" recess the mirror panels fit in. Also, on the back inside of these sides, apply the wood-channels that the back panel slides into. This back panel is made from 1/4" masonite with a slotted and sanded 1" x 1" handle. Next, you can route out the slot for the fourteen swords. On the top outside of these sides, apply a 1" x 1" with two dowel screws. The top will wing-nut to these. Next, cut out the front panel, doors and all, from a piece of good 3/8" ply. This panel pin-hinges to the box. To duplicate the design, copy the grid supplied with the plan's front elevation.

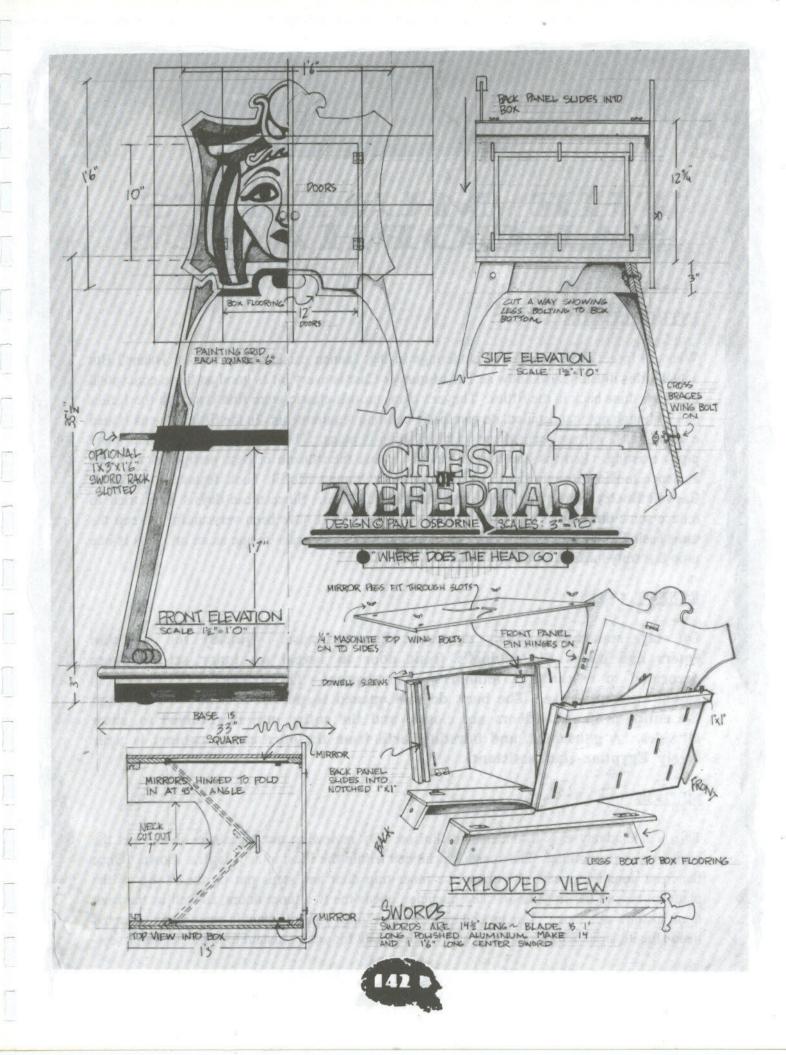
The box bottom is made from 1/2" ply boxed in at the bottom with 1" thick white pine. The legs will bolt to this. In the 1/2" bottom, cut out the space to accommodate your assistant's neck, as indicated on the top view of our plan.

Cut the eight leg pieces from 1" x 6" pine and glue and nail them at right angles to form the four upright legs. These legs carriage-bolt to the box flooring at each corner.

From 1" x 4" stock, cut the three cross braces that wing-bolt to the front and two sides. An optional idea is to apply two 1" x 3" x 1'6" sword holders, slotted to hold fifteen swords, to the two side cross braces.

The base is 33" square with half-round trim and 1/4" skirting to hide the four casters.





THE MUMMY'S SARCOPHAGUS

INTRODUCTION

Who can forget those wonderful renderings in the Tannen catalogue by Nelson Hahne? But actually this illusion, also know as The Mummy's Case is every bit as good as those conceptual drawings done back in the fifties. Thayer's plans on this classic were first issued in the forties and, although not that detailed, do give basic building requirements. In the fifties Owens issued a set of plans. All you seem to see on this illusion is plans. There don't seem to be that many props existing. Perhaps one reason for this is that the illusion is best performed with the audience looking straight on. The Burling Hull/Ormond McGill book features a photo of Caswell Boxley performing in an obviously dated photo. Since those days I have tried to reduce some dimensions and'update the basic styling, but I have been verycareful to keep the same basic Egyptian motif, I believe this familiar design bespeaks magic as an art. This is one prop that truly looks mystical.

EFFECT

On stage stands a uniquely decorated Egyptian case. Quickly the magician enters and opens the cabinet's front door to reveal an inner set of doors decorated to resemble a mummy's sarcophagus. These doors are opened to reveal an empty case. The back door is opened to permit a clear view through the entire prop. All doors are closed, and the entire unit is revolved to show all sides. A gunshot ... and bursting forth from the once empty cabinet is your lovely Egyptian-clad assistant!

METHOD

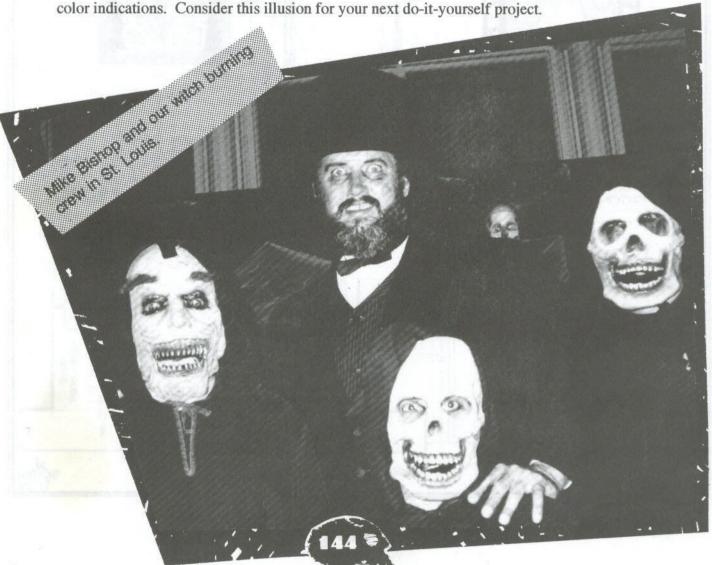
This is a relatively easy-to-understand illusion. By reviewing our plans you should get the basic idea of its working. The assistant is hidden witnin the illusion as it is first shown. Once the front door is opened, she opens the inner trap door and steps out on the 7" lip of the platform behind the front door. The magician opens the two inner doors, as well as the back door, to show all empty. This procedure is reversed until your assistant is, once again, secreted inside the illusion. All is revolved, and you are ready for your assistant to make her surprise

