



ILLUSION SYSTEMS

BOOK TWO

BUILD YOUR OWN ILLUSIONS

With a Forward by:

Webster Bull

of "Le Grand David and his own Spectacular Magic Company"

Written and illustrated by:

Paul Osborne

With a little help
from his friends:

- Alan Zagorsky, *Owen Magic* • Dave Jackson
- Doug Anderson • Mark Evans and Marlynn
- Bob Kline • George Kimery, *Chalet Magic*
- Tony Spina, *Tannen's* • Ed Verba
- David Mendoza, *Magcraft*
- Paul Driscoll • Martin Eldridge
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the Amazing Mr. Art



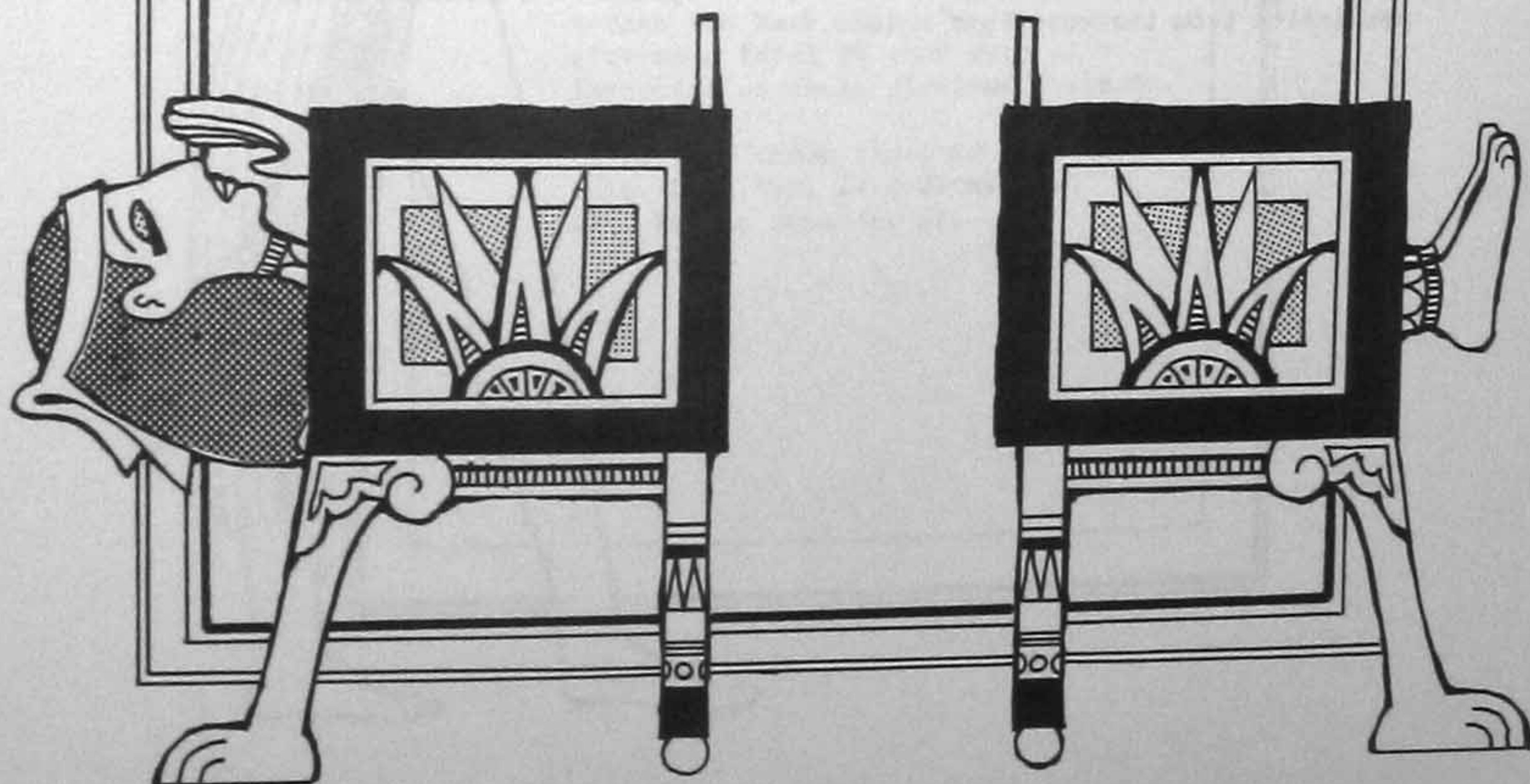
BUILD YOUR OWN ILLUSIONS

BOOK TWO

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PUBLISHED BY
ILLUSION SYSTEMS



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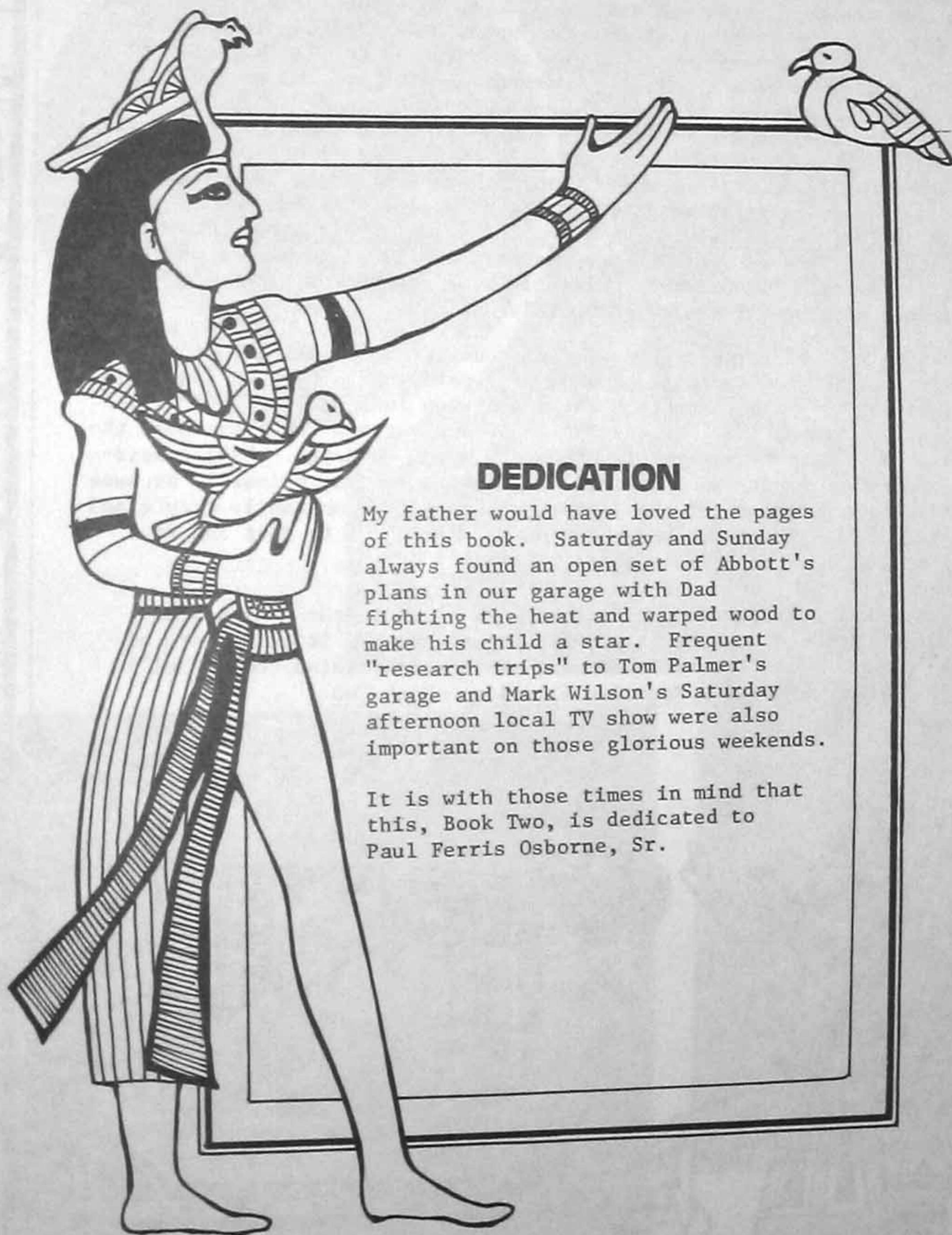
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DEDICATION

My father would have loved the pages of this book. Saturday and Sunday always found an open set of Abbott's plans in our garage with Dad fighting the heat and warped wood to make his child a star. Frequent "research trips" to Tom Palmer's garage and Mark Wilson's Saturday afternoon local TV show were also important on those glorious weekends.

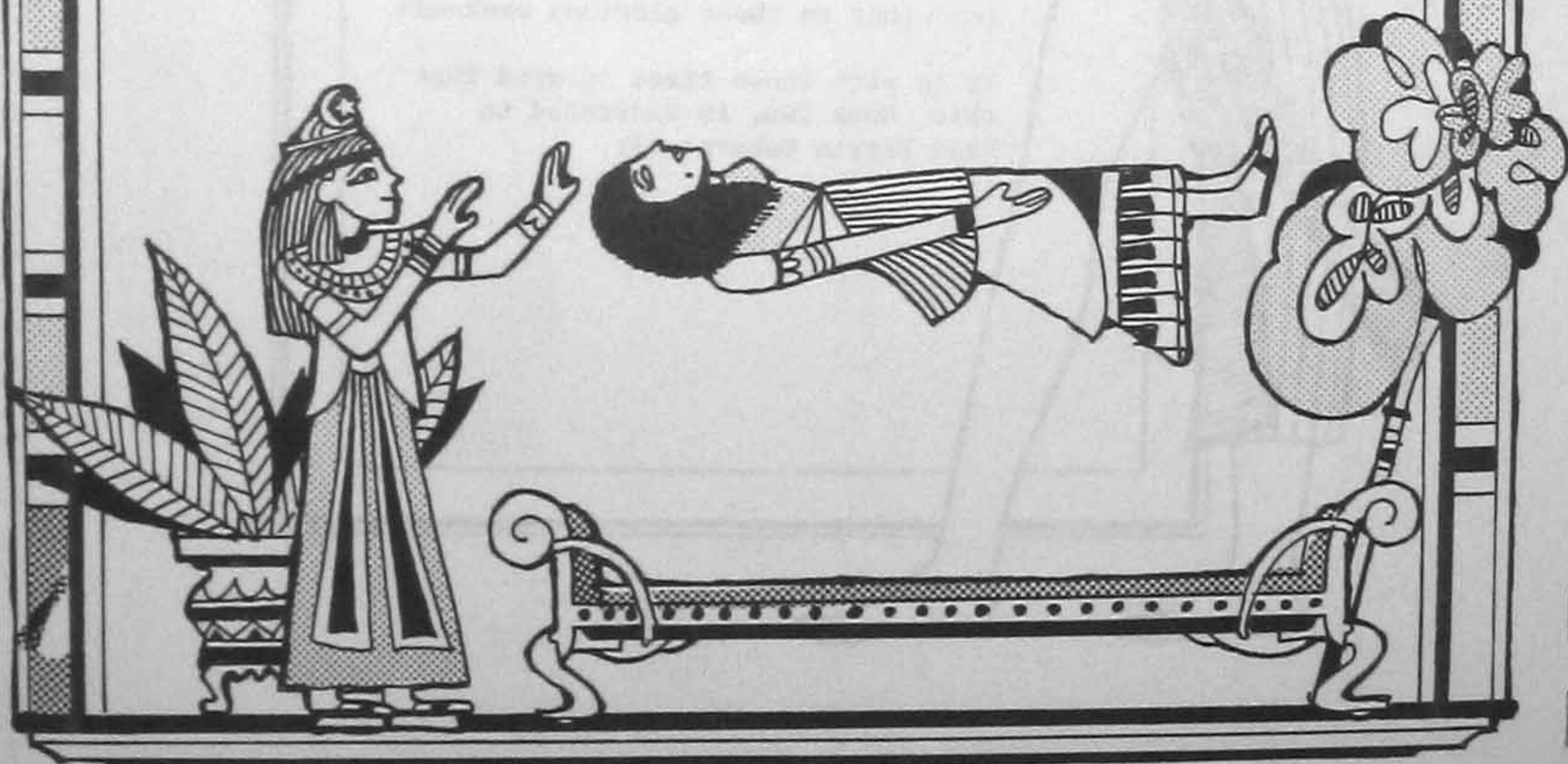
It is with those times in mind that this, Book Two, is dedicated to Paul Ferris Osborne, Sr.

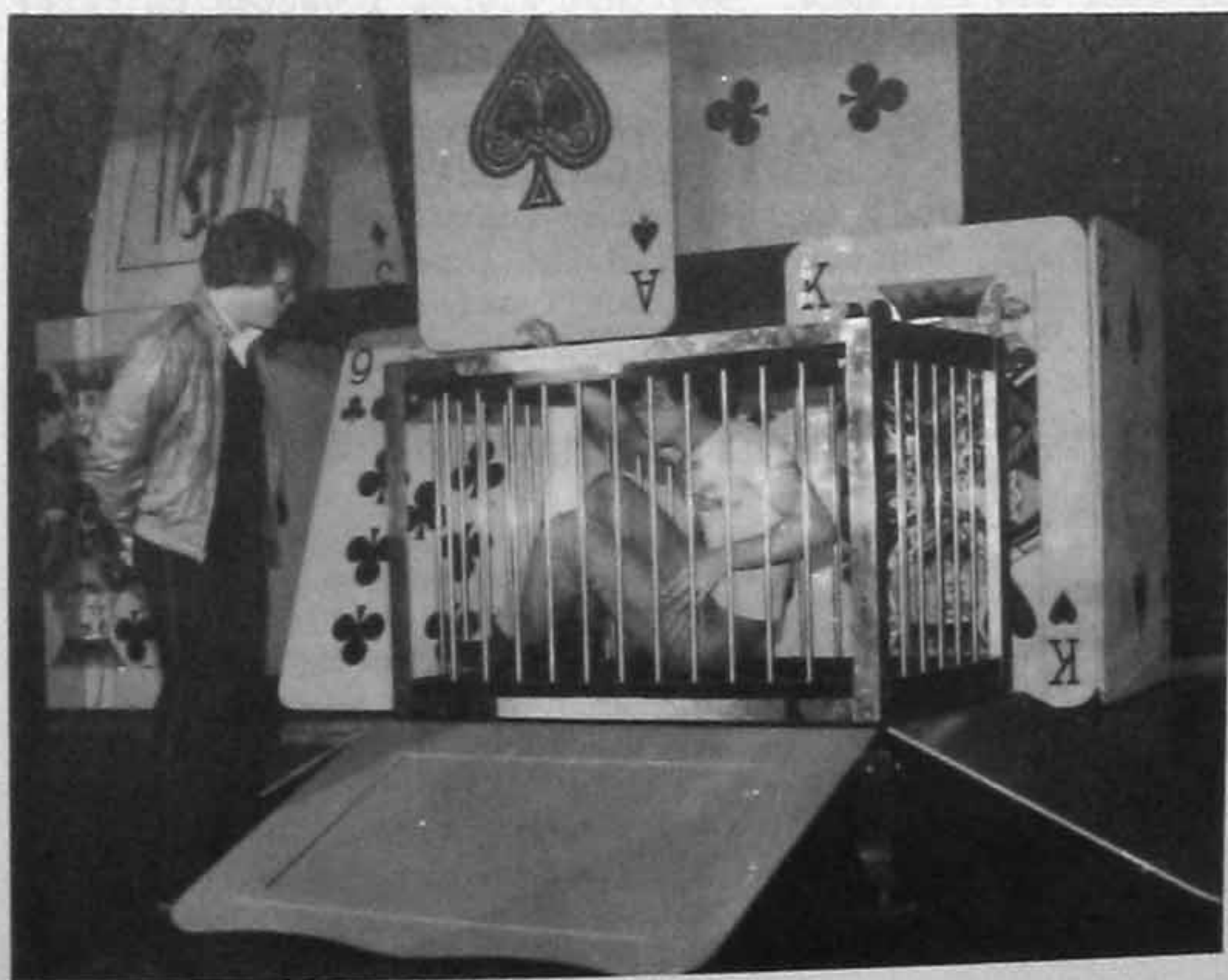
PAUL OSBORNE...

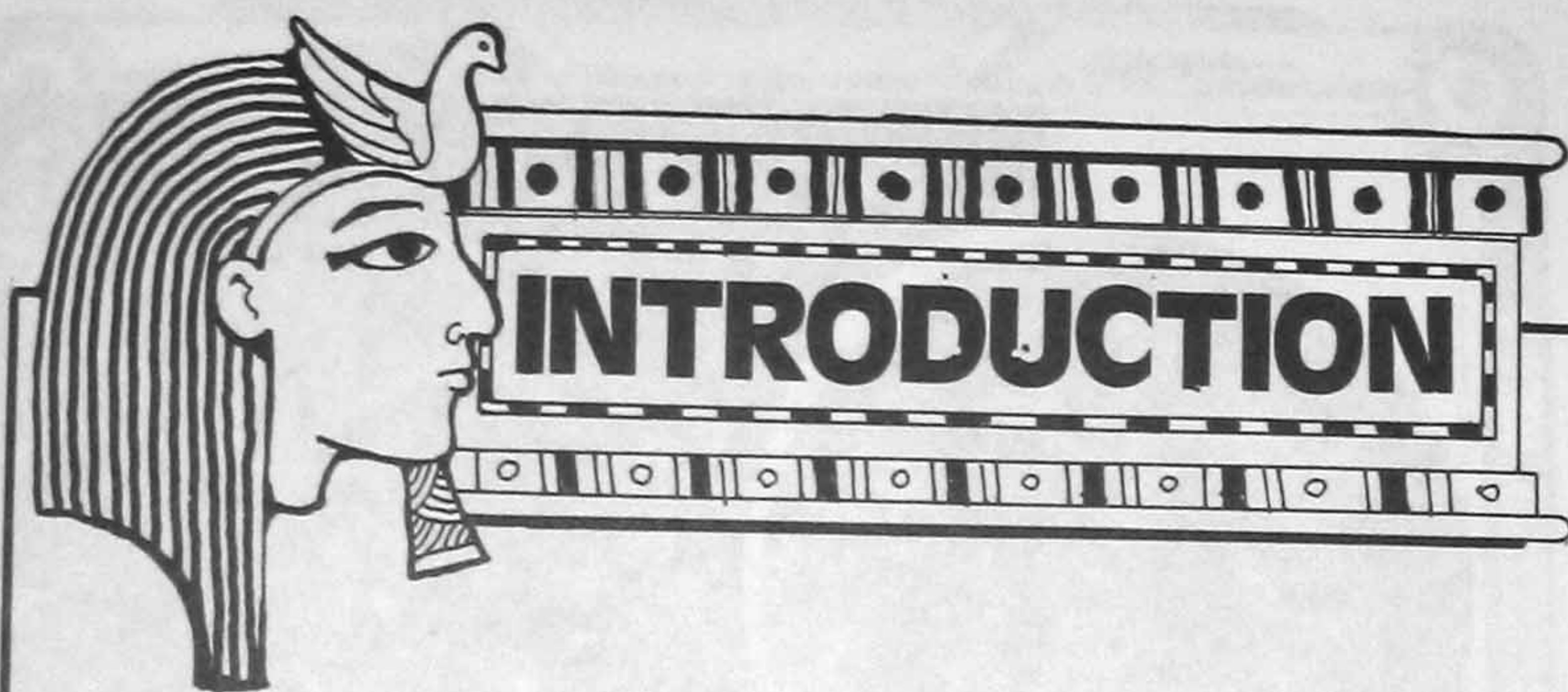
Paul Osborne has never been satisfied doing just one thing in life. As a creator, director/producer, Paul's puppet and illusion shows can be seen in many of the nation's leading amusement parks. As a designer, Paul's work is seen not only in amusement parks, but also on the Broadway stage and network television specials. As a broadcaster, Paul's radio talk show about entrepreneurs and small businessmen can be heard on Dallas' number one radio station. As an author/illustrator, Paul's columns on illusions are found within the pages of *Genii Magazine* and the *Magic Manuscript* in addition to his recently published books, Begin To Build Your Own Illusions - Book One and Illusion Planning. Also from his personal file of designs Paul has made available to magicians the Illusion Systems blueprints. Currently over forty-five plans are available with new titles added monthly.