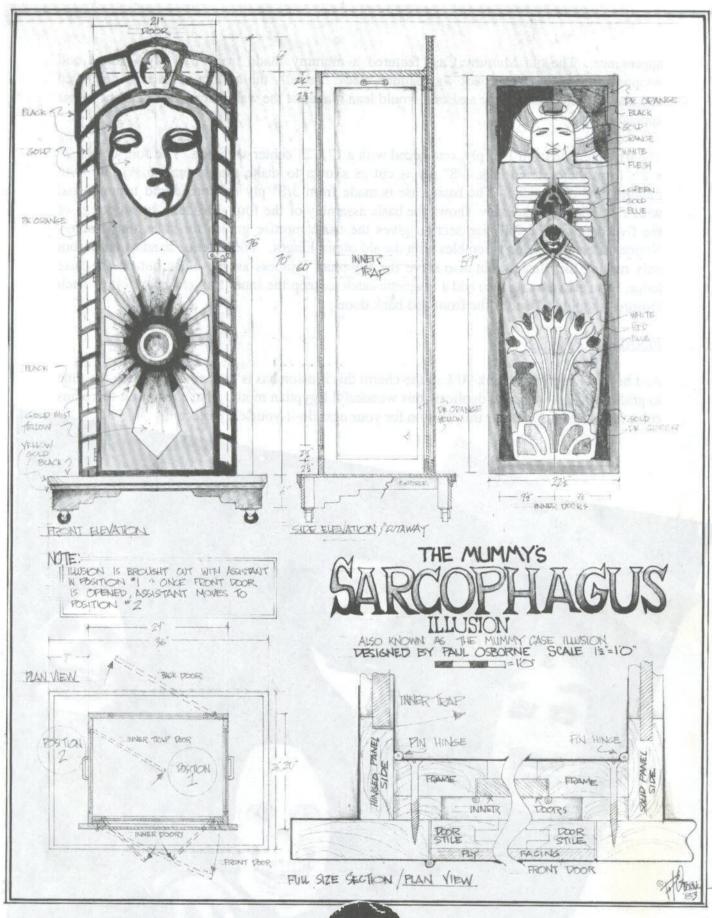
appearance. The old Mummy Case featured a mummy made from 1/2" ply, padded and wrapped with gauze. The back was painted black. Initially the mummy was first displayed and placed in the case. Your assistant would lean it against the wall, back side out, prior to her appearance.

The base is made from 1/2" ply, reinforced with a 1" x 2" center stiffener. The four corner 2" x 2"s form the castered legs. 3/8" ply is cut as shown to make the decorative skirting with molding and trim added. The basic case is made from 3/8" ply reinforced and trimmed out with 1" x 3"s. The plan view shows the basic assembly of the four sides and the workings of the five doors. The full size section gives the basic mortise guides for sides and frames. Notice the entire illusion assembles with the aid of pin hinges. The exterior handles aid in not only turning the illusion, but also serve the Egyptian Princess as she hides out on the base ledge. You also may want to add a magnetic catch to keep the inner trap closed. Bolt or latch closures should suffice for the front and back doors.

FINAL THOUGHTS

As I have said before, I think 90% of the charm this illusion has is the paint job. Take the time to grid off my art work and duplicate this wonderful Egyptian motif. I have noted on the plans color indications. Consider this illusion for your next do-it-vourself project.





THE BLADE BOX

I love this prop! I first saw it as a young child with my friend John Colwell, at Mr. Mac Alister's Side Show at the State Fair of Texas. After he put the girl in the box, he put all the blades in and then reached in and pulled out her costume!! Well shoot, I was a healthy young twelve-year-old, so I paid my .25 cents to go up and look in the cabinet to see if she had really vanished . (Had her clothes off.) The first big lesson in my life came when I simultaneously realized three things as I stood in line looking down into the box.

A.She had not vanished

B.She her clothes on

C. A toothless Wino magician had just taken my last quarter...but I loved the prop!

In later years Karrel Fox immortalized this illusion in car shows all over the United States, and I saw the best of magicians from Jack Gwynne to Mark Wilson presenting their versions of this outstanding illusion. I am excited to add it to our line-up of illusion System plans and I hope you will consider crafting and performing it. You can't get much more practical from a building, performing and trouping standpoint. It makes a great Halloween presentation so I just had to include it in this publication.

EFFECT:

In its traditional setting, this was a sideshow illusion. The host would introduce the prop by opening the front and the top and showing it completely empty and ungimmicked. (which it is!) The girl is introduced, and she enters and is hypnotized as the top and sides are folded back into position. He explains that he will make her disappear, and he reaches down inside and removes her costume to prove that that is all that is left of his beautiful assistant. To futher prove his point he will insert razor-sharp blades throughout. Blades are inserted from every angle, making it virtually impossible for anybody to still be contained within the cabinet. She has truly vanished, end of trick!

But the sideshow magician would go on and tell his audience that she really is contained within the cabinet, as it is an old magician's trick -and he would be more than happy to show how the effect is done for only "...one fourth of a dollar... that's right just one quarter and you can come up on stage and see how this is performed. Please don't let the nudity bother you. " (With that line we all instantly became interested in illusions and parted with our .25 cents.)

The prop does not have to be performed this way. For many years Karrell Fox and many others have performed it as a straight illusion with the girl going in the box, the insertion of the many blades and her reappearance. I have taken the liberty of redesigning the illusion for today's audience and I think the prop holds up even more so today than in years past. I hope you'll consider building and performing this one. It has all the pluses.

METHOD:

Our drawing showing the position of the girl tells the story. Basically, once the doors are closed she positions herself to miss the blades. Check out our top plan view that shows the top and its cut outs and match this up with the girl position drawing. By doing this you can see how the side show version permits view Into the box. Even if you don't plan on revealing the illusion to your audienc, it's a good idea to cut the cut outs anyway, so you can see in as you insert all the blades.

Our side view shows the dimensions, as well as how the top and front door open to allow access into the illusion. The back and two sides pin-hinge to the base. The top and front are hinged to open as indicated. The base, four legs and supports all bolt together. The interior of the illusion can simply be painted black, or it can be covered with a vertical striped pattern fabric that will add some confusion to the audience's eye of exactly where the blades enter and exit.