With a design/theater background, Paul considers original illusions his specialty. The basic design problem of creating a thin appearing table that is actually thick enough to hold a person is a challenge to all of Paul's talents. With the exception of the various contributions, the illusions in this book are all workable Osborne concepts. Paul considers himself an expert in the field of illusion design, primarily because he's already made most of the mistakes. Having to constantly create and design for his amusement park shows has enabled Paul to test and fine tune many of the props included in this book.

Having seen his designs and creations come alive in the many professional and amateur workshops across the nation, Paul is well aware of what creative minds and hands can do. With this in mind comes Paul's third publication, Build Your Own Illusions - Book Two.







Hopefully since my first book, "Begin To Build Your Own Illusions", if the Lord was willing and the creek didn't rise, maybe Santa Clause blessed you with a belt sander and you got to perform that new home-made miracle before an S.R.O. crowd at Easter. In other words, I hope you're picking this book up as a more experienced builder/craftsman than when you picked up our first offering. If you aren't a builder but are an aspiring illusionist, hopefully the plans, ideas and concepts in both books will stimulate your own creativity and imagination.

Since our first book on illusion building has been published, a great many things have happened. A great deal of travel, a lot of designing and all new illusion shows have been produced, but the best result of our publishing efforts with our books, Genii Magazine and the Magic Manuscript has been that you have written me and sent photos and ideas! I knew you were out there and you proved this to be true. So what was once Paul Osborne's Book Of Illusion Ideas now reads like a "Who's Who" of magic. I am very proud to announce that this, Illusion Systems' Book Two, has contributors! Professional and amateur builders and performers have come together within the confines of these pages to share ideas, give hints and stimulate new concepts. Now that's what I wanted to stir up.

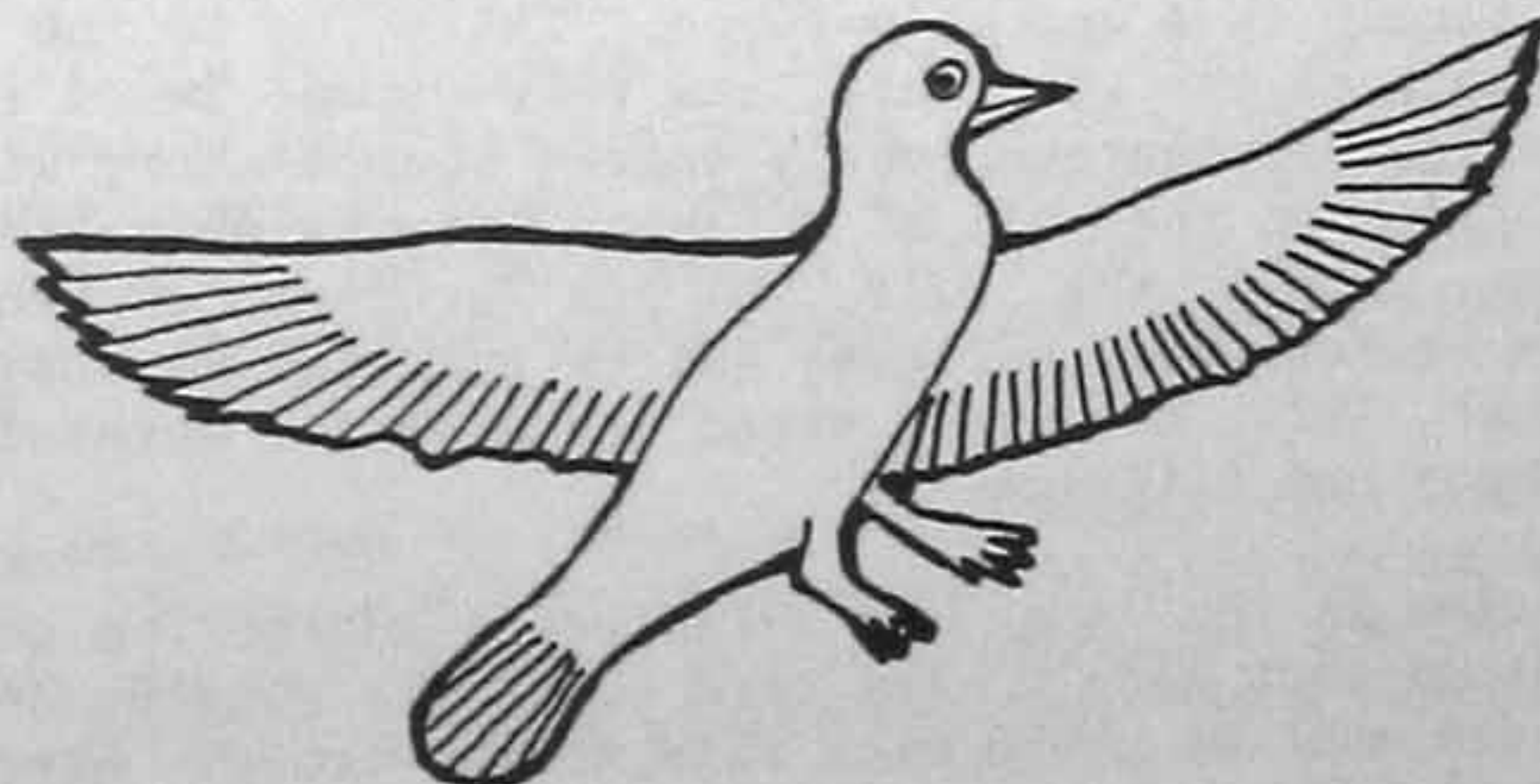
My beginning concept for Illusion Systems was to update the idea of "do it yourself" illusions. Of course, the only plans available when I began were lacking in detail and most were outdated. It was my hope that you would improve on my improvements and a whole chain reaction would take place. Well, I never expected the reaction would be so positive. Illusion Systems has grown to over 150 plans and publications. I have no choice but to credit this volume to you...the artist, the craftsman, the builder, the magician. Thanks for your support; let's all of us keep it up! There are new ways of doing things, improvements to be made and illusions to be dreamed up, and it's all up to us.

One of the most refreshing developments since my first book seems to be the re-birth of originality. In the worst of all possible times, people are realizing that creativity costs nothing. They are also realizing that their own creativity is more reliable and dependable than twenty years invested in a job with a large corporation. They are living by their own wits which stimulates new endeavors, new businesses and new approaches to lifestyles. I like to think this re-birth of originality is happening in magic. Hopefully, our publications are the sounding board for new illusion ideas, yours and mine. I don't know that anyone has ever taken the time to analyze how a new illusion is created. I'm sure everyone has their own methods. In my case, I always start with the "what ifs (?) and work backwards until I end up with a rough sketch.

I draw up the plans, then the prototype is built. I try to anticipate the pace and style with which the illusion will be performed as I select the music and costuming. The initial rehearsals are conducted and the prop is crated and sent to its performance destination, usually one of our nation's fine theme parks. It's usually during the week to two weeks that we are rehearsing the cast that I begin wondering, "Is this going to fool anybody?" Or thinking, "That's too obvious, the audience won't react." It's funny because many of the other original minds of magic have told me that they have experienced the same feelings. It's only during that first performance in front of an audience that you realize whether you've created a miracle or a disaster. It's never 100%, either. You'll find your new prop will need re-staging, additional rehearsal and, of course, "The base would have looked thinner if I had...." But, so goes an original idea. The audience reaction will show you your faults. You adapt, fine tune and eventually end up with a unique prop, presented in a manner only your hard work could have achieved. The creative process takes time. It's worth every minute of it. You invest the time and you accept the applause. I don't think there is an audience in the world that doesn't appreciate originality. Because you are an entertainer, I believe you owe your audience originality in concept, design, construction and performance. Take a few moments each day and exercise your ability to create. Dream up things - you'll find your ideas get better and better with practice.

It's always easiest to just do the Zig Zag. It's predictable, we know the audience will love it and no additional rehearsal is required. That's the easy way out and, let's face it, to some extent we are all afraid of failure. New illusions can mean failure, so why hassle? Because new illusions can also mean success, and failure can mean learning. So what have you got to lose by being original? Nothing!

In conclusion, I believe we illusionists need to go a long way to catch up with the fine close-up magicians of the world. If we invented as many boxes and props as Max Maven does card moves, there would be no need for a book like this. Unfortunately, the new revolutionary illusion is long over due. It's a personal challenge to me and hopefully, to you to find it. The art of illusion involves all of the great theater techniques; music, lights, choreography, costumes, props and special effects. It's more involved than learning that new card move, but well worth it in terms of entertainment value. Originality has an important place in theater and magic. It is my sincere hope that this book will be your first step in unlocking your own in-born creativity.





FORWARD

by

Webster Bull

of

Le Grand David and his Own Spectacular Magic Company

For hours at a stretch we crouched and paced on a dusty patch of paint-spattered flooring. Oblivious to sounds around - voices, intermittent hammering, the steady hum and periodic clackatack of sewing machines in the next room, an occasional burst from a power saw somewhere down the hall, footsteps, truck chains rattling and whirring through the new-fallen snow on the street below - we stared at a cardboard contraption that looked like nothing so much as a lunar module designed by a seven year old with a heavy case of cabin fever. We tinkered with it, lengthening and shortening its oddly angled planes, joining them with masking tape, scoring the board to hinge it; and every so often I climbed inside, Brett attempting to hold it together around me. But it collapsed outward - every time.

"Got to make it bigger," Brett muttered again, his voice choked back in his throat just the way mine was whenever I spoke, which was seldom. This Sword Box was so...I was mute with frustration. How did Cesareo ever imagine we could mount a magic show in - what was it now(?) - four weeks?!

The Cabot Street Cinema Theatre is a blockish building of red brick painted white on the main thoroughfare of Beverly, Massachusetts. At the left end of a block-long facade is a modest marquee. Extending to the right, down the remaining length of the structure, are four street level store fronts and, above, a string of nineteen evenly spaced second-story windows, rectangular portholes on the hull of a blunted cruise ship. When the theatre was young, back in the '20's, the six "staterooms" behind these windows had been professional offices; but by the time we bought the building in August, 1976, the space stood unrented for several decades. It was empty, dusty and stifling.

While we ran movies in the large and splendid auditorium next door and refurbished a stage that hadn't been trod since the ringing down of vaudeville, we did what we could with this second story. Aired it out, cleared decades of junk, replastered walls, made it liveable. But now, in the first weeks of '77, we were several steps beyond liveability. Now the second story was a fool's paradise. Somehow, some way, Cesareo had mobilized our impossibly large company of sixty-some sane men and women...and we were preparing a magic show. Not just any magic show, I might add, but



one which Cesareo promised could "rival the great touring magic caravans of the sunrise of the century." Never having seen a conjuring caravan and being a veteran of but three decade-dawnings, I couldn't say. But he was quite certain about it. Even had a tentative name: "Le Grand David and his 10 Assistants." A very big company.

You'd have to know Cesareo to understand how any of this was possible (while remaining utterly improbable). A youthful-looking man in his forties with sun-bronzed skin, a hawk-like profile, and a full and wavy head of hair that gave him a kind of Mediterranean Albert Einstein look. A deliberate, balanced walk that seemed to promise at any moment to break into a bouncing Spanish jota. A peripatetic career that had covered three continents and two professions: psychology and theatre. These were some of his surface attributes, but they hardly explained how he had become the putative producer, director and leading performer of what would surely be one of the world's largest magic companies - if (and I do mean if) it were successful.

Suffice it to say that a crew of fifteen intrepid women were sewing, without patterns, a closetful of kimonos in the adjoining room. ("Chang had three dozen, but twenty will have to do for the first show," was Cesareo's way of putting things in perspective.) Suffice it to say that, down the hall, three men were trying to wrestle three tea chests into a 12-foot pagoda. ("This has never been done before: a combination of two Okito classics.") And that on every available square inch of floor-space in the six rooms of the second story small groups were hammering and sawing and sewing and cursing at cabinets, canisters, costumes and curtains - enough merrily colored gifts to fill Santa's sleigh, which, in my delirium, I frequently heard on the roof.

But even Santa's most inventive elves couldn't have helped us with the Sword Box. Brett and I had seen one in operation. (Man enters box; box closed; swords thrust; box opened; man gone.) We knew how it worked. (Cesareo explained.) But now we had to build one. Without plans. And without a lot of help from Cesareo.

But that was only one or two shots above par for the course. He had set an opening date of February 20th and was orchestrating the efforts of five dozen people in a score of separate but interlocking projects. He was directing, designing, choreographing, promoting and prodding, walking steadily from room to room from six at night 'til well into the morning, with a hammer in his belt, a paintbrush behind his ear, a designer's pencil in his pocket and a big, crazy dream in his heart. And Brett and I were a pair of college-educated, self-proclaimed geniuses who had been entrusted with - aw, heck, it was really a simple enough task. We ought to be able to solve it. Right?

But we were faced with rigid conditions. Our "wood shop" was a hodgepodge of portable, personally owned hand-tools which passed from room to room on a complex trade route. ("You can use the mitre-box if I can borrow the power-drill." "OK, but David has the power-drill, and Burger's got it next. Needs it for the Flip-Over Vanish." "Well, d'ya think Burger would settle for the hand-drill...if I threw in a baseball card of Pumpsie Green?" "Somehow I don't think that would help." "How about a vintage Carl Yastrzemski and two Fred Lynns?")

Moreover, Cesareo suggested that we use only scrap wood, since our cash was even more limited than our time. There were some old sheets of 3/4" ply backstage; there was a jumble of maple, birch and oak planking in the crawl-space beneath the balcony; and when these resources failed, there was always the dump and a nearby demolition site.

Yet, to me, the most troublesome difficulty was: no plans. All my years of education had taught me to be an expert in following formulae. I could find projected investment given a 15% decline in industrial production, 10% prime rate, and a Marginal Propensity to Save of 0.79. I could diagram organic compounds, analyze poems. But I couldn't solve this bloomin' box. Not without cutting up acres of cardboard - and reverting to childhood. Not having plans, Brett and I were forced to think. Yee gads, think!?! Yes, think. With our hands. And build from inside out. We had to begin from the man

- Cesareo - who would sit at the center of the box when it was in operation, and work outward from him. Like an architect who had no thought for the outside look of a house until he had installed a furnace and built an interior design around it. Or a woman who began her recipe for Quiche Lorraine with a pinch of salt - and then improvised all other ingredients. But then anything grows this way, doesn't it? An oak thunders upward from within a tiny, silent seed.

Dinnertime. Brett and I walked with Cesareo to a little restaurant down Cabot Street. On the way back, we passed the American Legion post, where workmen were remodeling. A tottering snow-topped pile of trash and half-smashed furniture had been amassed on the curb, waiting to be carted away. To one side, a topless wooden box had escaped from the general jumble. Cesareo stopped in his boot-tracks, pointed to it, and stated with unshakable conviction: "That's the Sword Box."

It was little more than a fruit crate. Tipped on one edge, it had accumulated an inverted pyramid of snow in one corner. A child might have looked at it and chirped, "Oh boy, a sled!" Cesareo, no toddler, was nodding his head with greater and greater certainty. "Yes," he said. "A beautiful base for your Sword Box. It might need a little reinforcement. Remember; we want to build to last for twenty years."

I dutifully hefted the crate upstairs to the second story workrooms. It had not one square corner. It was cracked in two places. But Cesareo submitted it to only one test; could he sit cross-legged within it?

He could.

Every step in the construction of the Sword Box demanded the same flexible willingness I evinced at that moment, standing there, looking at Cesareo seated inside. Every step challenged my own half-informed beliefs about what we should have done. The demands of the illusion, the dimensions of the man inside it, and the limited material at our disposal; these dictated what had to be done.

"One step at a time," Cesareo insisted.

"How tall do you want it?" I wondered.

"As tall as necessary," he answered.

"What color are we going to paint it?"

"I'm not there yet. You're way ahead of me. First, let's strengthen the base."

Brett and I did what we could - to make a purse from a pig's ear. Installed corner posts and small blocks on the inside edges for strength, yanked a couple of nasty-looking nails, sanded, and when the time was right we began building what was possible on top of this improbable foundation.

Cesareo check up on us at each stage of our work, he and David (Le Grand) moving continuously from room to room in the hands-on tradition of magic masters past. I began to see that his was an additive, never-turn-back approach to creativity. Once a step had been completed he never retraced it, always willingly building on top of what had already been done, even if mistakes had been made.

Each new stage posed new, unthought-of difficulties for Brett and me. The trapped flooring that we built above the crate had to be strong enough to hold a man's weight, without any pillar-support from below. After a day's trial and error, we cut it from 1" super-oak. Because the box was off-square, the sides had to be mounted at angles to compensate. The hinges... Is there any branch of science more complex than "Hingeology"? Someday a 21st Century Edison will invent an invisible reverse-and-

double-action hinge. Until then each stage illusion will pose its own unique hingeological problems, at least for me. And the mirrors...Cesareo insisted they were a matter of life and death, since he would be inside if and when they chose to break. After intense investigation, Brett brought back a can of "Mirrormastic" from the local glass company, and we used fifty times the recommended quantity.

The roof was the topper. It seems we had ignored one small detail in our cardboard cut-up calculations - Cesareo's head. The box was deep enough and broad enough, it jes' weren't tall 'nuf. But the same thing that got us into trouble got us out - Cesareo's head. Brett and I were ready and willing to tear the whole creation down and start from bottom up again, erecting taller sides. We had a fixed idea of how the Sword Box would look; that idea included a flat roof; our flat roof was too low, so the box had to be redone. Right?