In reviewing the blades, notice that there are no blades in position one and three, but there are for all the other positions. The thirteen other top blades are drawn to scale in our plan. You can use polished aluminum or plywood for your blades, depending on taste. Notice, too, that some blades have a hole drilled through them to accommodate the aluminum rod that is inserted through the cabinet once all the blades are in. Notice our *front* elevation that indicates the slot for the front four blades and compare that with the dotted lines in the position of girl drawing. You will see that these front blades don't all go in straight. Blades 17 and 18 are inserted at



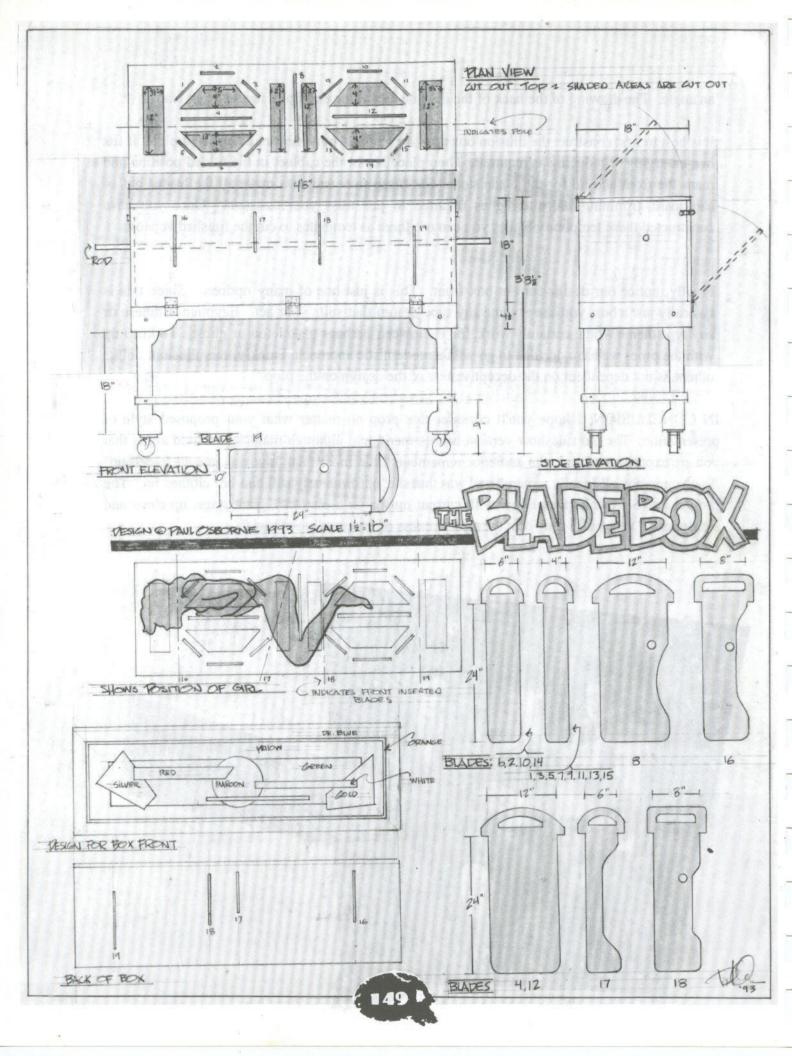
an angle. The drawing of the back of the illusion shows the exit holes for the front blades.

It is best to first construct the illusion box after measuring your assistant to make sure that it fits her, enlarging or reducing as required. Then place her in the cabinet in the folded position and mark the front and lid for the blade slots. Cut these slots and next make all the blades out of cardboard, trimming and altering as required to just miss your assistant. Once you have constructed these temporary blades you can use them as templates to cut the finished versions.

Finally, notice our design for the box front. This is just one of many options. Since this is basically just a box, you can execute any type design that suits your act. Egyptian, Chinese or any type theme would certainly work. for Halloween perhaps a skeleton or ghost. To keep up with the times we have decided to go with a modernistic approach. Frankly, this illusion, unlike others, is not dependent on the deceptiveness of the design on the prop.

IN CONCLUSION: I hope you'll consider this prop no matter what your proposed style of presentation. The old sideshow version has its merit, and although magicians would argue that you are exposing the trick, the audience remembers little more than "she was just all folded up" As a young boy all I really remembered was that she, unfortunately still had her clothes on. The prop can also work in pantomime with current music, on a platform, giant stage, up close and surrounded. You really can't beat the effectiveness of this startling miracle!





THE HEADLESS LADY

INTRODUCTION

I first saw this illusion in a carnival "Ten in On" (means ten freaks under one tent) show when I was a small child. And boy, did I buy the whole story! The illusion is very convincing and I am happy to say has been somewhat resurrected because of the popularity of haunted houses during Halloween. I sincerely hope you consider constructing one. They are a great way to use up some of your creativity and the effect, I know, will be well worth it!

EFFECT

The M.C. explains about a horrible accident that caused a beautiful young lady to lose her head... "The car in which she was driving was involved in an accident with an ice truck. She was decapitated in the wreck, but ice was spilled all over the roadway and her body, thrown from the car, was preserved long enough for an ambulance to transport her remains to a nearby hospital. Because the body was chilled below its normal body temperature, the doctors had time to create a unique life-saving device made up of special pumps and the latest in medical technology." He continues with the miraculous tale as he pulls back the curtains of the cabinet that he was standing in front of to reveal the headless body. "What you see before you is state-of-the-art medicine designed specifically to preserve life. Ladies and gentlemen, may I present the headless lady!" The headless body is exhibited and asked to move its hands and feet, and spectators are encouraged to touch her hands. Once the demonstration is concluded, the M.C. goes on to another attraction or area.

METHOD

This illusion works on the principle of two 45-degree mirrors that hide the young lady's head. By looking at our top drawing of the unit, note that the dotted lines indicate the placement of the mirrors. Also note that the entire tube assembly is affixed to the chair for stability, but it should be able to pull out of the chair to allow your assistant's access. The two back tubes are 3" longer and slip down into the back posts of the chair. The tubes are made from 1" O.D. aluminum tubing and assembled as shown. To illuminate the prop a lightbulb rests on top as pictured. The chair is made from 3" x 3" and 1/2" plywood.

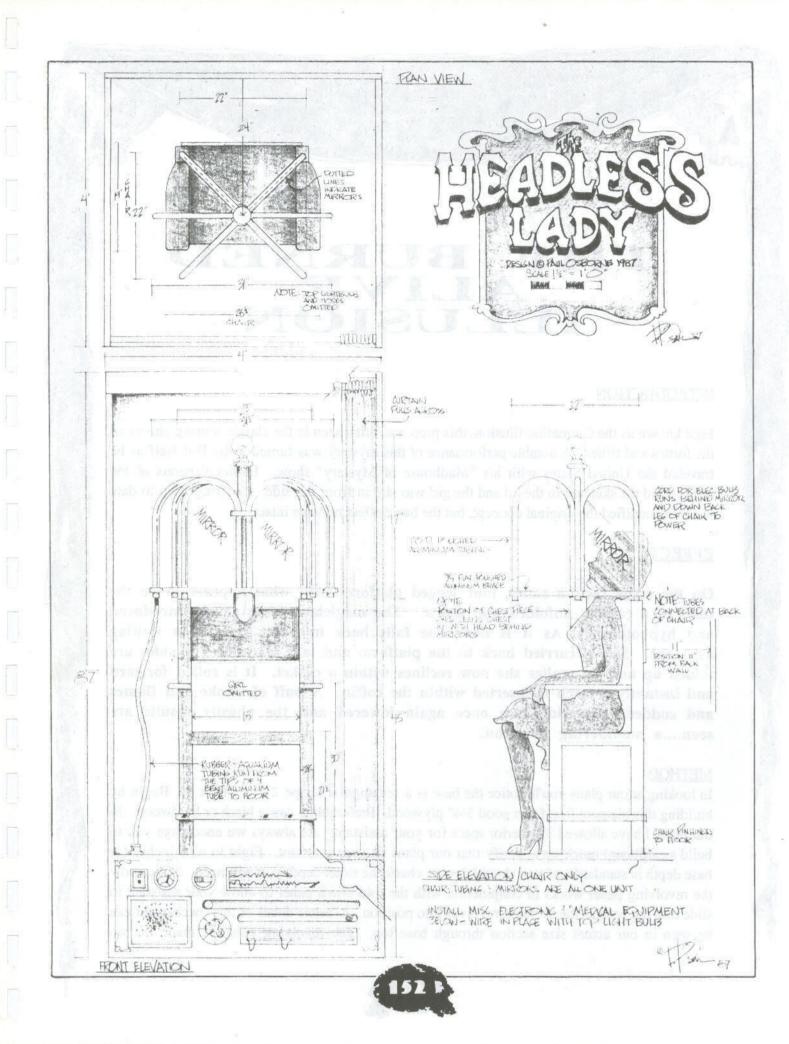
The chair and mirror tube unit rests within the 4'x4'x8'7" cabinet. This cabinet is made from I"x 2" framing and 1/2" plywood. The interior should be covered with a small print wallpaper or fabric. The walls can be made to break in half and pin-hinge together if storage space is a problem. The front of the cabinet has a dowel mounted near the top, behind the front batten, to hold the curtain. The curtain pulls across the entire front.

The medical instruments at the bottom will, no doubt, be dictated by your own creative means. We have gone to major hospitals and found suppliers of various hospital machines and equipment. Then we have contacted these suppliers and asked to buy the defective dials, controls, readout equipment, etc. In many cases suppliers and hospitals have given us their old, worn out items. Once you have obtained these, it's just a simple matter to logically mount them in the allocated space. Obviously, the more realistic your headless lady can look the better, and with today's computers and liquid crystals and communications technology you reafly could space-age this one up.

This is one of those illusions that we just try to give you the basics on because there is such opportunity to utilize your own creativity in construction, scriptwriting and performance. As always, use these plans as a starting point and figure out how you can make the prop even







THE BURNED ALIVE ILLUSION

INTRODUCTION

First known as the Cremation illusion, this prop was often seen in the classic touring shows of the forties and fifties. A notable performance of this mystery was turned in by Bill Neff as he traveled the United States with his "Madhouse of Mystery" show. Earlier versions of the illusion hid the skeleton in the lid and the girl was slid in from the side. To bring it up to date we have modified the original concept, but the basic effect remains intact.

EFFECT

On the stage rests a small, four legged platform with what appears to be the sides of a cabinet unfolded and down. The magician's assistant is introduced and hypnotized(?). As it is done she falls back into the arms of a waiting assistant. She is carried back to the platform and laid to rest. The sides are folded up and we realize she now reclines within a casket. It is rolled forward and instantly a torch is inserted within the coffin. A puff of smoke and flames and suddenly the sides are once again lowered and the ghastly results are seen....a smoldering skeleton.

METHOD

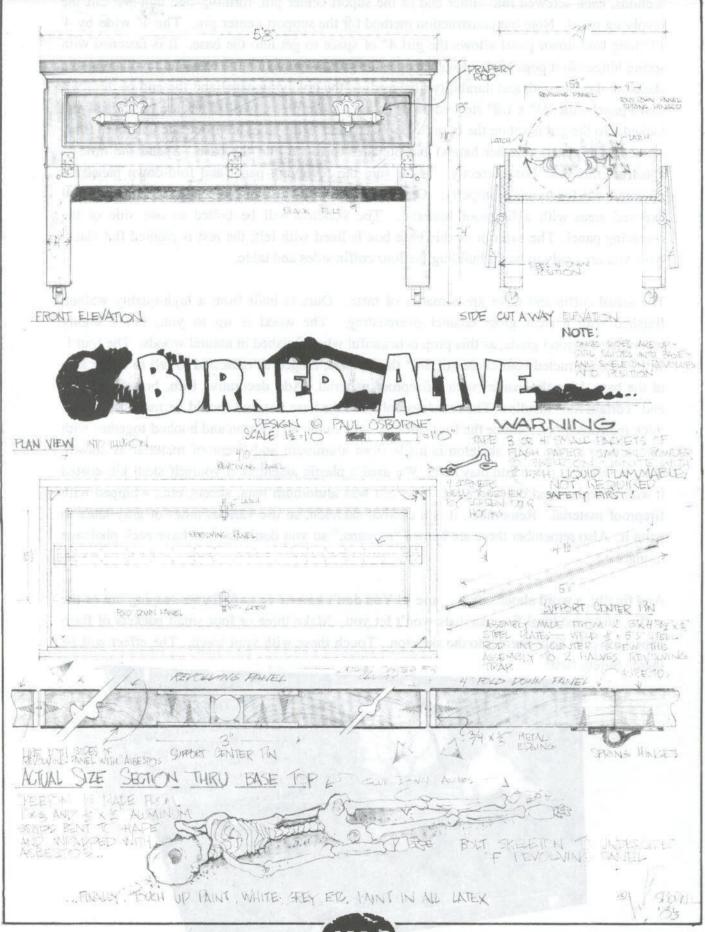
In looking at our plans you'll notice the base is a rectangular shape 27" x 5'6" x 9". Begin by building this element first from good 3/4" plywood. Preferably a dense birch or hardwood. In our plans I have allowed 8" interior space for your assistant. As always we encourage you to build a cardboard mock-up to verify that our plans fit your assistant. Eight to nine inches for base depth is standard and you should double check the exact depth you will need. Notice how the revolving panel works in conjunction with the fold down panel to allow your assistant to slide into the base as the skeleton revolves into position. A better detail of this mechanism can be seen in our actual size section through base top. The revolving panel is made in two

sections, each screwed into either end of the suport center pin, forming one unit we call the revolving panel. Note our construction method for the support center pin. The 4" wide by 4' 11" long fold-down panel allows the girl 4" of space to get into the base. It is fastened with spring hinges so it pops back into place once the girl has gone into the base and revolved up the skeleton. For strength and durability I have edged the revolving panel and the end of the fold-down panel with 3/4" x 1/8" steel edging. To keep all in place, two latches are positioned and locked. So the girl is set on the base (hypnotized) and as the sides are lifted she unlatches (they should be mounted near her hands) and prepares to rotate into the base. Spend the time to construct this base box correctly. Make sure the revolving panel and fold-down panel are mounted and functioning properly. Once done, proceed to line the revolving panel and all exposed areas with a fireproof material. The skeleton will be bolted to one side of the revolving panel. The exterior of this base box is lined with felt; the rest is painted flat black. Now you are ready to begin building the four coffin sides and table.