Wrong. With a little tilt of his head and a smile on his lips, Cesareo just said: "Make it a slanted roof. Yes. Surely. Just like a little house. Why, we can even have a Widow's Walk at the peak. Yes, that will be very beautiful. Can you see it?"

I could now. Now that he described it. And I could see how easily I had become trapped in a fixed notion of how it should be, blinding myself to what it could be. I had boxed myself in.

"Use what's available," Cesareo recommended when it came time for decoration, adding that red, green and gold were "the colors of magic." Magic and Christmas, I thought. After red and black base coats had been applied, we striped the roof with yellow electrician's tape. It was "available". As was a roll of green, self-adhesive shelf-lining paper, which Cesareo cut into round, abstract hieroglyphs and stuck to the center of the sides. And the piece de resistance - four enormous golden tassels which he brought from the sewing room and hung like tree ornaments from the four corners of the sloping roof, as from the boughs of a Scotch Pine.

Within three weeks, everything that could be done had been done, including the five coats of high-gloss polyurethane which were to become de rigueur for every illusion that left our simple shops. Everything but the one thing Brett and I couldn't bring ourselves to do - cut sword-holes in the sides. From cardboard to fruit-crate to Sword Box, we had watched our project grow, assuming impossible shape and strength. Through our doting parental eyes, we had even come to see some hint of handsomeness in this, our first home-grown illusion. How then could we bring ourselves to cut holes in it? Yet it certainly needed ten sword-slits sawn through the sides, without which our box could not be much of a Sword Box.

For days we put it off, passing on to other last-minute projects. But soon our opening was impossibly near. Cesareo and David needed the finished apparatus for a full run-through, and Brett and I once again found ourselves crouching and pacing and staring:

"Here, you cut it," Brett said, holding out to me the plugged-in but silent power saw.

"No, you," I answered, with mock generosity.

"No, you..." Brett laughed. Then, after a very deep breath, he flicked the saw into whirring, whirling motion....

* * * * *

...I was nervous. For no reason. We had nothing left to prove, and I was nervous.

Cesareo had been named "Magician of the Year" by Hollywood's Academy of Magical Arts. Time Magazine had given us a bigger spread than any magic troupe in history. And I was nervous. We had successfully performed more than 540 times on this one stage in this one 800-seat house in this one modest-sized seacoast community north of Boston. And I was nervous. Why?

Because the magicians were coming, that's why. One if by land and two if by sea. One thousand magicians, and every one thinking, "I've heard such good things about 'Le Grand David'. I wonder if I'll be disappointed." Like art collectors travelling to see a much-vaunted contemporary masterpiece, the S-A-M conventioners might just wonder what all the fuss was about.

Before curtain, the stage was quiet. Even the children were engaged in hushed and earnest philosophical debate in the upstage-left corner. Seth, our ten-year-old junior wizard, appeared to be expatiating on the merits of Little League baseball. I had to move. Pushing open the backstage door, I stepped squintingly into the warm summer twilight and walked around to the front of the building.

There is usually a line in front of the Cabot Street Cinema Theatre before a show, an orderly queue, often a block long. But tonight the waiting crowd was like a crush of last-minute buyers moving to and fro in the jammed aisles of Neiman-Marcus. Up to seventy-five people at a time were massed around the display windows to the right of the theatre entrance, a shifting sea of shoppers continuously replenished, as one bus after another discharged its cargo of conjurers.

For a moment I imagined myself one of these visitors. Stepping off the motor coach, onto the sidewalk. In front of this massive white hulk of a theatre that looms above me. My first time at the "Le Grand David" show. Doors just about to open, and - what's all the commotion? Above the heads of the crowd, through a broad, light-spangled glass, I can now make out a patchwork of bright colors. Reds, greens and golds predominate, painted planes of brightness that mix kaleidoscopically with the window - reflected images of people, bus, trees and sky.

I move closer as the milling crowd shifts. I see that the velvet-covered display counters are piled high with wonders, like a children's store at holiday time. Chests, canisters, and vessels of all shapes and sizes - a sultan's treasure trove. If I say "Open Sesame," will the Forty Thieves leap out to defend their bounty?

My attention is drawn to a cocked-open chest of gold, five-feet-by-four-by-three, grandly enthroned on a lattice-work base. At the center of each of its four visible sides is a cameo the size of a China plate, painted with a scene from Oriental life - a horse and kimono-clad rider pausing mid-stream, three swordsmen, a landscape worked by farmers, three women in their paper-partitioned chambers. Beneath the base, on a scroll of colored paper, the calligraphed message: "Nothing quite like it may ever happen again."

I see three giant coins, red and gold with square holes in their centers; a three-by-three-by-three-foot gilded cage atop a hand-turned seven-foot stand; a deck of playing cards showing three cowed figures and their mirror image, as though seated by a ripple-free reflecting pool; a door-sized sheet of plexiglas, framed in blue and gold-hued wood with a pagoda-like top; an enormous painted egg; dozens of silks, fans and parasols, some large enough to shade a giant, others delicate miniatures; boxes and more boxes, hinged to open and close every possible way, and each intricately decorated.

There is a program book here on the counter. On its cover, dozens of costumed people are posed on a stage. Must be seventy performers, if there's one. A very big company. Below them, a title reads, "500 Performances," and a subtitle, "January 18, 1981."

I press my face to the glass and - oh, this is too much! The entire floor of the twenty-by-forty-foot space inside is covered with treasure, and a huge wall-mirror apparently doubles the wealth.

Across a side-wall, a dragon-emblazoned banner reads: "Marco the Magi's production of 'Le Grand David and his own Spectacular Magic Company.'"

And here is one last hand-painted message: "Welcome to a world of enchantment!"

Smiling, no longer nervous, I retraced my steps to the backstage door and pulled open. Brushing aside the light-baffling curtain, I stepped down a short flight, my feet leading me feelingly, my eyes not yet adjusted from the twilight brightness outdoors. My nervousness was gone. Yes, very calm now. Not that all those displayed illusions would help us perform any better tonight, but...well, maybe they were a reminder of what we're capable of.

As it has so many hundreds of times, my left hand reached out instinctively at the bottom of the backstage steps for the support it always finds there, a support I never thought about until now, only a solid surface to guide my way in the near-darkness.

But tonight my hand sent a message to Mission Control: "Stop a moment. Take notice." The surface on which my left hand rested was steeply sloped like a roof, with little, barely perceptible ridges running crossways. And between them, the feel of rough wood sanded and polyurethaned.

"Still here, old boy?" I asked, half to myself, half to the Sword Box.

"Still here," the Sword Box seemed to answer. "Cracked-crate bottom, two pounds of Mirrormastic, four overlong tassels, and all. I figure I've got a good fifteen years left. How about you?"

Webster Bull

- Webster Bull

May, 1982



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Paul Driscoll

Magical Productions ★ ★ ★ ★ ★





THE ILLUSIONIST

by Paul Driscoll

"It takes more skill than most people ever dream of to present an illusion well. Some self-styled experts have attacked the illusionist as representing the no talent segment of our art. Admittedly, there are a great number that fill this category. Yet, many theatrical skills are required to take that box with its traps and gadgets and produce 'magic' for the audience in the form of entertainment. It's a skill few are able to accomplish."

The preceding thoughts are from a man who knows the illusion business "from the inside out"...Mr. Johnny Gaughan. His thoughts, quoted here from the April, 1974 issue of Genii magazine, echo my feelings on the presentation of illusions.

I believe that to be a great illusionist, you must possess a variety of skills, more than are necessary for any other branch of magic. There is so much more to performing illusions well than just purchasing the prop and learning the mechanics of it.

The action of wheeling an odd looking cabinet on stage, placing a person in it and dividing that person into two parts is not "magic" and it is not entertainment...it is a puzzle. A good illusionist does not deal in puzzles, he deals in entertainment, as should any professional entertainer. An audience will not pay to see someone present a puzzle...not even Rubik's Cube with a line of dancers and back-up singers can produce real entertainment.

The field of illusion is the most theatrical segment of magic. As Johnny Gaughan emphasized, it takes many theatrical skills to properly present illusions. The illusionist must coordinate music, choreography, lighting, scenery, assistants and story line. Only when these elements are properly blended can there exist a true magical entertainment experience for the audience.

Of course, the illusionist must possess a personality that will shine above the boxes and gadgets. He must not be overshadowed by the illusions. The illusionist must be the "star", not the huge boxes and all the trappings. An audience should leave the theatre remembering the illusionist...the performer...the personality.

Well, so much for my thoughts on the wonderful art of illusion. When Paul Osborne asked me to contribute something to the book, I had no idea what to put on paper. He suggested I answer a number of questions that might be asked by someone relatively new to the illusion field. I will endeavor to do just that:

HOW DO I KNOW WHAT ILLUSION TO ADD TO MY ACT?

To answer this question I would consider the following:

1. What performing conditions will you be working in? Will you be working on fully equipped stages? In shopping malls with all types of angle and set-up problems... night club dance floors...cruise ship showrooms?
2. How many assistants will it require? Does the illusion require any more personnel than the assistant in the illusion? While on the subject of assistants...I would prefer the term "co-performers" to describe these invaluable people who do so much to "put the

show over".

3. Will the illusion require a special sized assistant? Will you be restricted to using the same assistant for every performance? An example being the classic Disembodied Princess. After investing in a replica of the young lady's face, you will want to make sure she will be around for more than just a few bookings.

4. What do you want to accomplish with the illusion? Are you shooting for a dramatic or comedy presentation? Will the illusion be part of an overall segment or skit?

5. What method of transportation do you have? A car, station wagon, van, truck, tractor trailer, etc. Consider the size of the illusion and the other props you will be transporting.

Once an illusion has been chosen...WHO SHOULD BUILD IT?

I have had illusions constructed for my show in two manners; by local craftsmen and by established illusion builders. The majority of my props were custom made by magic builders, but there are a few that were produced through what might be called the "do-it-yourself" plan.

When I worked under this plan I employed a number of local craftsmen for several different projects. These men were not experienced in the construction of magic props, but they were master craftsmen who could work their own special magic with their hands and a shop full of tools. I did not merely hand them a set of plans and say, "go to it". I worked with them very closely all the way through the planning and building process. This was part of our agreement. I sawed, nailed, glued and even painted...the glamour of magic.

I provided all the materials right down to the last nut and bolt. The craftsman was paid a fee, for which he supplied his expertise and workshop. Basically, you are looking at the cost of materials and the builder's fee. Also, you must consider your time, which is a very valuable commodity.

Beside the economics, there are other advantages to "doing-it-yourself", such as the quality control factor. You are there at every turn to oversee the project. If a problem arises, you are on hand to evaluate it.

Building an illusion well is by no means a simple task. Even when you have the finest plans available...such as the ones from Illusion Systems...you will encounter "hidden" headaches along the way. This is even more true when you are building an original, untested illusion. However, the solving of these problems can be rewarding and can contribute to the overall satisfaction of building the illusion yourself.

When I first ventured into the world of illusions I had my first props built by local craftsmen...mainly for economic reasons. I was very fortunate to have two friends who were master craftsmen...Sam Hawkins and Sam Gainer. These two gentlemen contributed a great deal to the success of my show.

The other option in illusion building is to turn the job over to a commercial magic builder. The majority of the illusions in my show were constructed by two of the finest builders in the business today, John Gaughan and Associates and George Kimery of Chalet Magic.

I would recommend that you contact the builders to obtain a price quote on the illusion you desire. If it is a standard item, such as a Zig Zag Girl or Thin Sawing illusion, simply write or better yet, call for a quote. Unless it is a totally unique illusion or concept, he should be able to provide a price.

If you require special options or features, such as a radio controlled "gimmick" or device, as opposed to a manually operated one, advise the builder of this at the outset. Options and modifications of this nature will definitely affect the price.

If the illusion is a creation of your own, something that has never been built, you will have to consult with him and provide more information...and most likely sketches to illustrate your concept. Once the builder has an idea of what you want and if it can indeed be constructed, he will work up a price. This price may be a "ball park" figure, as he does not know exactly what his production costs will be. He knows exactly how much it costs to build a Zig Zag as he has turned out dozens. Once he plunges into the building process he should be able to pinpoint the price.

While I recommend you contacting the builders for quotes, please do not call or write these gentlemen unless you are sincerely interested in having something built. These men are very, very busy. Please do not call just for curiosity's sake.

Now that you have the price quotes, what is the next step? Let me emphasize that the price alone should not be the bottom line when making your choice. You must consider the track record of the builder. Try to see a sample of their work, and speak with a few of their customers and clients. A preview of their craftsmanship may be as close as your own television screen, as many of the builders produce illusions for many of the television magic specials...check the credits.

If you are interested in a particular illusion, such as the Thin Sawing, try to see one that has been built by each of the builders. No illusion builder constructs the Thin Sawing in quite the same fashion. Granted, the basic illusion and mechanics are the same, but there are subtle design differences, paint schemes, graphics, etc. Determine which model appeals to you.

WHAT MATERIALS, COLOR SCHEMES, ETC. CAN I DICTATE AND HOW?

If the illusion is being produced by a commercial magic builder, you can rest assured that he will be using the finest materials. They have the experience and expertise to choose the correct materials for each illusion.

If you are "doing-it-yourself", do not try to cut corners by purchasing cheaper, inferior plywood. In the long run you will regret it. I recommend the use of birch in the construction of illusions.

When working with a magic builder, you must express your desires for any special materials, trim or accents, such as plexiglass, chrome or brass plated trim, etc. While on the subject of metal trim and accents on props, I would like to recommend the use of "polished" aluminum rather than chrome plated trim. On stage, you cannot distinguish one from the other, and the aluminum is much less expensive. Once the aluminum has been polished to a "chrome" appearance, you will need to have it anodized to protect the finish. Otherwise, it will require frequent cleaning, due to the tarnishing. Check the Yellow Pages under "Plating" for those metal shops who plate, polish and anodize metal. A wide variety of finishes are available, brass, chrome, copper, nickel, etc.

Consider every phase and segment of the illusion. Make careful notes that will convey your requirements to the builder. I make extensive use of sketches, notes, photos and color samples when working with a builder. I make notes on everything, from the color of paint I want to the type of casters. I send this information and then follow up with many phone calls to go over each detail with the builder, as my long distance bills will show. I also stress to the builder that he should contact me should he have any question on how to handle a particular problem or situation. I want no "surprises" when the illusion arrives.

Know exactly what you are getting. I cannot imagine anyone simply ordering an illusion without any discussion of color scheme, design, etc. But, I am sure it happens. Leave nothing to chance.

As for color schemes and design, the sky's the limit. You can direct the builder in these areas. Perhaps you desire an Oriental look...Egyptian...High-Tech...or even Art Deco. If presenting the illusion within a "themed" or "period" setting, the design and decoration are vital considerations.

If staging a Wild West magic segment, you would not want the illusion to feature plexiglass and chrome trim. The illusion would need to have a Western flavor...a rustic look with natural wood finish and perhaps brass plated trim.

An illusion can have many faces. A fine example, the classic Nest Of Trunks illusion. This illusion can assume any look you desire. Harry Blackstone's masterful presentation of the illusion takes place in a circus ring setting, so his trunks became brightly colored circus trunks. His lovely wife, Gay, is shot from a cannon to the suspended nest of trunks.

David Copperfield presented the same illusion, under a different guise, on one of his television specials. The setting was a discotheque, so the trunks were transformed into large speakers...which would logically be found hanging in a disco. When Bernadette Peters vanished, she was found inside the nest of speakers.

In my show, the illusion is presented in a mysterious waterfront setting. Speakers and circus trunks wouldn't quite blend in with the waterfront atmosphere, so the trunks became "cargo crates". The boxes are painted to resemble packing crates...the type normally found on the docks.

In each of these presentations, the illusion has been "camouflaged" to logically blend into the overall picture and not look like a "magic box".

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST AND WHEN WILL PAYMENT BE DUE?

The cost can be determined quite easily if you are building the illusion yourself. Simply figure the cost of materials and the builder's fee. However, I would allow an emergency fund of \$50 to \$100 for any unexpected expenses, as it is almost impossible to foresee every expense.

If the illusion is being constructed by a magic builder you should be able to obtain a price or price estimate. Keep in mind that the price will always be F.O.B., making you responsible for all shipping charges. Don't forget to include in your budget the cost of a case for the illusion. I will cover the subject of cases a bit later.

My experiences have shown that the builder will require a deposit "up front", of at least half the total amount, with the remaining half due upon delivery of the prop.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO BUILD? (LEAD TIME)

If building the illusion yourself, the production time will largely depend on how much time you are prepared to devote to the project. When can you work? Evenings? Weekends? When I worked with a local builder, we worked evenings during the week and all day on weekends. Working around my show schedule and his work schedule, a month of hard work was required to complete the illusion. This included locating materials, building and painting.

When dealing with a magic builder, he will most likely ask you about your lead time, or when you have to have it in your hands to begin rehearsals. He should provide a fairly accurate time estimate. If it is a rush order the price will automatically

increase, as it will require overtime.

Determine your lead time, allowing sufficient time for shipping, rehearsals and just generally getting to know the illusion. Do not cut your lead time too short. Depending on the builder's work load, it will take at least four to six weeks for completion. If the builder is involved in a major project, such as constructing a dozen illusions and assorted smaller props for a television magic special or an amusement park show, his manpower will be solely devoted to this undertaking. An order for a single Zig Zag illusion will be placed on the back burner.

Also, allow time to make adjustments once you have received the prop. I have yet to receive an illusion that did not require a few minor adjustments. I do not care who constructs it, or how well it is made, you will have to perform a few odd jobs to make it exactly right for your needs and routining.

HOW SHOULD I SHIP AND CRATE THE ILLUSION?

Basically, there are two methods to ship illusions from the builder to you. The most expedient and expensive is air freight. Unless there is an urgent need to have the illusion the next day, I would not recommend air freight. Shipping charges will run from \$200 to \$1,000, depending on the size and weight of the prop and, of course, the individual airline's pricing structure. Another drawback is that the shipment must be picked up at the airport.

Motor freight, on the other hand, will pick up the illusion from the builder and deliver it to your front door. It is the most economical way to ship illusions, with costs ranging from \$100 to \$200. Delivery time averages a week to ten days. These estimates are based upon previous shipments from Los Angeles to Houston, approximately 1,400 miles.

As for crating of the illusion, there are several options:

1. Build your own case or packing crate.
2. Have your illusion builder construct a case.
3. Have a case manufactured by a commercial case company.

Regardless of the route you take, get a case for your illusion. After investing hundreds or thousands of dollars in a piece of equipment, it would be foolish to not protect your investment.