The actual coffin and table are a matter of taste. Ours is built from a high-quality walnut, finished with a clear gloss enamel overcoating. The wood is up to you, but I highly recommend a good grade, as this prop is beautiful when finished in natural woods. The four f sides are constructed your choice of 3/8" thick wood, hinged as indicated to fall to either side of the base. Line the insides with a fireproof material. Add decorative trim, brass hardware and "curtain rod" handles. The four legs bolt onto the base box and should be made from 3/4" thick reinforced ply. Notice the four sides are kept in the up position and hooked together with screen door hooks. The skeleton is made from aluminum and fireproof material as shown. Your art abilities come into play here. We used a plastic assemble-it-yourself skull kit, coated it with fiberglass and fireproofed it. The rest was aluminum bars, sheets, etc., wrapped with fireproof material. Remember, it is a charred skeleton, so use various tones of gray latex to paint it. Also remember these are burned "remains," so you don't have to have each phalange in place.

And finally, a word about safety ... use it! You don't have to have 6' flames leaping out of the coffin, and most local fire marshals won't let you. Make three or four small packets of flash paper/powder. Tape them into the skeleton. Touch these with your torch. The effect will be there. Safety first!





THE STOCKS OF PERIL

INTRODUCTION

This illusion could really provide something unique for your act. It has its roots in the stage effect, The Sword Through Neck. I would suggest that if you plan to build this prop, you first purchase a smaller version as an example for some of the details space does not permit us in this article.

EFFECT

Your assistant takes her place in a simple but sinister set of stocks occupying the center stage. From her shoulders to her hips she is secured within the three stocks of the prop as the magician shows six "solid steel" swords. Once she is "hypnotized," slowly the magician begins inserting the swords so that it appears as if they actually penetrate her body front to back and side to side. Once the blades have been inserted into the unit, it is obvious that not only can she not escape the illusion, but all six swords have penetrated her body at six criss-crossing points. The illusion can be revolved to show all sides and, of course, once the swords are removed, the young lady is unharmed and receives a full round of applause.

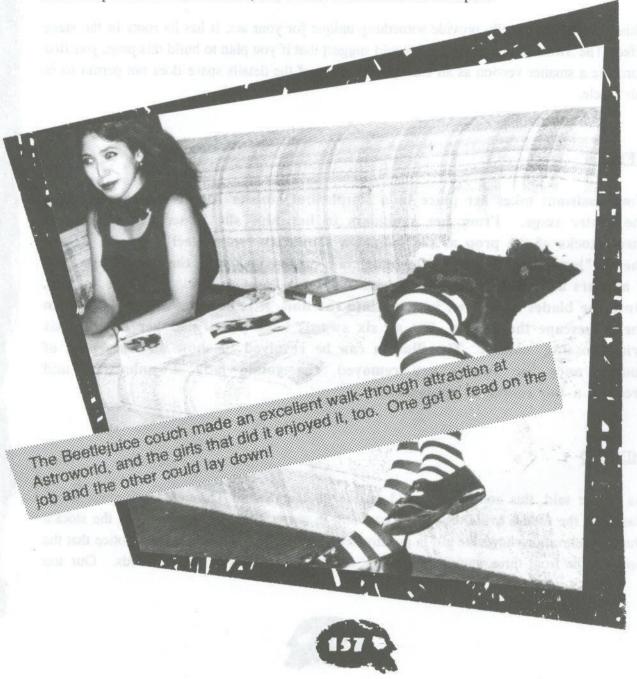
METHOD

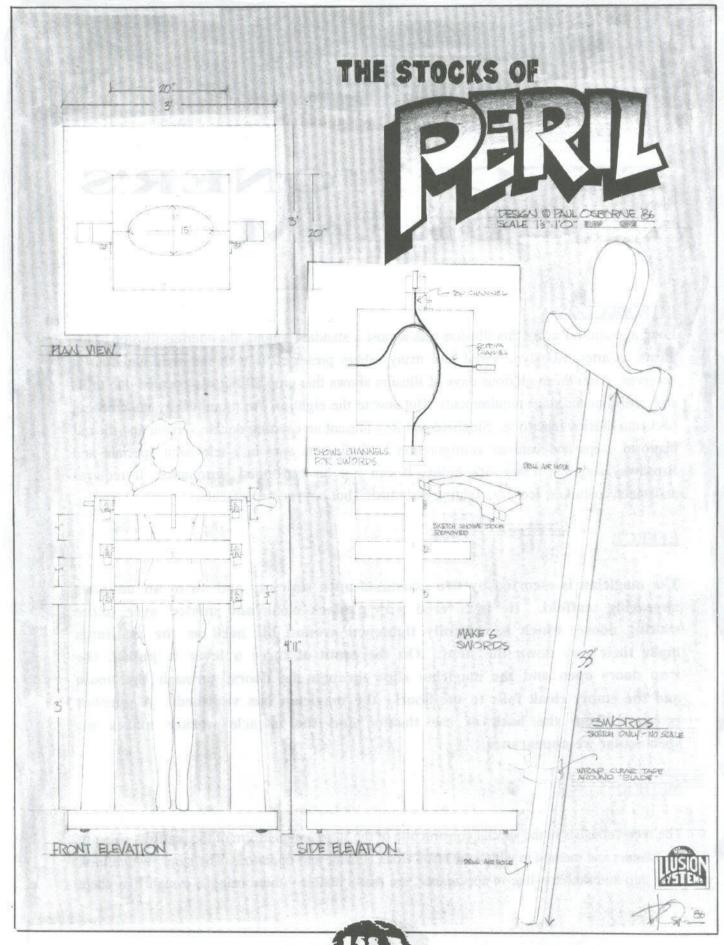
As I have said, this concept is based on the popular Sword Through Neck stage prop. Basically, the swords avoid the girl by traveling in secret channels grooved into the stocks. Our front elevation shows the girl in position with the top two swords inserted. Notice that the slots for the front three swords are below the slots for the side three swords. Our top

illustration, just above the side elevation, shows the basic tracking of the swords. The side elevation shows the positioning of the three stocks and how they detach for entry.

The swords are the key to this prop and they can be made as per the Sword Through Neck smaller version. Basically the sword blade is constructed from tape measure tapes cut, inverted and taped together as per our sketch. It is important to drill air escape holes and if properly made the swords will simply bend and follow the channels, yet look rigid when not inserted into the illusion.

One final thought on this prop, it is sensational to use a member of the audience! I sincerely hope you'll consider constructing this illusion, it has the "big three" ... it's easy to build, can be done up close and surrounded, and breaks down small for transport.





EXECUTIONER'S DREAM

INTRODUCTION

Long ago and far away this illusion was almost a standard among the touring illusion show greats. Carter, Rooklyn, Virgil and many others presented it with the style and flair it deserves. After those glorious days of illusion shows this prop all but disappeared due to its size, assistant and stage requirements. But now in the eighties, I'm proud to say it's creeping back into illusion repertoire. Siegfried and Roy present an exciting double version and the tall platform, steps and banister configuration is finding its way into television specials and Broadway stages. It'sbig, it's bulky, it can not be performed surrounded; it requires assistants, costumes, scenery, lighting and music...but boy, is it spectacular!