The majority of cases currently used in my show were constructed by a commercial case company, so I will concentrate on this aspect. I recommend Anvil brand cases for maximum protection and durability. Sometimes called "flight cases", they are widely used by rock bands, orchestras and various touring shows to protect their sound gear, instruments and props. They have also become very popular with the magic world protecting valuable equipment and illusions.

These heavy duty cases are made from laminated plywood with a resilient, scratch resistant surface bonded on...usually plastic or fiberglass. They are available in a rainbow of colors. The wide range of colors is not for aesthetic reasons, alone. Suppose you have a dozen or so cases in your truck and you instruct the crew to load in the case containing the Asrah illusion. The typical response from the stage crew would be, "Which one is that?". "Oh, it's the blue one", you reply. The only problem is, all the cases happen to be blue. You can see why the many colors would allow for easy color coding of the cases, simplifying procedures.

While fairly light in weight, the cases are practically indestructible. Each case is foam lined and features heavy duty hardware throughout.

Case prices start at around \$300, depending on the size, design and options. This may

sound high, but in the long run it will prove to be a wise investment, not only from the standpoint of protection, but also from the standpoint of re-sale value. Should you ever wish to sell the illusion, the custom case or cases will make for a more attractive package and will, of course, command a higher price.

Most illusion builders are distributors for Anvil and other case companies. As an additional service the magic builders can design and order a case for your illusion. Then the prop can be shipped out already in its case, which is the ideal situation. I would recommend ordering your case through the magic builder. It will save time and headaches and the price will usually not be any higher than if you had ordered directly from the case company. Even if you order directly from the company, you will be required to go through one of their distributors, so you might as well give someone in magic the business.

In some instances time will not allow the case company to ship the case to the builder in time to meet your deadline. In this event, the builder can crate the illusion in a temporary packing case to protect it during shipment. This temporary case is usually a simple wooden crate, but it will do the job until you have a permanent case built. The crating charge will be passed along to you in most cases.

A commercial case could then be purchased at a later date. Again, you will have another freight charge for the "empty" case. So you can see the ideal game plan is to have the illusion shipped in the case you intend to use, resulting in only one freight charge.

I have had illusions constructed here in Houston and then ordered cases through a magic builder, even though he did not build the prop.

Once, in an emergency situation, Johnny Gaughan rushed an order through Anvil for two illusion cases. They were manufactured and air freighted to me within one week. Even though the illusion the cases were intended for had not been built by Johnny, he went to the trouble of ordering the cases and seeing that they got to me in time. It's no wonder that Johnny is known as one of the nicest people in magic.

Some illusion builders are getting into the "manufacturing end" of the case business. They're producing custom cases comparable to those on the market. I know that George Kimery of Chalet Magic is now turning out very fine cases, as I have several in my show.

FINAL THOUGHTS...

Paul asked me to include any "tips" that I may have picked up along the way. Here they are:

1. If you have any illusions with a "load chamber", line it with black felt. Examples - Crystal Casket, Asrah, Mismade Girl, etc. The felt will provide a more comfortable load area for the assistant. The felt also prevents snagging of costumes on screws, splinters, etc.
2. On the Mismade Girl illusion, put matching hose on the fake legs/feet. This will make for a more realistic appearance. This would also apply to the fake legs and feet in the Thin Sawing.
3. If using any number of padlocks in a given illusion or escape...Substitution Trunk or Assistant's Revenge...have the padlocks keyed alike, that is, one key fits every lock. Most hardware shops or locksmiths can supply them.
4. When ordering an illusion or prop from a magic builder, be certain to ask for "touch up" paint for all the colors used on the illusion. Carry it with you in your tool or supply kit.

5. An excellent metal cleaner and polish can be found at most auto and motorcycle supply shops. It is a cream and the brand name is, what else..."Blue Magic".

6. If using flash pots in your show, I would recommend the use of "solar igniters" for setting off the pots. They are very small and very reliable. Their normal use is the launching of model rockets. They can be found at most hobby shops. The igniters are not re-usable, however, they are fairly inexpensive...about \$1.00 for six.

I sincerely hope that I have answered at least a few of your questions concerning the planning, building and performing of illusions. Illusions were my "first love" in the art of magic, and this love affair has continued to this day. You might say I'm hooked on illusions. I don't mean the physical prop itself, but rather the thrill, excitement and joy that can be created and given to an audience. The illusion is merely a tool, a device ...as a song is to a vocalist.

Illusions and illusionists are the mainstay of magic, keeping it out front, in the minds of the public. This will always be the case. How many times has someone approached you and asked, "You're a magician? Can you really saw someone in half or make me float in the air?". And each time, even in this day and age, there is a marvelous sincerity and wonder in their voice. I have yet to be asked, "Can you really do that rope trick, or the card trick with four aces?".

Devote the time and energy to learn the intricacies and subtle points of your illusions. Strive for unique touches and bits of business. There is so much more to an illusion than what is found in the blueprint.

Since I did not touch on the presentation and staging aspects of illusions, I would like to recommend the reading and careful study of the following books:

"Magic And Showmanship" by Henning Nelms

A comprehensive treatise on showmanship, stage deportment, misdirection, use of assistants, and dramatics...and how they apply to the art of magic.

"Showmanship For Magicians" by Dariel Fitzkee

Part of the excellent "Fitzkee Trilogy"...three works that should be in every magician's library.

"The Art Of Illusion" by Will Ayling

Many years ago, I met Mark Wilson and told him of my interest in illusions. He recommended I purchase this book...which I did. I did not regret it, as it is one of the finest publications on the presentation of illusions.

"Forging Ahead In Magic" by John Booth

While this book does not cover the presentation and staging aspects in detail, it does offer valuable advice on the "off stage" aspects of becoming a successful, professional magical entertainer.

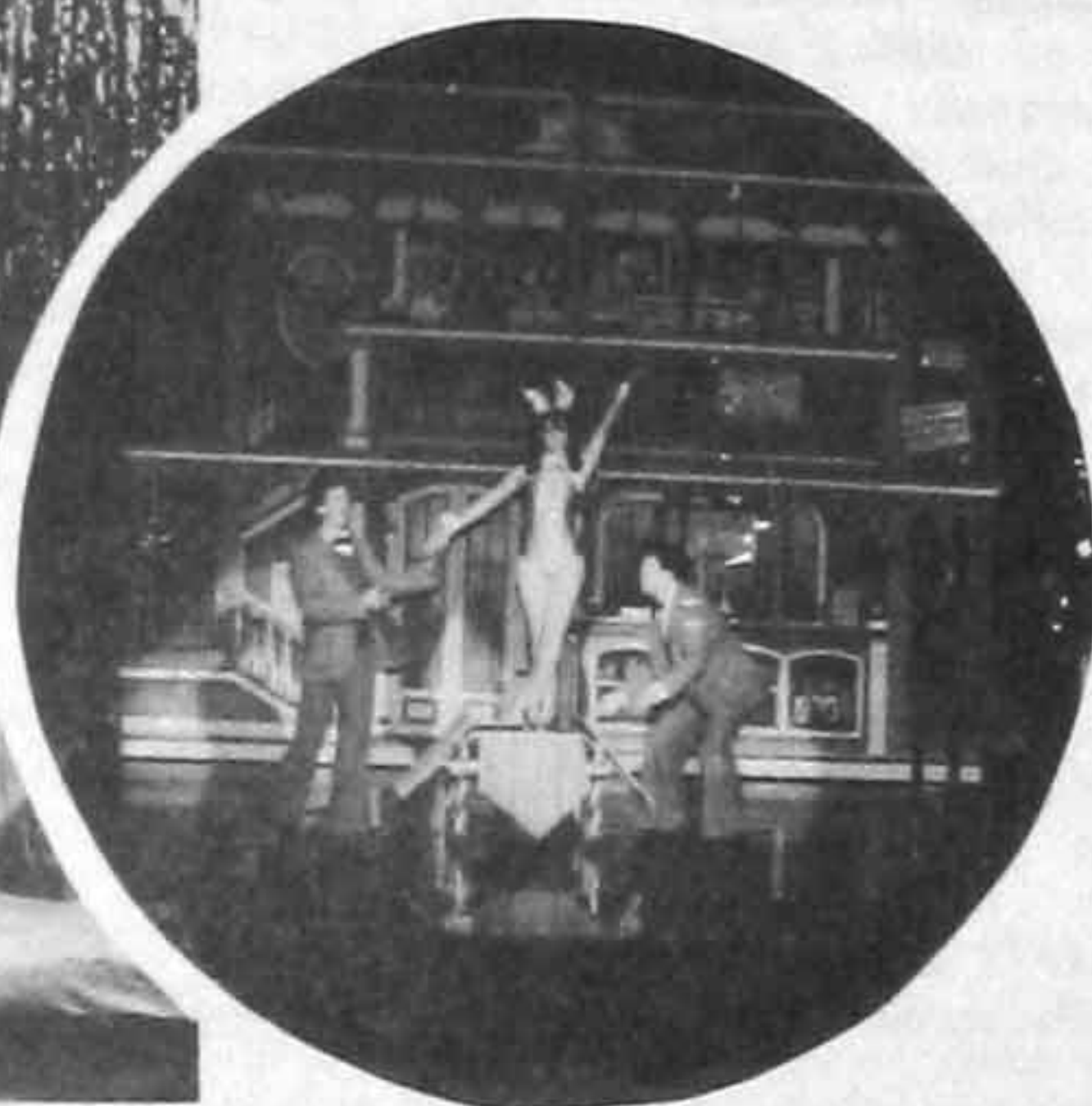
"The Success Book" Volumes I, II & III by Frances and Jay Marshall

Again, these works do not deal too heavily in the presentation and staging departments, but they do offer a wealth of knowledge gathered from top professionals. Practical advice on promotion, make-up, publicity, bookings, costuming, etc. You name it...it's in the Success Book.

I would also strongly urge that you study the related "theatre arts", as magic is becoming more and more a "total entertainment" medium. Any coaching or lessons you can acquire in dramatics, music, dance and voice will be most beneficial. The multi-talented magician will be the magician of tomorrow.

Marriott's GREAT AMERICA

The producers of "It's A Magic World", Paul Osborne and Gene Patrick, have brought to Marriott's giant theme parks a most elaborate illusion show, featuring over twenty-five major illusions. Throughout this book will be photos of this and other Paul Osborne produced shows.





Chalet Magic Co.

RT. 3

LIMESTONE, TENN. 37681

PH: (615) 257-2777

Well known as a builder of custom stage magic and illusions, George Kimery is in charge of the Chalet Magic Company in Limestone, Tennessee. Having bought many illusions from George, I can verify what you have probably already heard - excellent quality at reasonable prices. I am honored that George would let us in on a few pet secrets:

BUILDING TIPS:

"Use TITE-BOND glue or the yellow professional woodworker's glue for assembling. It works much better than the white woodworkers glue. Your local Sears hardware department sells the TITE-BOND. Also, mix the glue about half with water to make a solution to seal the edges of plywood before applying the sealer to the wood. This gives you a much nicer finish on the edge of the plywood."

"To prevent wood from splintering when you cut it, use sixty or seventy-two tooth carbide blades. Also, use masking tape or duct tape where you are making a cut. After the cut, peel the tape up."

"If your wood is sanded, filled and sealed properly, and you want a super paint job, take it to an automotive body shop. They will spray it at a reasonable cost if they don't have to get it ready to spray. Just use regular automotive enamel or lacquer. It will work fine on wood. Just make sure the sealer is compatible to the paint being used."

CLEANING ILLUSIONS:

"Household LEMON PLEDGE spray-on wax applied, then wiped off gives a nice look to illusions."

"A product called the TANNERY, much like a spray-on vinyl top dressing for autos is excellent for cleaning and giving a sheen to illusion bases covered with vinyl or imitation leather."

"A product called SIMI-CHROME, available at motorcycle shops, is made for cleaning and polishing polished aluminum. Great to clean up those polished metal and chrome pieces on illusions."

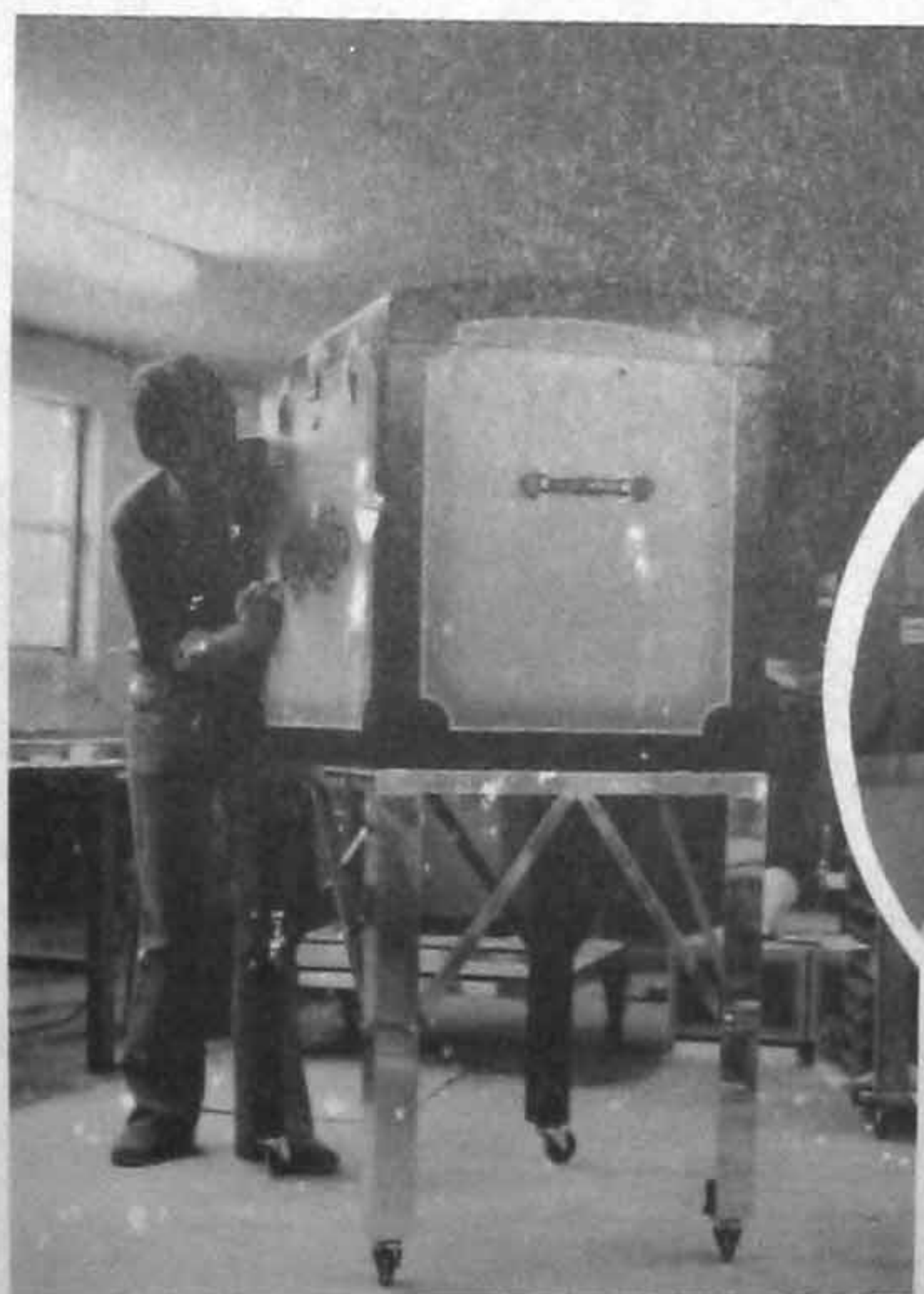
MISCELLANEOUS:

"Use a carpenter's nail apron to put your bolts and nuts in while assembling an illusion. Have a different apron for each illusion with all the proper bolts, pins, etc. in place. This will make all the items you need readily accessible."

"Use a mechanic's 'speed' handle to assemble. This is a wrench shaped much like a brace and bit tool. It takes socket type fittings and is really fast."

"You can buy a roll of 1/2" or 9/16" carpet foam at a carpet store to use to line cases to haul your illusions. It comes in 6' x 60' rolls and is quite economical if you have several cases to do."

George Kimery
Chalet Magic Co.



the LION & COBRA

INTRODUCTION

Based on the old Hippity Hop Rabbits, this re-themed version offers ample opportunity for audience involvement. Unless sheet metal and art are two of your strong points, this is also a good illusion to learn the skillful technique of "subcontracting". If you do a lot of stage or kid shows this prop is for you. Take the time to sit down and write some fun patter and you will have a trick with solid entertainment value.



EFFECT

On the stage rests two attractive thin boxes standing 32" off the ground. The magician explains that beneath one box resides the stately King of Beasts; beneath another the dreaded Kaboon Cobra, and it is the audience's responsibility to keep up with the whereabouts of these threats to mankind. Each box is wheeled to the far side of the stage as the magician first reveals the lion, then the cobra. At this point the audience realizes their task may not be that great.

The cartoon representations of these deadly animals are once again covered by their respective boxes. The standard Hippity Hop exchange now ensues with the lion and cobra changing places as the magician frantically runs from stage left to stage right to reveal "the magic".

The magic, unfortunately, is somewhat thin in that it is obvious that the magician is revolving each box before revealing its contents. The usual by-play occurs ending with the magician explaining he can't "turn them around" because beneath each box, on the other side is man's most dreaded foe; a menace to all mankind; a threat to civilization. The lion and cobra are uncovered and turned around to reveal - two skunks.

METHOD

These units are made just like the Hippity Hops, only larger and on their own casters bases. This makes for a lot of showmanship possibilities and their size reads well from the last row.

By reading our plans the easiest way to make this effect is as follows: Cut out the basic shapes from 3/8" stock (you can use the 5'6" x 4' grid to duplicate this shape.) Make two of these. Remember the bottom 1" will notch into the base for stability. Once done, cut out a cardboard template (delete the bottom inch, but include enough scrap at the top to fashion a hook.) Take this template to a local sheet metal shop to have it cut out and the edges ground smooth. You will require two of these metal gimmicks.

Take all the measurements required to build the two small bases and prepare to begin on them as soon as you take the two wood cut-outs and two metal gimmicks and this plan to your local sign shop or college art department. Point to the cut-outs and say, "Do that,

I'll see you in a week." Once home you can complete the bases as indicated.

All that remains now is to build the two 1' 6" x 2' 5" x 4 1/2" boxes out of 3/8" lumber. You can decorate them with a bamboo contact paper or a fancy paint job with your initials - your choice.