EFFECT

The magician is escorted by two assistants up a stairway and on to an ominous appearing scaffold. He is covered with a black cloak and guided over to the waiting noose, which is carefully tightened around his neck as the assistants make their way down the steps. On the count of three a lever is pulled, the trap doors open and the magician slips through the doors, through the noose and the empty cloak falls to the floor - the magician has vanished! A gunshot is heard from the back of the theater and the miracle worker makes his spectacular re-appearance!

METHOD

The secret consists in the special construction of the steps and platform of the scaffold. Also in the manner and method in which the black cloak is made and operated. The steps, which look very thin and skeleton-like in appearance, are really double - there being a trough like chute

between the steps themselves and the underside, deep enough for the performer to slide down feet first and backward.

This cavity in the steps enters into the floor landing, which is also hollow, and as one of the side stage wings is in close accord with the extreme far corner of the stair landing, the "off stage" feature is an easy matter once the trip down the inside of the stairway has been accomplished. Please note that the underside of the stair box has been cleverly shaded in black and gray to appear as the underside of steps should really appear when looked at from the angle as viewed by the audience.

The scaffold platform is 4' wide by 6' long, mounted on four legs about 7' high. These legs are bolted to corners of the platform with heavy carriage bolts and wing nuts for packing purposes. Steel rods between the legs at the bottom act as braces. Double traps are placed in the center front section of the platform. These traps are hinged as shown, to drop down when the spring bolts are pulled. These bolts are pulled by small steel cables which run over a series of small pulleys to a lever in back of the front leg, or it can be placed where the performer wishes.

The traps are rabbited at the joints so that bolts placed on one trap locks both traps. These traps must be made very strong to support the performer without a danger of falling. A center beam or joist divides the platform into two sections. The back section has a top made from spring weave or other black, stretchy material about 18" x 5' long, split in the center, but slightly overlapping. This back section has a solid bottom made of thin three ply wood, which is curved or bent from the center beam which has a depth of 7" to 8" to the back beam which is about 10" wide. At the end of the platform opposite the stairway the bottom is also painted black to give a thin appearance. This makes a container large enough to conceal a performer. The inside of this box should be covered with oil cloth or vinyl. The end of this box next to the stairway is open to allow the performer to enter the slide or chute under the stairs.

Reinforcing strips of iron should be used to strengthen where needed. The gallows consists of an upright post bolted to the back of the platform and having a horizontal cross arm with a brace as shown. A large screw eye at the end of the cross arm is provided to hold the rope.

The stairway consists of solid stairs, having the thickness through which the performer slides. This space between the steps is backed with three-ply wood and covered on the inside with oil cloth or vinyl. The space between the steps and backing should be 8" long. This space is open at both ends of the stair. One end connects with the container in the platform and the other end



conects with the opening in the lower or stair platform, forming a smooth slide all the way down. The stairway can be fastened in position with large hooks or loose pin hinges.

The stair platform consists of a platform and step, having an opening at the bottom of the stairs and also an opening next to the side being used for the performer's exit. The stair rails and newel posts are made of thin, three-ply wood, fastened to the steps with bolts and loose pin hinges. A reference in the drawing shows how the edge of the stairway is faked to give it the appearance of being shallow. The dotted line is the real location of the actual size of the steps, although the side effect reduces this height by at least one half, as the real stairs are completely hidden in back of the stair rails. Both the false stairs, balusters and railings are painted in brilliant colors, while the real stairs are painted dark to render their real location less conspicuous.

The cloak or robe is made of black cloth with a head piece connected. It is split up the back from the bottom to the shoulders and is held closed with snap fasteners. Inside, the robe has a series of metal rings or hoops sewn in place as shown: One at about the center of the head, one at the chin, one at the neck, and a larger one at the shoulders. A double wire form is sewn on to the robe at the waist. This receives the rope tied at the waist. There is a small, cup-shaped metal plate having a small wire ring projecting through the cloth at the top for purposes described in operation. These rings must be of a size to slip over the head as the robe is dropped over the performer. A series of stiffening cloth strips are placed about the shoulders and waist and sewn to the robe to hold the general shape better. Weights are placed in the hem at the bottom of the robe. A pair of mannequin hands are also hung at the proper position in the side of the cloak, which can be tucked out through the side slits by the performers, or after the cloak is placed over the magician's body. A fine, invisible line must be arranged with a hook to fasten an eyelet in the top of the head plate to hold the cloak form in a standing position as soon as the cloak is placed over the performer. This line leads off from the guide eyelet above, with plenty of slack to allow for the cloak to drop with the large robe when the trap is sprung.

The large robe should also be arranged so that the final effect of causing the empty cloak to fall in a heap on the floor can be accomplished by an assistant making a release at the rear.

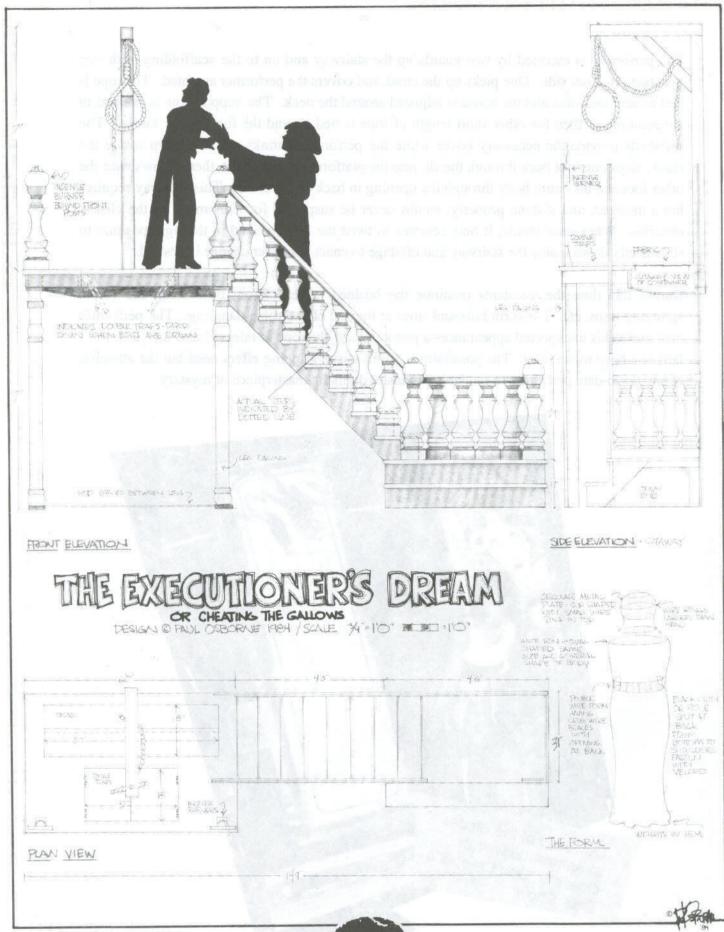
This apparatus sits center stage. The cloak, which has been telescoped into a compact bundle, rests in readiness on the platform, so, at the desired time it can be picked up by an assistant and placed over the performer's head and then unfolded down over his entire body.