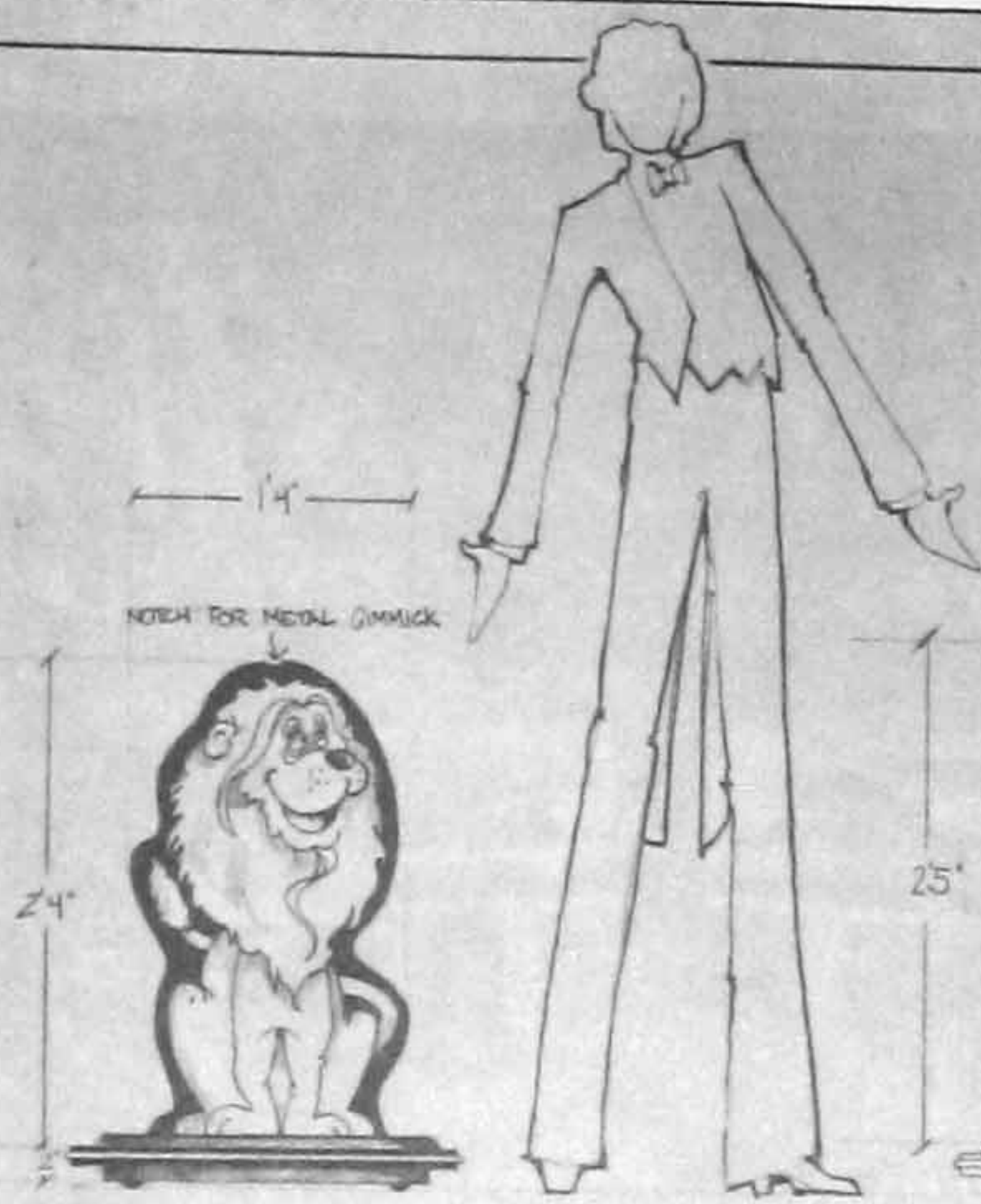
Once you retrieve and assemble all the elements, practice this one just as you would the Hippity Hops, but remember they are bigger and on casters, so you can do so much more. Playing with the trick will unveil all the nice little subtleties.

One other thought too, by adding a 1' x 2' piece of 1/2" ply with 1/4" molding, you can fashion a nice top for each box; which means throughout your act you can use them as side tables.

We performed this trick over 4,000 times in amusement parks across the country. Take it from me, it's worth building.



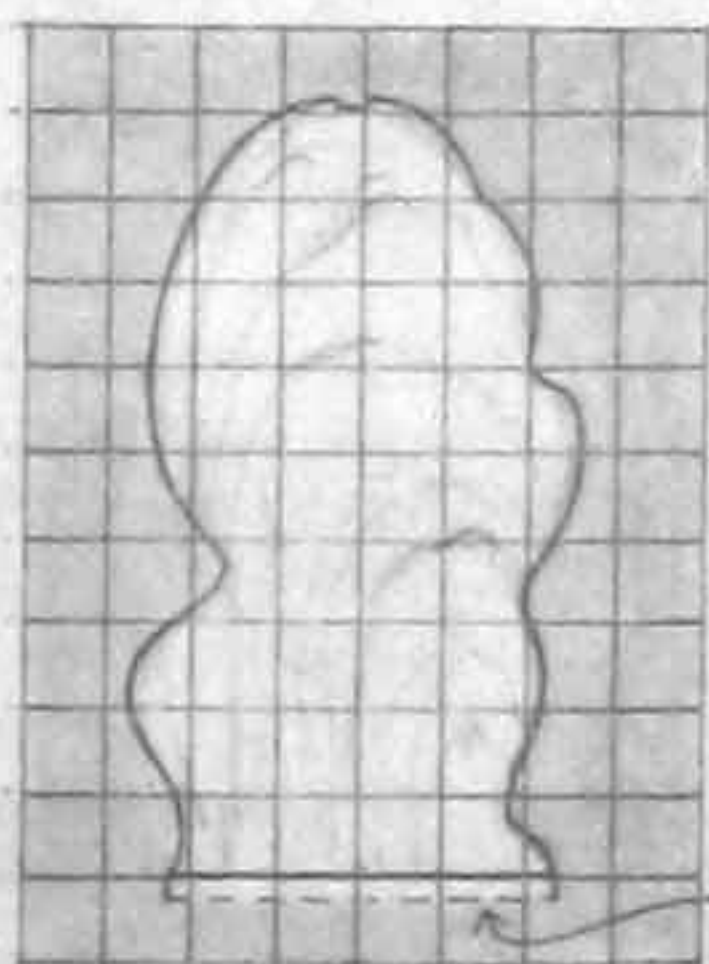
After first seeing the plans for this illusion, Mark Evans and Marlynn constructed it for their "Mad World Of Magic" traveling promotion show. Notice the boxes can be finished in any manner. They chose to number theirs to further help the audience keep track of critters. Combine my plans with your originality to make a prop that is truly you!



FRONT ELEVATION

1'10"

NOTE: BEHIND THIS LION PAINT SKUNK SEE BELOW



CUT THIS SHAPE FROM $\frac{3}{8}$ " STOCK
EACH SQUARE = 6" X 6"
MAKE TWO - PAINT LION ON ONE SIDE SKUNK ON OTHER
- PAINT COBRA ON ONE SIDE SKUNK ON OTHER



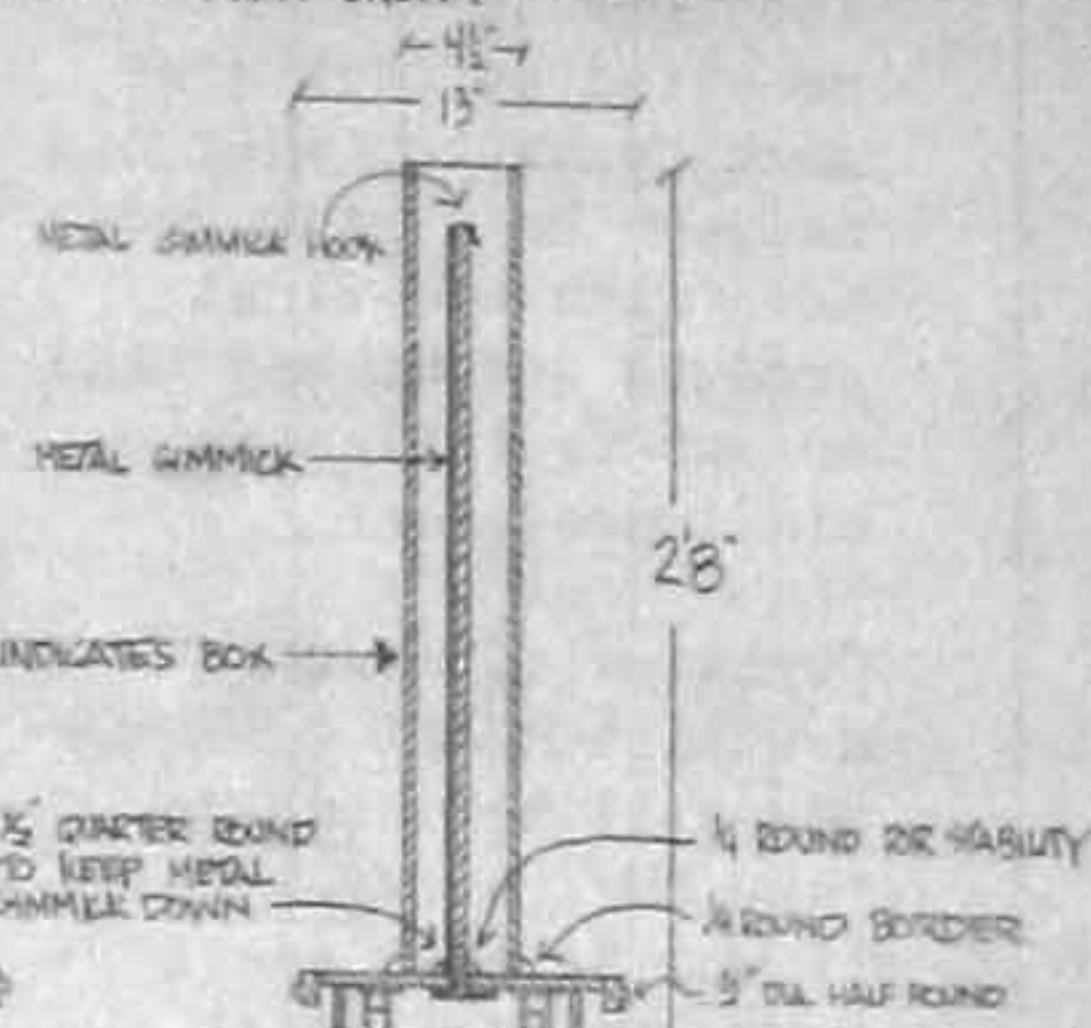
PAINT SKUNKS
BEHIND LION & COBRA

NOTE: SKUNK IS PAINTED IN
MED GREY TO STAND OUT
FROM BLACK BORDERS

NOTE: BEHIND THIS COBRA PAINT SKUNK SEE BELOW



FRONT ELEVATION



SIDE CUTAWAY



NOTE:

CUT LINE ALL CARTOON ANIMALS
WITH BLACK LINE
PAINT IN ALL HI-GLOSS ENAMELS



HANG BEHIND LION



HANG BEHIND COBRA

CUT METAL GIMMICKS
FROM $\frac{1}{16}$ " SHEET METAL

PAUL OSBORNE
1981

As I have said many times, I hope my plans are only a beginning to your own creativity.

After purchasing my New Thin Model Sawing plans the Amazing Mr. Art modified my feet gimmick to better suit his needs. He's pictured here with the final product and he was kind enough to let us in on his improvement:

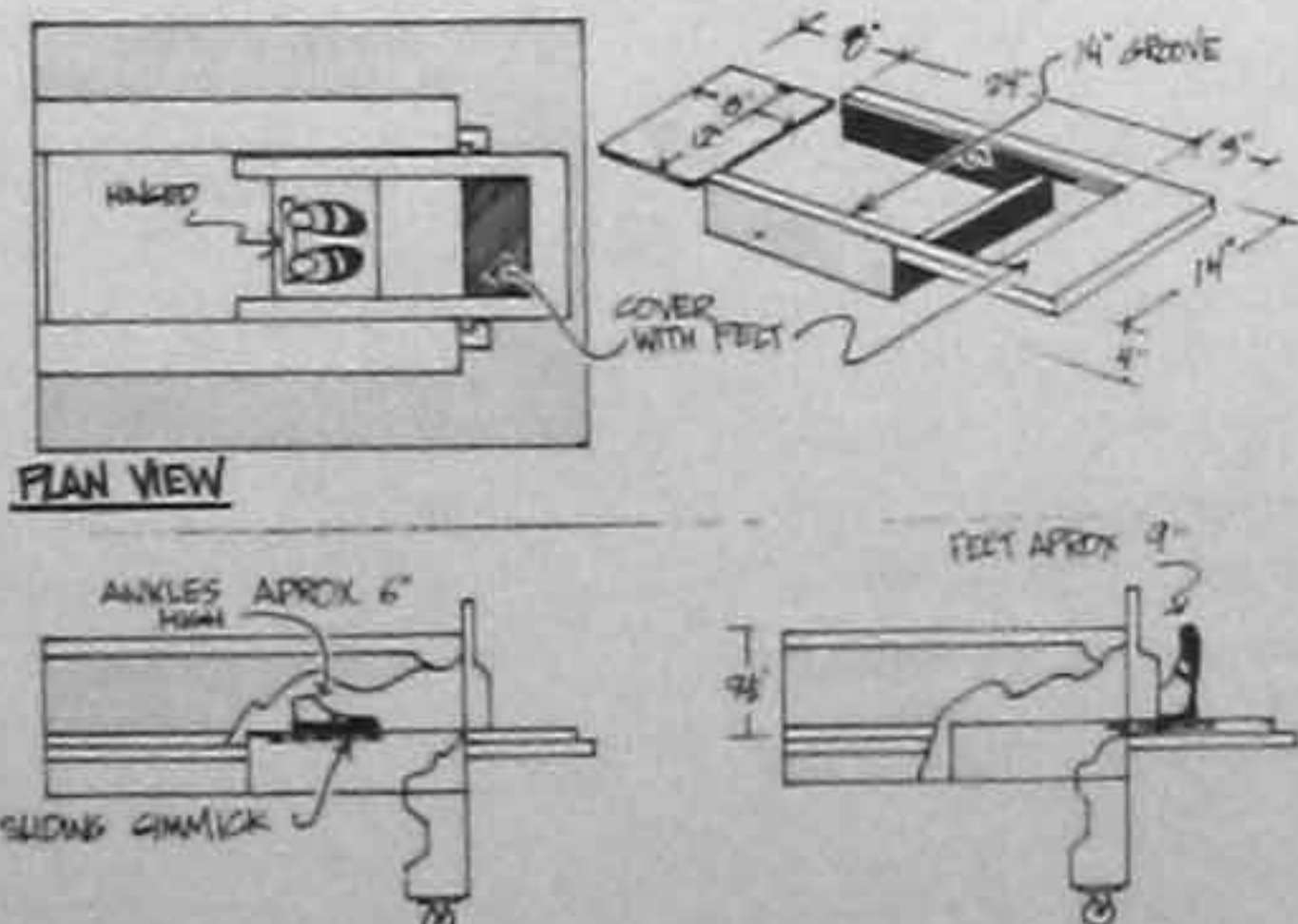
"With my changes in the New Thin Model Sawing you will be able to make the boxes thinner. If you have an assistant who is a little on the heavy side, this enables you to lower the depth of the table box without any effect of changing the appearance of the illusion. Also with the gimmick that I have you will note that the feet are a little higher than the boxes, creating a natural appearance.

With this gimmick you can have the top doors hinged so that they can open to the front or the rear. The gimmick cannot be seen.

I perform it in this manner: Of course, I display the illusion and present my assistant, and then I pull the blades. I lay them against the base legs in the rear. I open both doors and help my assistant into the box where she stands and displays herself for a moment. Then I help her into a sitting position in the head box, making sure her feet are placed in the foot box, keeping her knees up and visible. I go to the foot end and pull the foot stock. I place the stock against the box, partially hiding the opening, then I reach in as though I am grabbing her ankles. In doing this I push the gimmick feet toward the assistant. This move allows me to put the feet in an upright position. Then the assistant pushes the sliding gimmick, causing it to come out to the end of the box opening. I then place the foot stock back into position.

Next I go to the head box, pull the head stock, lower the assistant, place the assistant in position and insert the head stock. Finally, I proceed to close the doors, insert blades, cut girl in half, etc. etc.

Upon completion the doors are opened, the head stock is removed, the assistant arises and the head stock is

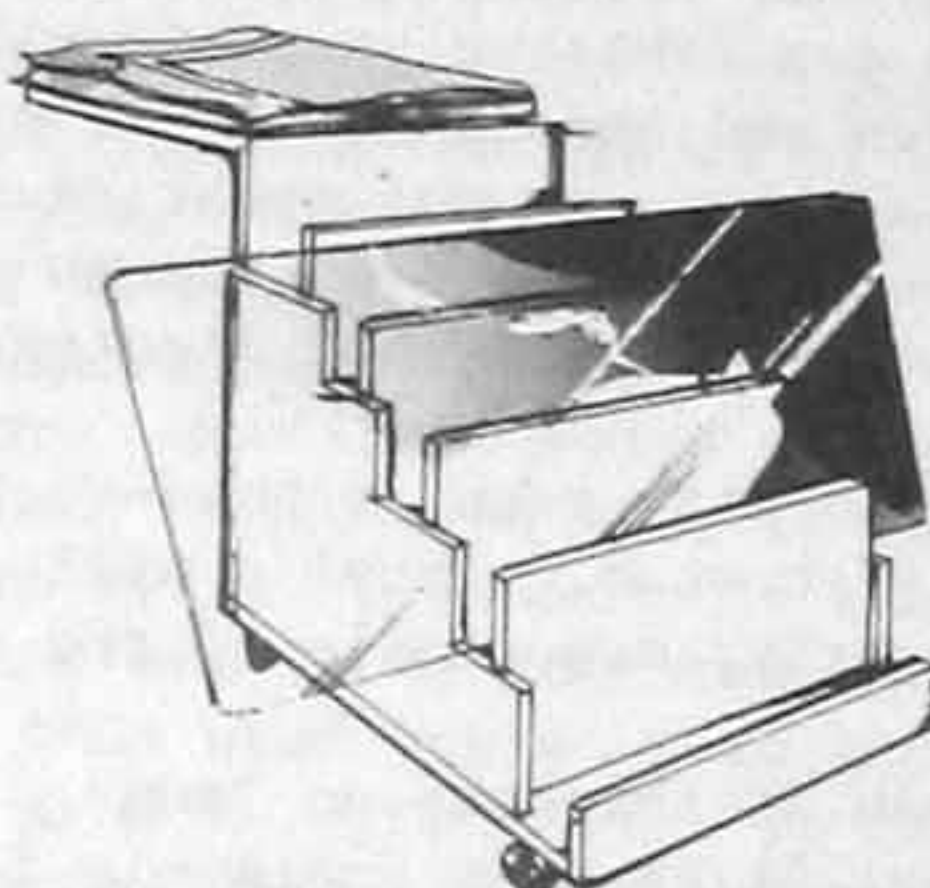


replaced. Here again, a natural move - I remove the foot stock and lay it against the end box to partially hide the gimmick feet. Then I grab the feet and push them towards the assistant. This allows me to push the feet back to their original position and at the same time I push the sliding gimmick toward the assistant. This move allows the assistant to raise her legs so her knees are again visible and I help her out of the box. Applause!!"

TIP...

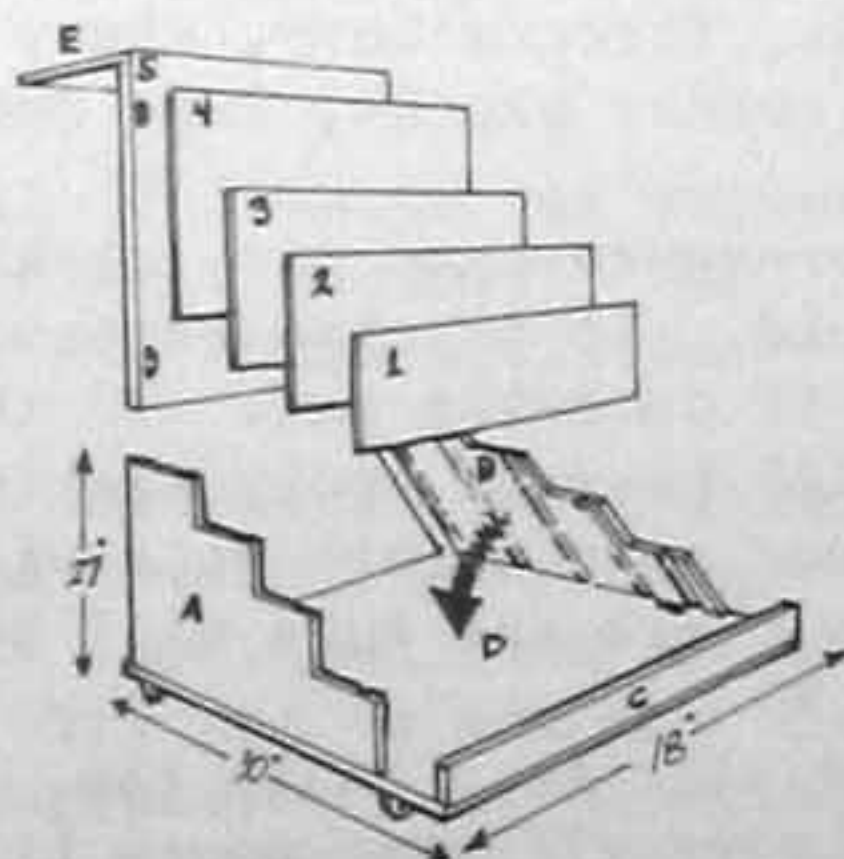
The Crystal Casket

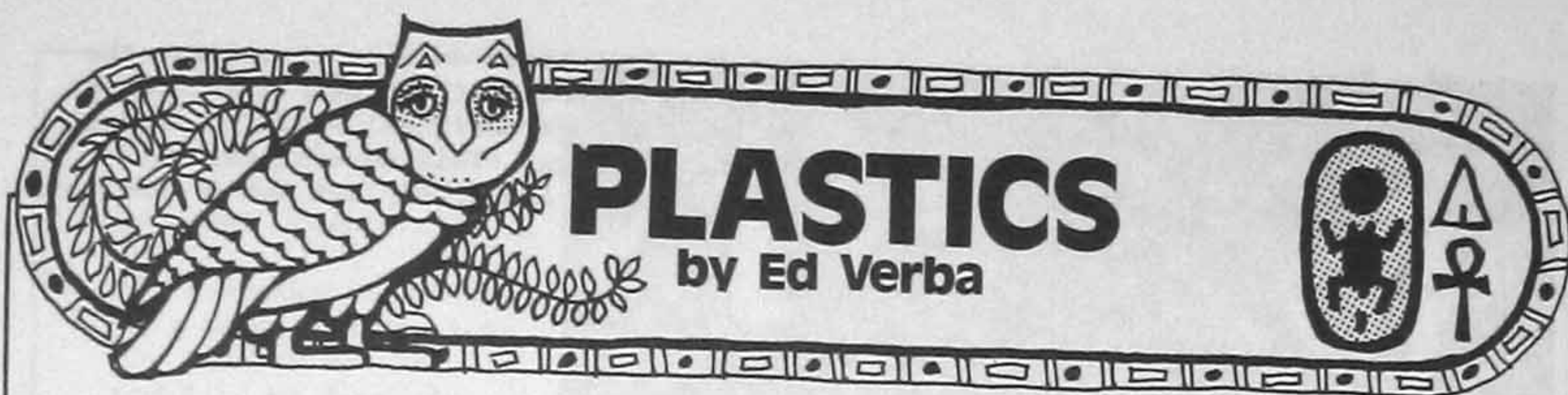
Have you ever bought or made a Crystal Casket and only during rehearsal found that you had no place to store the six plexiglass sides backstage? I have! Solution... the plexiglass holder. Make it from scrap 1/2" plywood to the dimensions shown. Sides A and B hinge to fold in and are grooved to receive panels 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1. Panel 5 pin hinges to A & B forming the back wall and ledge E is designed to hold the Crystal Casket cloth.



PLEXIGLASS HOLDER

The two small side pieces rest against panel 1, the back against panel 2, the front against panel 3, the top against panel 4 and the bottom against panel 5, all staggered up the holder. For extra protection, staple old carpeting to the holder where the plexi sides touch it.





"As soon as you have developed some skill with your woodworking tools you may want to continue your magic prop building with plastic. There are many types of plastic available to the commercial industry, but the most common type used by the "do-it-yourselfer" is ACRYLIC. Plexiglass, Lucite and Acrylite are all brand names of acrylic that you will find available to you. Acrylic is great for making magic props because it can be drilled, sawn and shaped to almost any shape desired. Plastic is more expensive than wood in general, but has one great advantage over using wood in some magic props. The advantage of being able to see through all or part of the prop leaves the audience with a feeling that the prop is not gimmicked.

Acrylic can be worked with regular wood-working tools, but more care has to be exercised than when working with wood. Acrylic will shatter and chip if the tools and/or material is not handled properly, especially if the material is cold.

Acrylic is available in thicknesses from .03" to 4" and in many sizes. The most common acrylic is clear but it is also available in many colors. It should be pointed out that it can be painted and it may be cheaper to paint the clear acrylic than to special order a color. You can also buy an acrylic that has a mirror finish. It is ideal for props that need a mirror. It is lighter than a glass mirror and there is less chance of breakage. The most common thickness of acrylic is 1/8". 3/16" and 1/4" are also very popular but, of course, are more expensive. The cost of the acrylic is by the square foot. The sheets come in 4' x 8', but most suppliers will cut you smaller sizes at a higher price per square foot. Many suppliers have odd size scrap bins that are full of small odd size pieces that are left over from special jobs. The cost is usually by the pound and is a bargain for someone who wants to experiment and practice. Other acrylic material that can be purchased are tubes and rods. The tubes come in many sizes and can be transformed into candles, wands, firecrackers, etc.. The rods are round, square and triangular. They can be used as corner blocks, legs and braces.

Acrylic sheets are covered with pressure-sensitive masking paper. This paper protects the material from getting scratched. It is also necessary to prevent the acrylic from getting chipped and cracked when it is being cut. If the paper has been removed and more cutting is necessary, you will have to apply masking tape to the area where the cut will take place. The tubes and rods do not come with the protective masking paper, so masking tape has to be applied where the cuts will be made.

The basic tool for cutting the acrylic is a table saw. The plastic suppliers do sell special blades, but you can save yourself some money by buying a veneer blade. These blades have many teeth per inch and will cut the material with little danger of cracking and chipping. Fine metal cutting blades will do the job also. It is a good idea to keep a blade separate for plastic cutting only.

Drilling can be done on a drill press or with a portable drill. Although regular twist drills can be used, the cutting edges should be modified to prevent grabbing. It may be worth your while to purchase a few popular size drill bits from your plastic supplier rather than grinding down your regular drill bits. Some helpful hints about drilling:

Back up the acrylic piece that is being drilled with a scrap of plywood. The drill bit will continue into the solid wood and will prevent the chipping of the hole.

Drill the holes slightly larger than the hole for a pop rivet or screw. Use a home-made paper washer with the rivet then, after the rivet breaks, tear away the paper leaving a slight space between the material and the rivet ends.

Use round head screws and back off a half turn after tightening. Both these hints allow the acrylic to expand and will avoid local stresses.

Most hole saw blades have many teeth per inch and are already ideal for cutting plastic.

CEMENTING ACRYLIC

Capillary cementing with a solvent (Methylene Chloride "MDC", Ethylene Dichloride "EDC", or 1-1-2 Trichlorethane) is an easy method of joining two pieces of acrylic plastic. Don't let all that chemical talk discourage you. Your plastic supplier can furnish you with an applicator and the necessary solvent to put into it. The applicator looks like a long hypodermic needle with an eyewash container at the end of it. It is easy to use and the instructions come with the applicator. Cut the acrylic pieces to the sizes needed. The pieces should fit accurately. Any joint area that is part of the original surface can be left alone. If the saw-cut is not very smooth, it should be wet-sanded or finished on a joiner or shaper. Edges that are to be cemented should never be polished. If that all sounds a little more than what you want to get involved with there is another inexpensive tool that will make the job easy. It is a simple EDGE SCRAPER. It is inexpensive and can be purchased when you buy the applicator. The edge scraper does exactly as its name implies, it fits the work piece on a ninety degree angle and a metal part of the tool scrapes the cut edge smoothly. It is very easy to use and does an excellent job. In a pinch the back part of a file can be used, but you will want the edge scraper to be one of the standard tools in your workshop.

Now that the acrylic is cut to size and the edges are smooth enough for cementing, the project can be assembled. Remove the protective masking paper. Assemble the pieces using small strips of masking tape to hold the project together. Apply the solvent to each joint with the solvent applicator and always KEEP THE JOINT BEING CEMENTED HORIZONTAL. Let everything dry thoroughly. The following warning about the solvent should not be ignored:

CAUTION: Solvents may be toxic if inhaled for extended periods of time or swallowed; many are also flammable. Use in a well ventilated area; keep away from flame and small children.

Although in most cases cement or solvent is applied to one surface only, the solvent will soften the other surface and create the necessary bond. This occurs within twenty to thirty seconds so it is important that no pressure is added during this twenty to thirty second period. Try not to get any of the solvent on other parts of the acrylic as it will mar the surface. Clear epoxy cement can also be used to glue the acrylic. You can use the epoxy if you feel that an extra strong bond is needed, however, you can also buy an extra thick solvent that is used for a stronger bond. On large pieces or boxes you may want to use corner blocks for extra support. The blocks are cemented in the same manner.

After you get your feet wet in a few plastic projects, you may want to advance yourself with polishing the finished project and making projects that have a bend in them. Bending and/or shaping is called FORMING and is done by using a strip heater. It is not a complicated job and for more information about it and also more information on working with acrylic in general you can write to:

CRAFTICS, INC.
2701 North Pulaski Road
Chicago, IL 60639

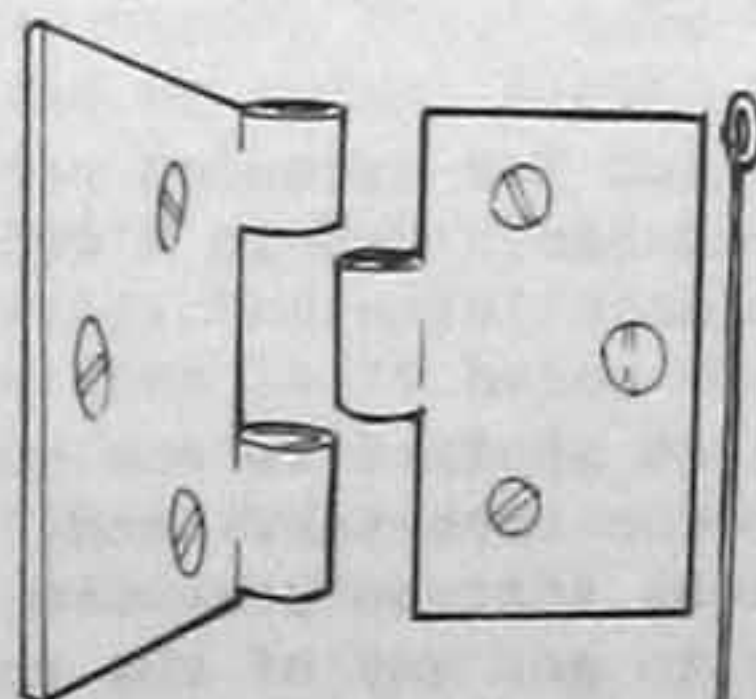
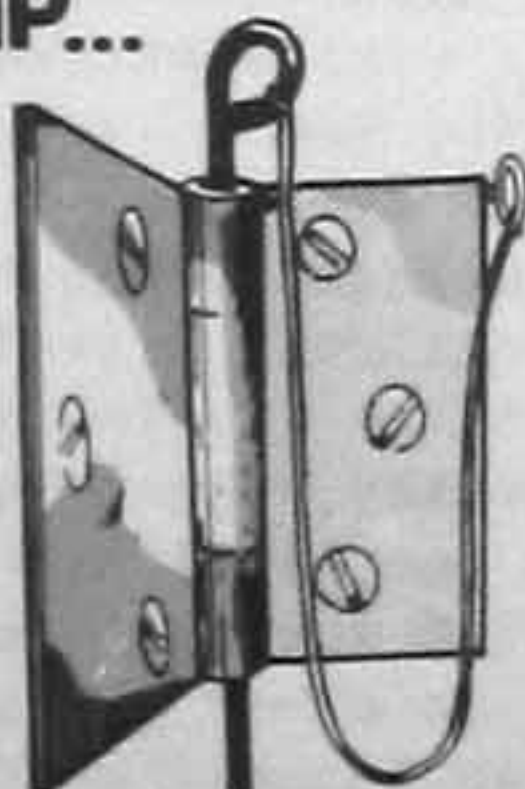
There are many home projects that you can tackle that will give you the necessary experience in working with acrylic. Most plastic supply houses have patterns for projects that are useful around the home. If you want to get right into a magic project, start with a small mirror box or adapt some of the magic props that you may have on hand to a new use. For example, do you have on hand a Gloves To Dove Tray or a Balloon to Dove Tray? Here is an idea that will give this prop a new useful life:

Put a flange on the bottom of the tray. Make an acrylic box that fits over the tray. Now for the idea. The magician walks out on the stage...removes his gloves...tosses them on the table and they change into a DOVE. Your assistant places a clear plastic box on the table (tray) and the produced dove, along with any others that are produced are placed into their clear viewing cage. The box gives an added reason for a prop that would normally be taken off the stage and the audience can now see the doves clearly without any fear on your part that they will fly away.

This plastic box on a tray can also be adapted for a canary cage for the Orange, Lemon, Egg and Canary trick and a modern dove basket for the Birds From Nowhere trick."



TIP...



Hinges

Some performers, prone to losing pin hinges, install a small eyelet next to their pin hinges and tie off the pin to this eyelet. Tear-down and set-up goes much faster when you have the pin hanging right next to the hinge.

Tony Spina's SILKSPENSION

INTRODUCTION

Not only is Tony Spina "the man in the carpeted office" at Tannen's Magic, New York, but he's also a creative illusionist with many new and fresh ideas. "Silkspension" is a unique twist on the three sword effect. We chose the below stage Aga method to accomplish this miracle, but a behind the curtain method could be utilized just as well. With the proper staging, costuming, music and lighting this illusion could easily be the hit of your show.



Thank you, Tony Spina for this great illusion idea!

EFFECT

Standing center stage the magician produces a silk. With a flip of the wrist another silk appears tied to the first. As it's untied, yet another appears. Once untied, all three handkerchiefs are carried back to a small platform and clipped in place, one after the other. As if conducting an orchestra, the magician gestures and each silk flutters up, resting only on one corner. After some by-play all three silks are magically erect. The magician's young assistant is introduced, hypnotized and laid to rest on the uppermost tips of the three silks. With a snap of his fingers the magician causes each silk to drop from below the suspended young lady until she is floating completely unsupported. She floats up...she floats down...up come the silks...and off she is lifted as each silk is plucked from the platform and the performers take a well deserved bow.

METHOD

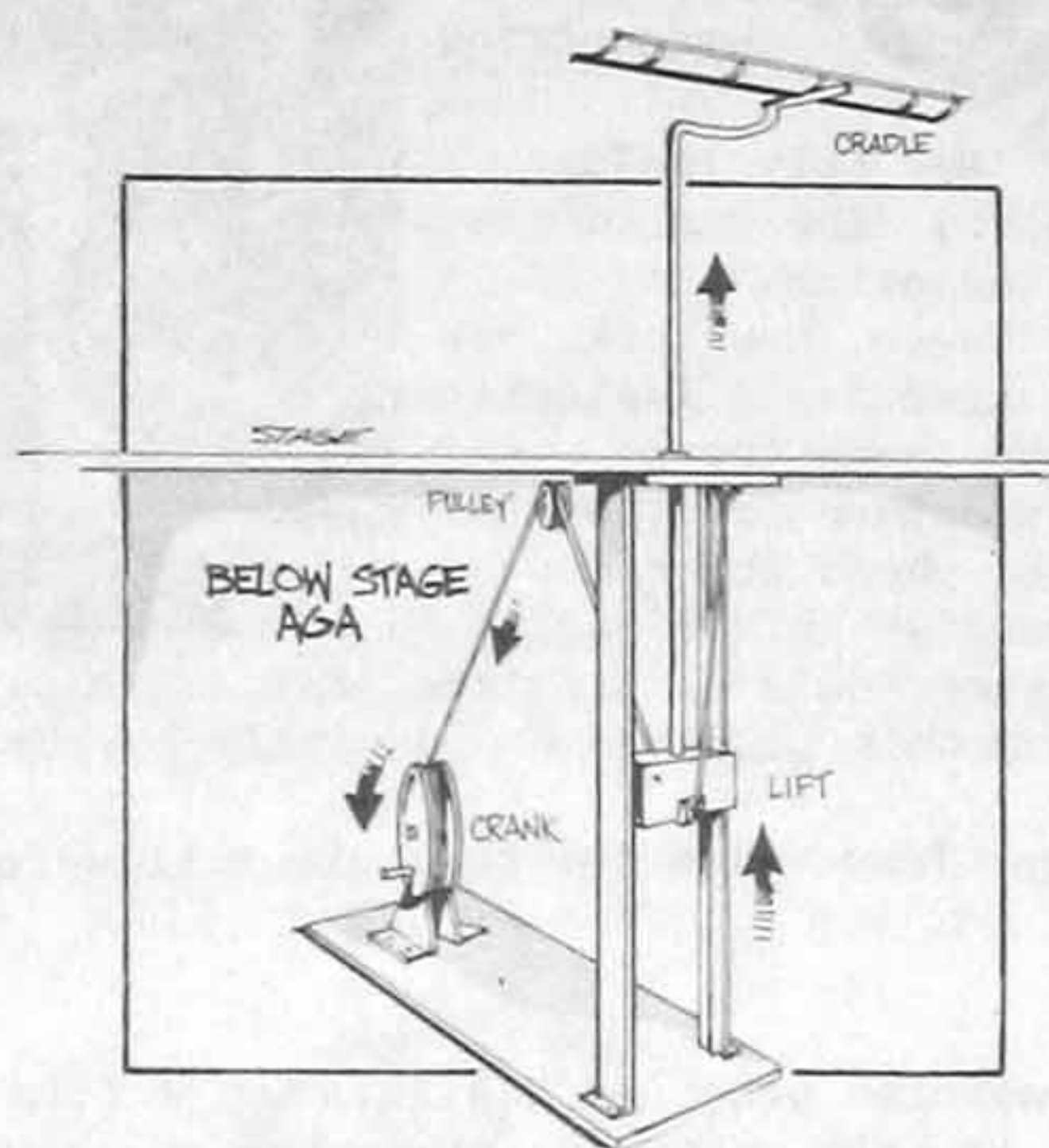
The silk production can happen by your favorite method. Tony Spina's "Ball O' Silk" or Sam Berlands "Silks From Nowhere" are both good and, of course, available from Tannen's. The secret behind the elevation of the three silks is the diagramed platform. Within this base are three 6" squirrel cage blowers, positioned approximately 20" apart. The silks are clipped directly above the blower tips. Notice in our plan view the thin mesh screen wire mounted above the blowers to prevent the silks from jamming down in the holes. The blowers should be positioned so as to slightly blow the silks back at the "suspended" assistant. The platform itself is built from all 1/2" plywood. The French legs can be cut from 4" x 4" stock on your band saw. Directly behind the three blowers is a 4' 2" x 12" x 1 1/2" deep pit to receive the cradle.