A sketch or playlet ensues, dramatized and costumed to suit the arrangement desired.

The performer is escorted by two guards up the stairway and on to the scaffolding with one assistant on either side. One picks up the cloak and covers the performer as stated. The rope is tied around the waist and the noose is adjusted around the neck. The support line is hooked in the head piece; then the other short length of rope is tied around the form at the knees. The assistants provide the necessary cover while the performer shrinks quickly down inside the cloak, steps one foot back through the slit into the platform compartment, then follows with the other foot and his entire body through the opening in back of the cloak. This getaway requires but a moment, and if done properly, would never be suspected for a moment by the closest observer. When once inside, it only remains to twist the body around in the right position to slide neatly down inside the stairway and offstage to enact whatever change is desired.

During this time the assistants continue the business of execution; descending the steps, springing traps, etc. The form falls and stops at the end of the rope, dangling. The performer then makes his unexpected appearance—a pistol is shot—the rope is released and the cloth form falls in a heap to the floor. The possibilities of this nerve—gripping effect need but the attention of any up-to-date performer to render it a monster dramatic masterpiece of mystery.





SPIDORA

INTRODUCTION

This is one of those grand illusions that dates back to the traveling circus and carnival side shows. Initially it was presented as a real biological phenomena not to be missed. I am sure the speech went something like "Through some horrible accident the genes of a beautirul young girl were mixed with the genes of a black widow spider." In today's technical world this illusion might seem to be a bit out dated but, not so, the kids still love it and it makes for an excellent gag in the new modern day phenomena of the Halloween spook house.

EFFECT

The presenter of this illusion stands next to it, while it is covered, explaining the horrible circumstances that fused the beautiful young lady and the spider. At the appropriate time the cloth is removed and the living illusion of "Spidora" is presented. Audience members see a giant spider with the face of a living, breathing girl. She answers questions and is quite alert, yet is trapped on a giant web.

METHOD

The basic principle for this illusion is, of course, the 45 degree mirror that reflects the bottom steps so that the woman's head appears to actually be a part of the spider. Our side elevation

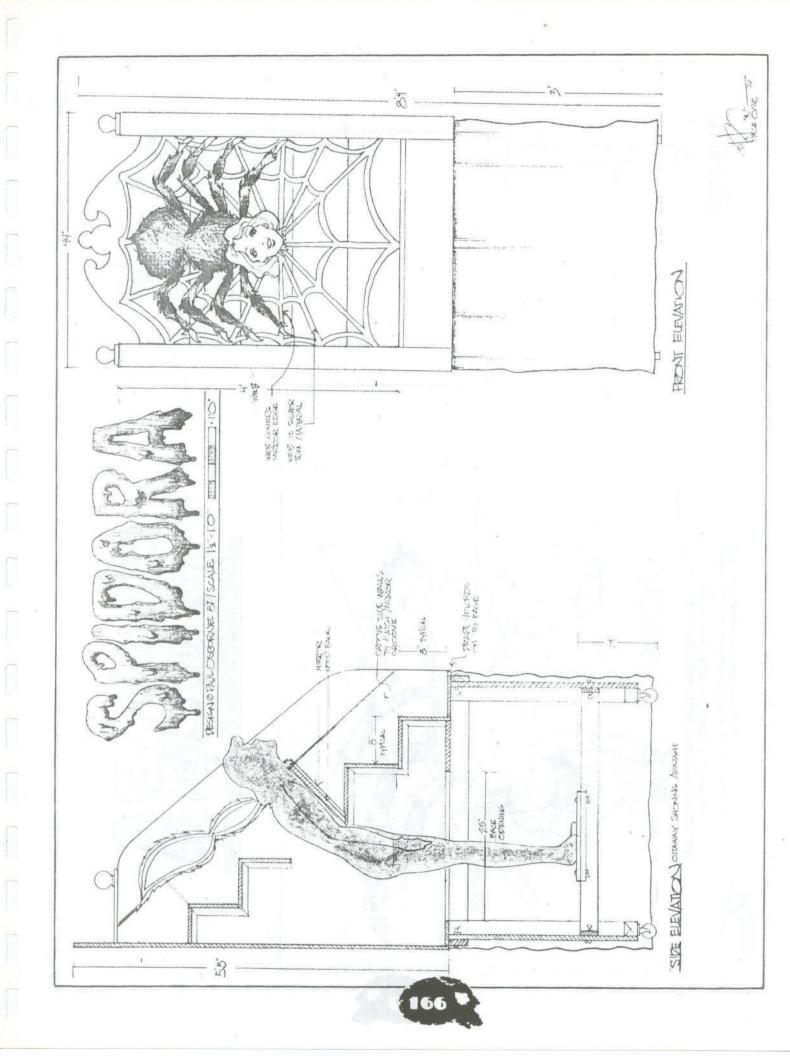
shows the position of the girl as she rests against the mirror. The completed illusion is shown in our front elevation. Notice that unlike most plans, we have put the illusion up on a platform. It is a much better illusion when viewed head on with the mirror. Naturally you will want to keep the audience back from the prop so that the mirror can't be touched, etc. The height is critical and we urge you to put the mirror at basic eye level. Notice the position of the mirror in our side elevation drawing.