For the actual levitation of the girl, the below stage Aga is recommended. This requires a basic lift mechanism as diagramed and an unseen assistant to operate. The cradle and lift bar are made from 1" steel tubing, covered in black Duvatine. This unit is brought up into place as the blowers are fluttering the silks. The black art principle is utilized here, so watch your lighting. Once the girl is on the cradle and the magician is standing in front of the lift bar, the lights can be brought up to a certain extent.

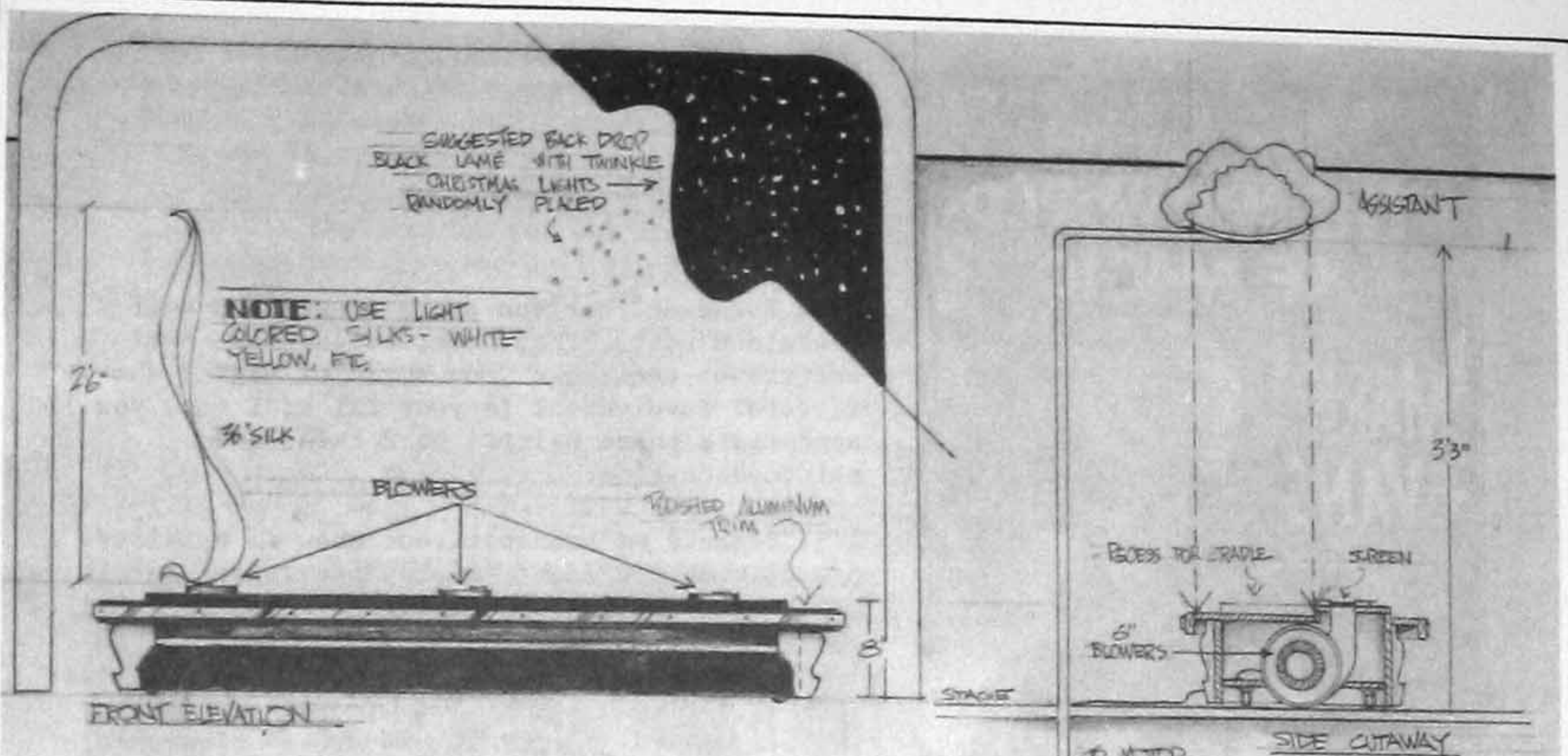
The background for this illusion is most critical. A black lame' with Christmas twinkle lights randomly placed is suggested. This can be framed in with 5/8" plywood as illustrated. In low lighting the cradle raising in front of this backdrop goes virtual-

ly undetected.

Tony Spina has given us the beginning of a fantastic idea. As with all well presented illusions, it will require your tender, loving care in building, rehearsal and presentation.



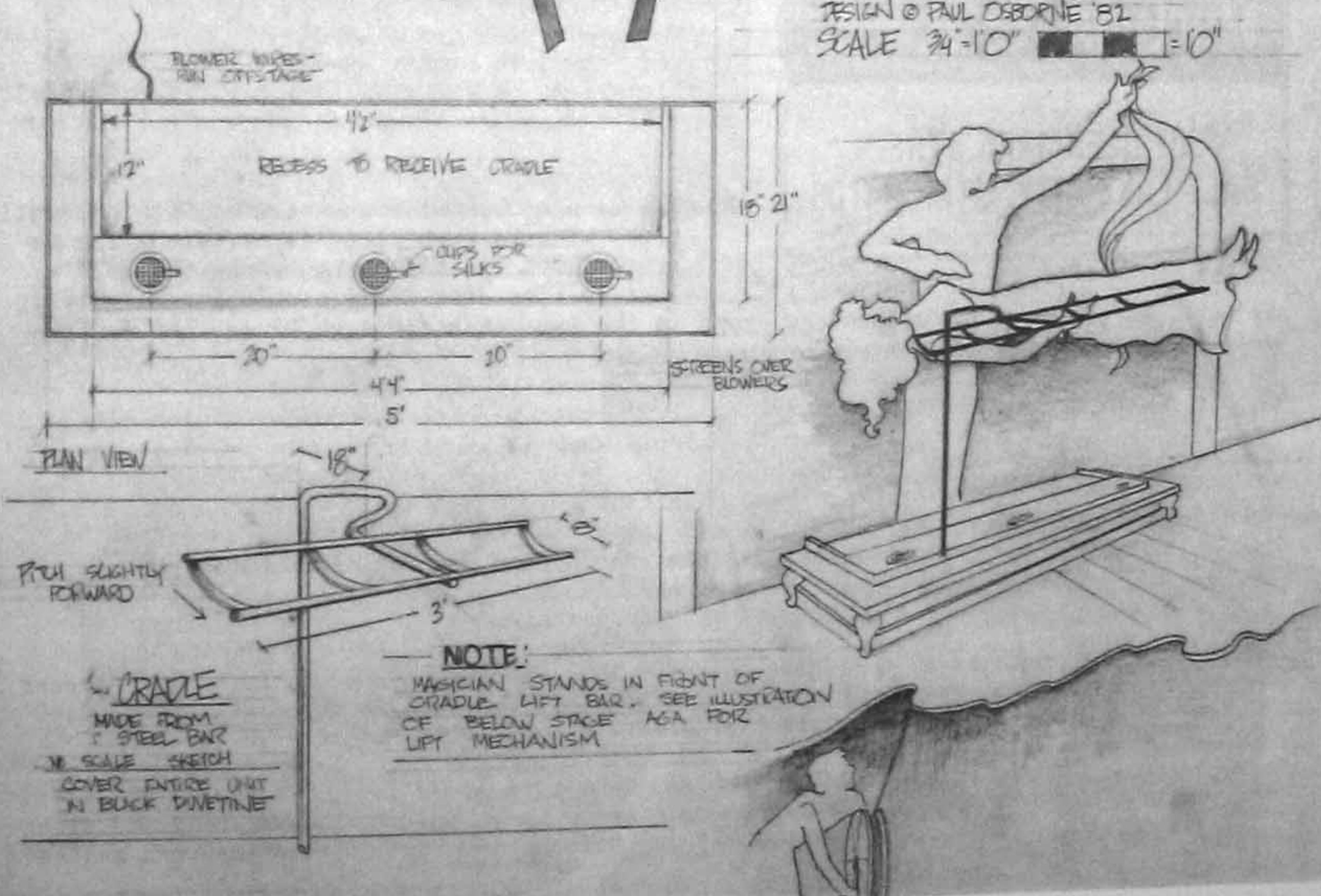
Spina & Co.
presents MYSTERIES OF MODERN MAGIC



TONY SPINA'S

SILKSPENSION

DESIGN © PAUL OSBORNE '82
SCALE 3/4" = 1'0" 1" = 1'0"



ONE OF THE MOST ELABORATE
SHOWS IN AMERICA

THE MAD WORLD OF MAGIC

STARRING

**MARK
EVANS**

WITH

MarLynn

FUN FILLED FANTASY
FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY

**2761 GLENMARE STREET
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84106**

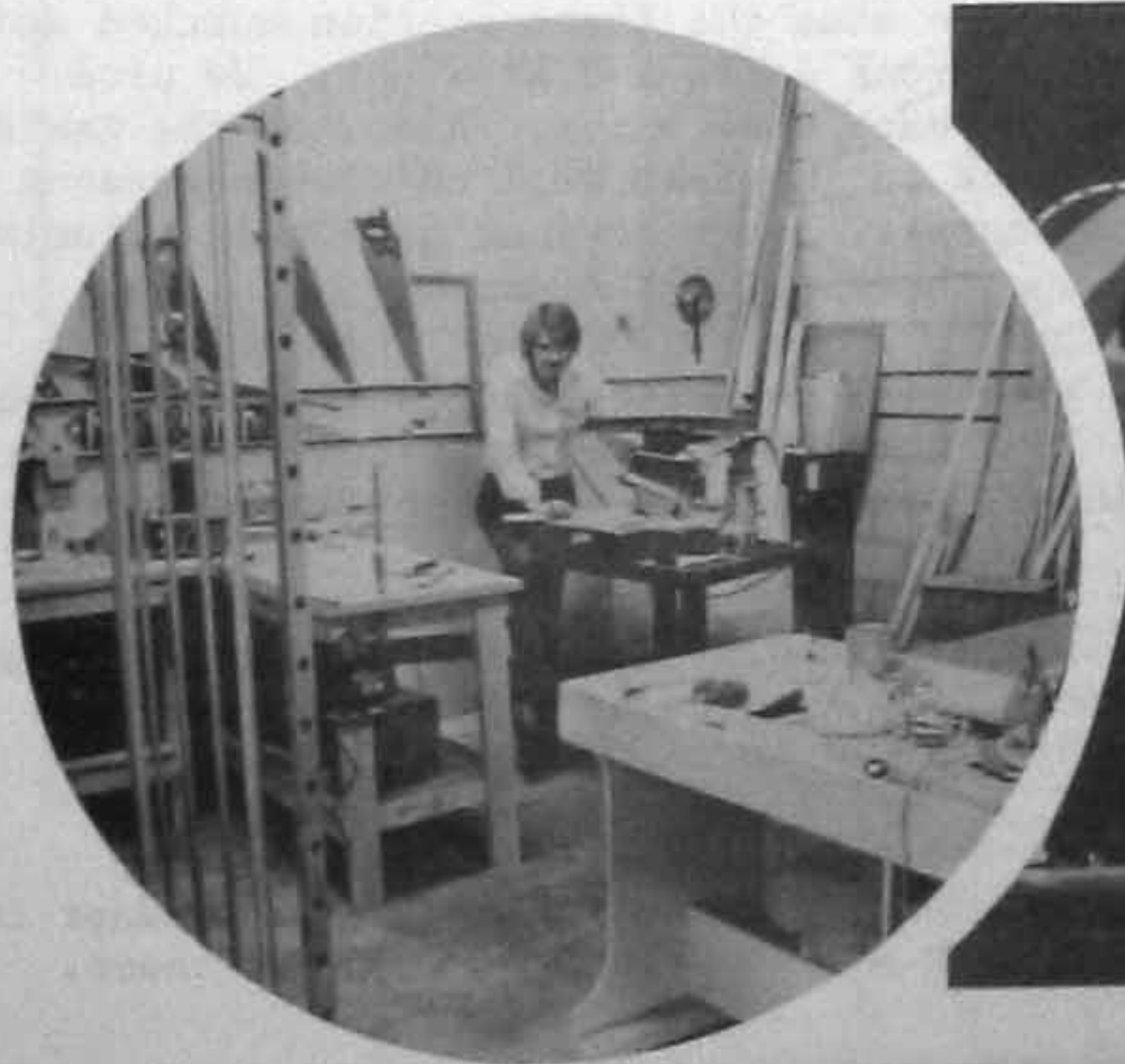
Mark Evans and Marlynn are a completely self contained unit. They book, build, sew, perform and travel their own "Mad World Of Magic" show. If total involvement is your thing, I know you'll appreciate these helpful performing and maintenance tips:

1. "Because we transport our show in a thirty-five foot trailer, we have space and we always leave botanias and feather flowers open all the time. We have crates large enough to allow us to do so. Our flowers all look like the day we bought them. The only time they are closed up is just prior to performance. Our botania is almost ten years old and looks like it just came from the factory."
2. "If we use a load-in crew we like to have junior high school age boys as they are strong enough, but aren't as sassy as older kids or adults. If you want something in a particular spot the junior high age boy will place it there. An older boy will ask why and an adult will tell you why you shouldn't place it there and tell you a better place to put it."
3. "We always work with the work lights on at all times because each place is different for us and we have black packing crates. We don't want to trip over everything while the lights are out. We try to place crates and props in the same location each place, but factors don't let us each and every time."
4. "We always check the main curtain and figure out which rope opens and which closes and mark them, so as not to look like fools when it is time to open or close them."
5. "We mark the light switches with masking tape so we know which is red, blue, etc."
6. "We take and put small pieces of masking tape at the opening of the main curtain both inside and out. This way we can find the opening and avoid the embarrassing moment of not being able to get through the curtain."
7. "All of our music is on individual cassettes. Each trick or scene is on a different one. This way we can change the running order of the show if necessary. When we were on reel-to-reel this couldn't be done without fast-forwarding or reversing continually."
8. "We have three full length mirrors back stage; one on stage left, one on stage right and one in the center backstage. This way we can check makeup, costumes and smiles each time we enter or leave the stage."

9. "One little tip on building...I have found a little handle affair that attaches to a spray can of paint. Now I pull the trigger instead of pushing the tip with my finger. This makes each can a professional spray gun almost. The pressure is the same and it is less tiring."
10. "I do all the booking for our show. The reason I don't use an advance man is the fact they usually over-sell the product."
11. "During the fourteen years we've been doing magic professionally, we've tried to live by an old saying we heard: 'Show business is two words, the larger word being business....' And that's how we operate, we have a business."



THE MAD WORLD OF MAGIC



THE CABANA ILLUSION

INTRODUCTION

Initially pictured in Book One, this illusion is a unique slant on the Doll House. Credit for the original concept of this illusion must go to Tom Palmer, although we updated and revised it somewhat.

EFFECT

A small beach cabana is shown empty and revolved to display all four sides. When the doors are opened again, a small "bathing beauty Barbie" doll has appeared. Again the unit is revolved and out pops a full sized bathing beauty!

METHOD

The Doll House style illusion obviously requires little explanation. The cabana itself and its steps are made from 3/8" birch ply cut to the dimensions indicated on our plan. The inner traps swing out of the way to each wall as indicated in our plan view. The floor trap and its frame (both made from 3/4" ply) rest on a half-round support within the base. As shown, this trap piano hinges forward out of the girl's way.