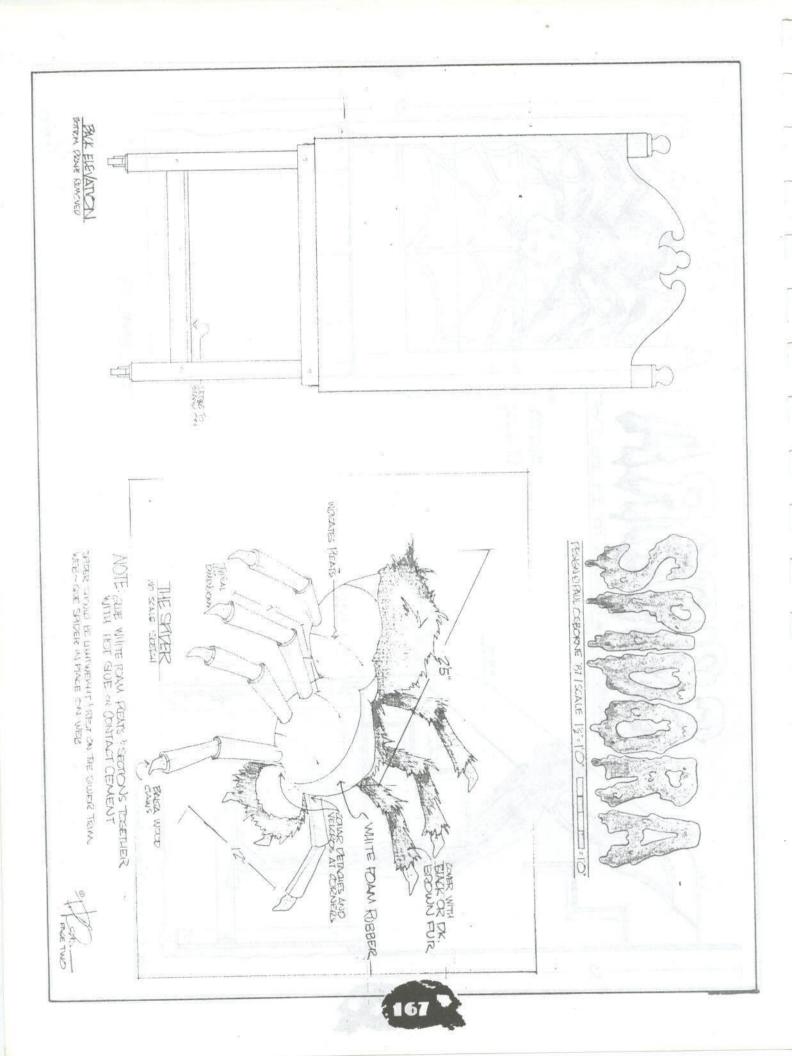
The prop is constructed out of 3/8" plywood to the dimensions as shown. The illusion can be made to break down with pin hinges and bolts. The web is made from silver trim, hot glued or sewn together as per our scaled drawing.

Page two shows the back of the prop and the simple construction of the spider. Basically, the giant insect is constructed from foam rubber glued to form the basic shape of the spider. Then the unit is covered with fake fur as shown. Notice that the spider body unit is approximately 2' 5" x 12" and the legs are each roughly two 7" sections assembled. The fur can actually be sculpted, or cut into, to create lifelike ridges and you can lightly mist the fur with spray paint shades of red, brown and black to give it some interest. The spider is glued to the silver trim as shown. Notice the fur collar that finishes the look off once the girl is in place. This collar also helps hide the mirror line.

In presentation, it is most important that the girl "drop" her shoulders as much as possible and not move her head. We also urge you to construct a simple cloth to cover the illusion during your patter build up. The surprise is much greater when you "reveal" Spidora!

I sincerely hope that you'll take the time to construct this prop. I know that you'll have fun performing it and you can make a few extra bucks by renting it out to local haunted houses and charities.





Easy Build Guilllotine

I have a beautiful Lester Lake guillotine, which has the distinction of being one of the last hand crafted by Carl Owen. It's a masterpiece that has played well over 2000 shows and has been refurbished three times. It's really too nice and too detailed to play the volume of shows we have in the park business, so this is our new replacement. It's easy to build, easy to troup and easy to repair - The Easy Build Guillotine!...And if you don't feel like building it call Douglas Wayne at 309-836-2275-they build a super one

EFFECT:

As always the spectator is put in the perilous position of being locked in a guillotine with the razor sharp blade above his head. After some by play, the magician pushes down the blade, and the spectator is unharmed.

METHOD:

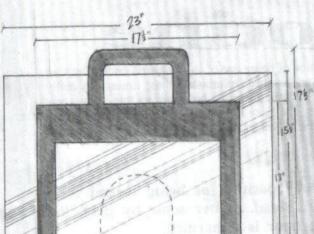
This illusion works strictly on gravity, and is simple to build. The blade is naturally the key and to accomplish this miracle you will actually have three blade segments to form what the audience will think is one single blade. Check out our exploded view of the blade. The frame seems to hold one piece of metal that forms the blade, instead it actually holds the exterior blade, the sliding solid blade, and the cut-out blade. When the spectator's head is in the stocks and the blade is lowered, his neck holds up the solid sliding blade. The exterior blade travels with the front frame and gives the illusion that the entire blade is descending. The cut-out blade stays in place and also travels down with the frames. This is the blade we see going down in the side holes around the head. The blades should all be made from the same light weight, highly polished aluminum.

The stocks are straightforward. The bottom two are attached to the upright legs. The top two are fitted within grooves to allow them to pass up and down so the volunteer can insert his head. Latches front and back secure the stocks together. The upright legs are notched so that the exterior blade can extend beyond the stocks.

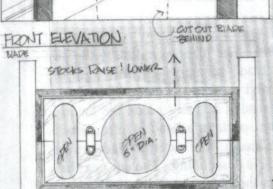
For easy shipping the uprights and the legs can unbolt and the entire illusion can easily fit in the back seat of your car. Presentation, after all is what really puts this effect over the line so concentrate on that and work with an illusion that is easy to maintain and transport.

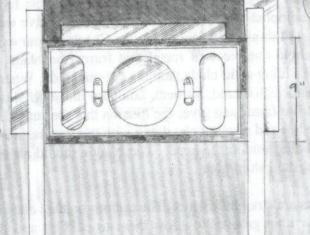
ENTEROFINE

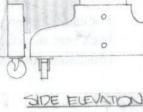
DESIGN BY PAUL OSBORNE '90 SCALE 3": 1'0'



EXPORTE VIEW OF BIADE







FRONT FRAME

EXTERIOR BLADE

SUDING BIADE

CUT OUT BLUE

BACKFRAME

Stacks Paise Lower TO Allow ACCESS

SIOT FOR BLACE

FRONT ELEVATION

FRONT ELEVATION



THE FINAL CHAPTER

t hope this first in a series of themed illusion books has inspired you.

Halloween has always been a special holiday for me in that it invites so much creativity and it allows us to indulge the darker side we all have. Like any other promotion though, I hope it is always done with taste and style. This is the part that is up to you. If you decide to build a prop, or fabricate a walk-through, do yourself a favor and make sure the finished product is first class. I am honored to have Phillip Morris and the Vorta company contribute to these pages. There are no finer experts in the field of Halloween past, present or future than these.

Please take note that the two buzz words that can be gleaned from this publication are "family" and "safety." You will not go wrong if you follow these guidlines. Following the "family" theme is just good business. You want your attraction to appeal to as many people as possible. The teenagers are enticing because they will accept whatever new idea you have. The family is much more discerning. However, they also have the buying power of a nuclear ticket price of three or more, when a teenager can barely afford one ticket. You'll want your Halloween work to payoff, so put the families first. Put uniqueness and creativity first, too. Offensive gore and too much emphasis on death will backfire. Take the "wonder" and "unknown" approache's first and expand on those.

Regarding safety: It is your single most important consideration. Safety not only for your paying guests but also safety for your actors and actresses. Hopefully we have stressed this point no matter what type of Halloween attraction you are planning. Halloween is a marvelous time of the year, and I sincerely hope that your planned activity is one of fun, enjoyment and entertainment. I would again like to thank my friends, Phillip Morris, Drew Hunter and Charles Chapman for joining me in this first in a series of themed illusion publications.

Happy haunting!