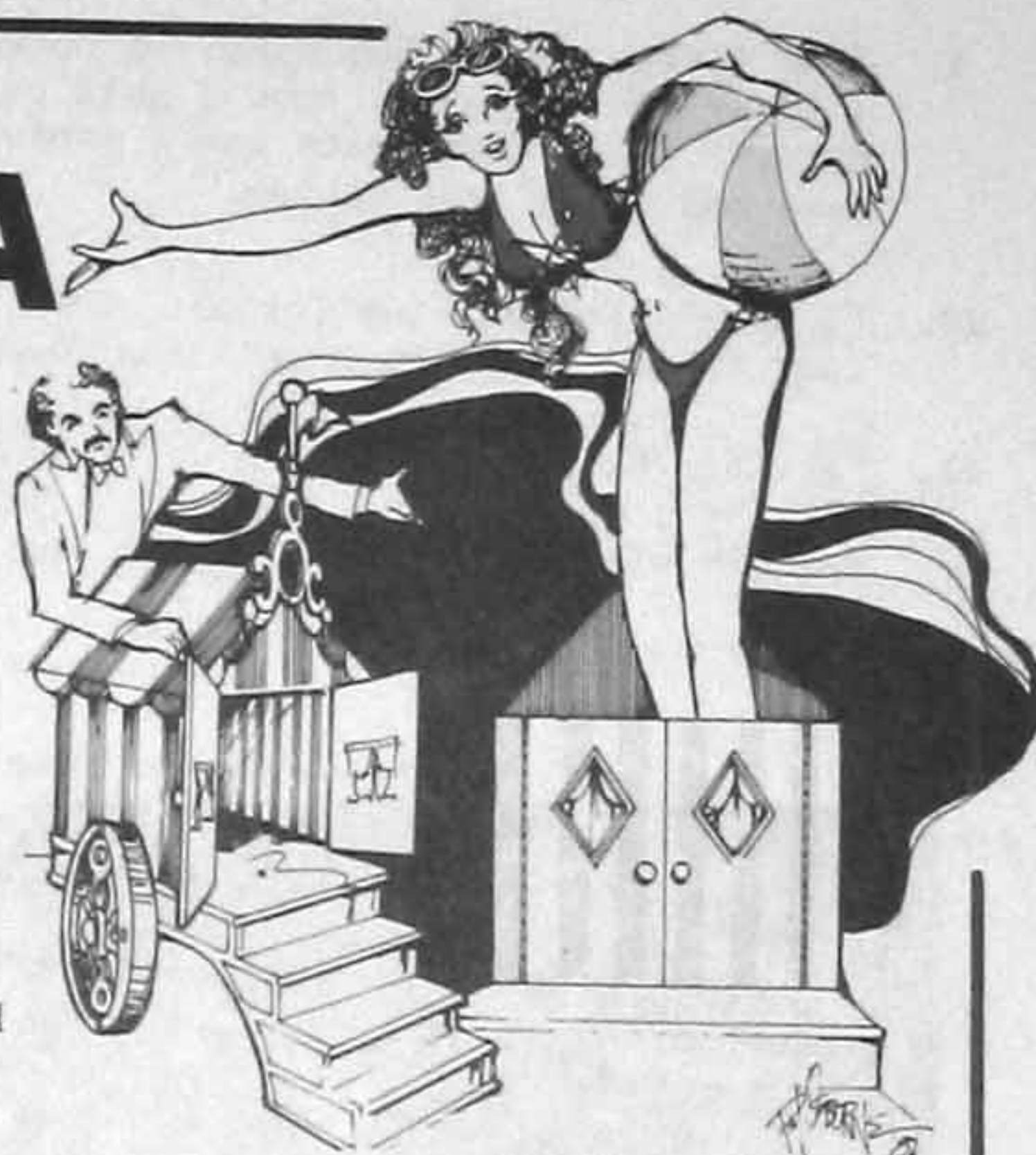
The wheels are made from laminated 1" white pine as in our gridded design. These wheels attach to the cabana by use of a bearing swivel, much like the ones used in "Lazy Susans". You should allow for about a 200 lb. load limit.

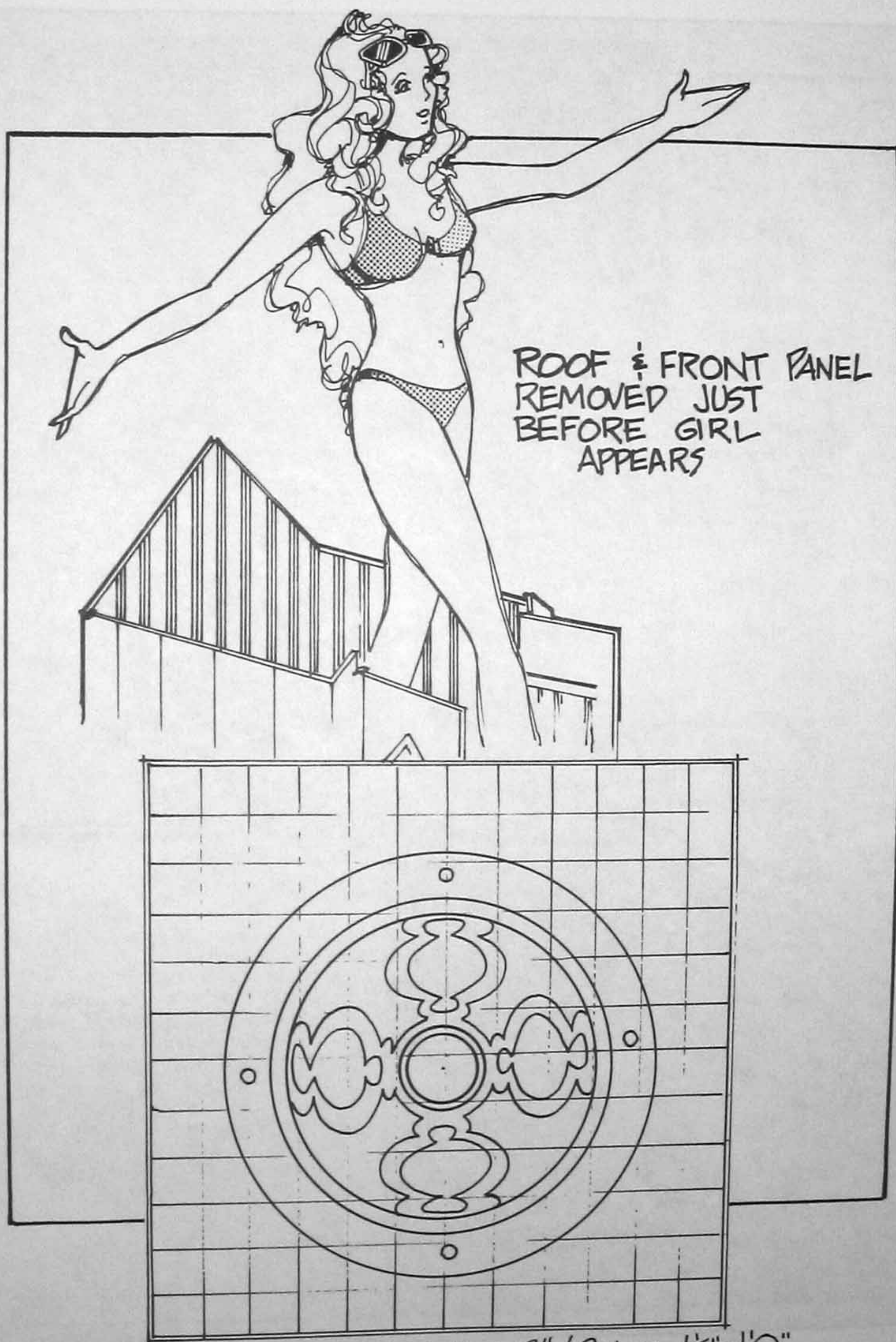
The roof is a separate unit that sits on the little house. Just before the girl appears, your assistant removes the roof. Also we made the front section notched and detachable so the girl can merely kick open the front doors and step out. We used bright yellows, whites and golds to give this a beach house look. Also, on the inside we thinned the interior stripes as they went back to the fake wall to give a greater illusion of depth. These inner and, for that matter, outer stripes give this illusion a vertically thin look as well as adding to the themeing of the prop.

In performance the unit is brought out with your girl assistant inside sitting behind the inner traps holding the doll. The magician shows the house empty and upon closing the front doors, revolves the entire illusion. Again opening the front doors, the small bathing beauty has appeared!

Again the front doors are closed and the illusion turned around. As this is done the girl is getting in position to stand up. The cabana is brought around, the roof removed and up stands your full sized bathing beauty.

The Cabana illusion is just another version of the old Doll House method, but its themeing is the original touch. If this "look" fits your presentation style, adapt it to your show. There's nothing wrong with adapting an old principle to a new theme.



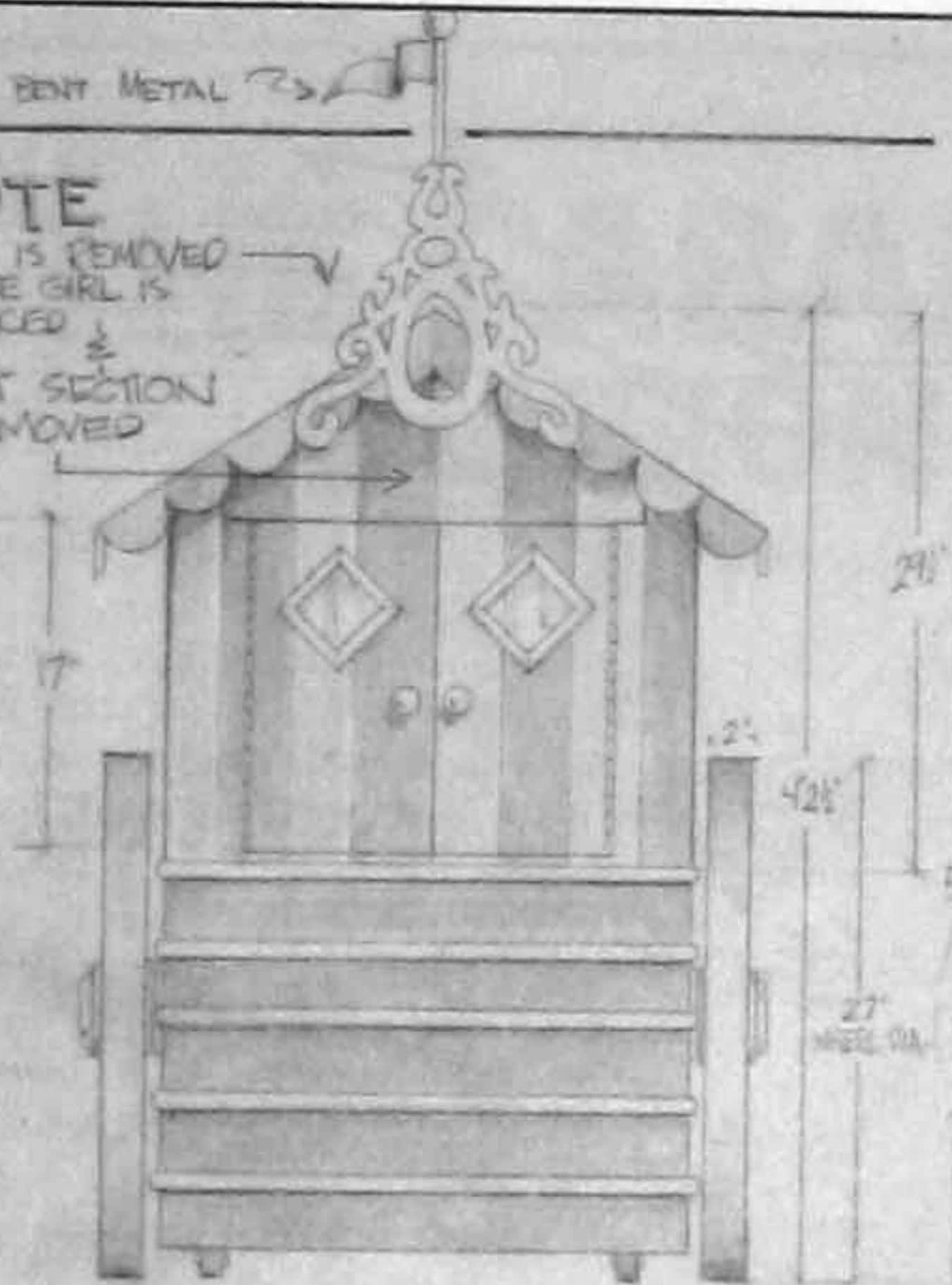


BENT METAL

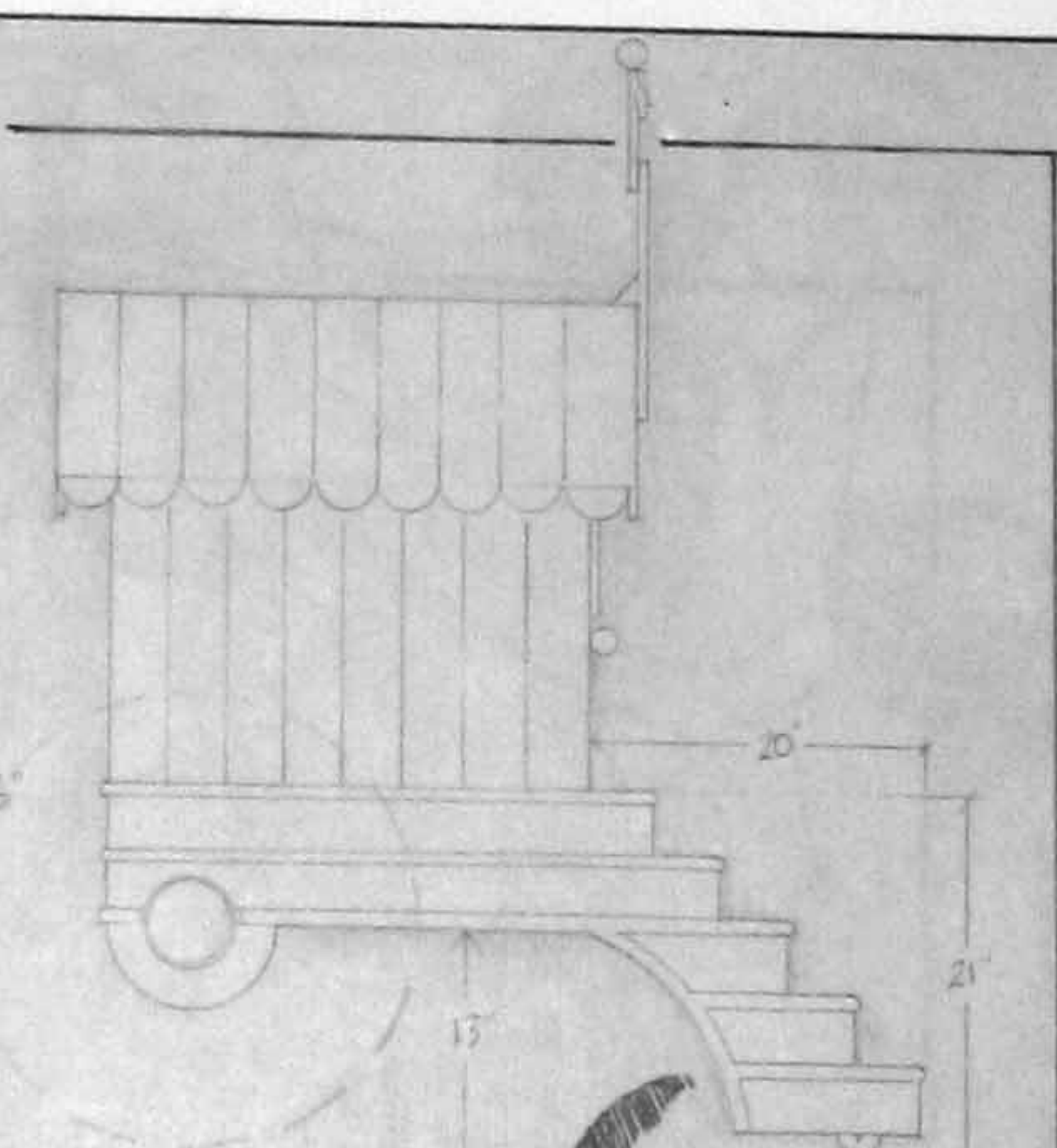
NOTE

ROOF IS REMOVED
BEFORE GIRL IS
PRODUCED

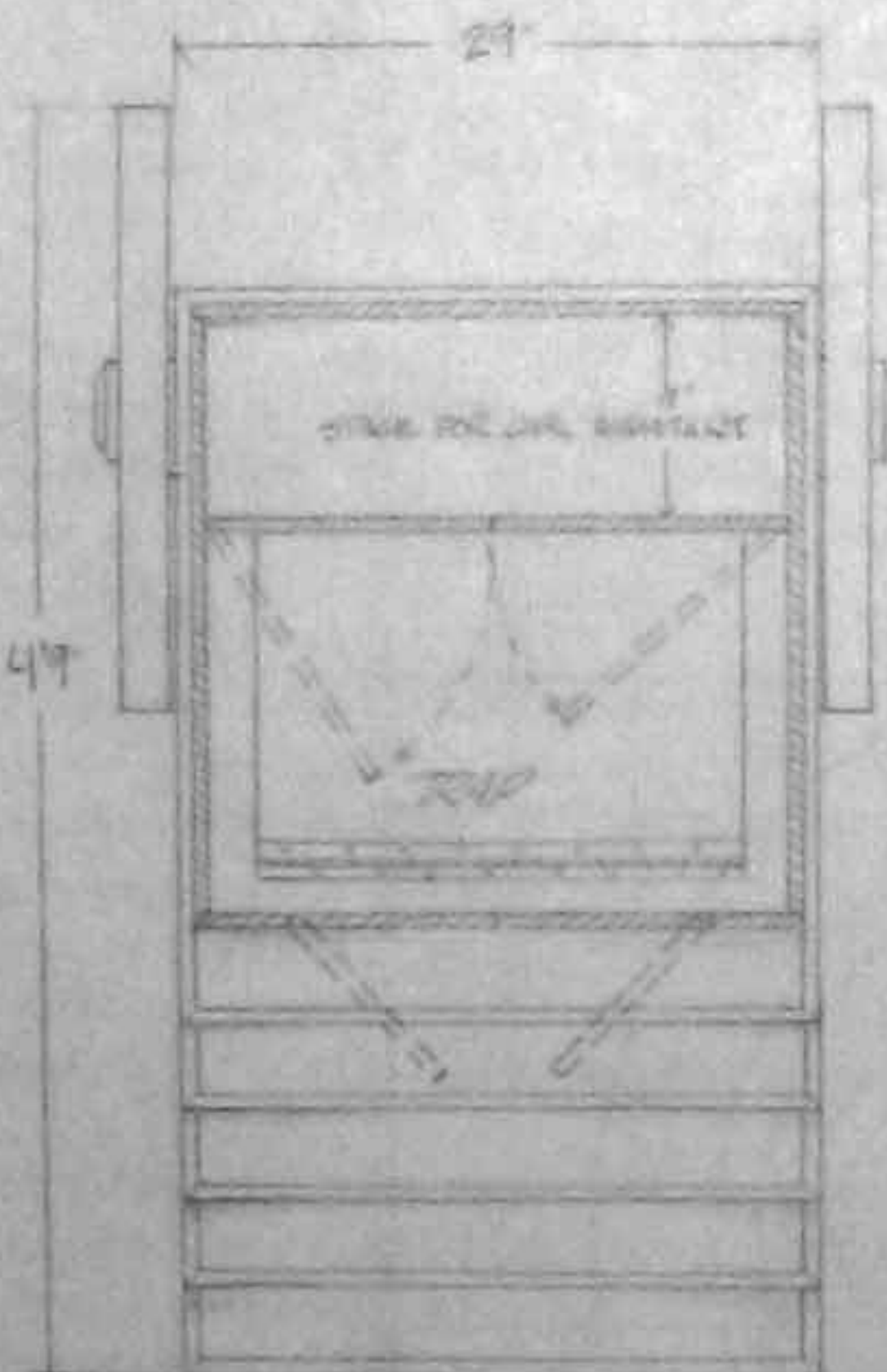
FRONT SECTION
IS REMOVED



FRONT ELEVATION



SIDE ELEVATION

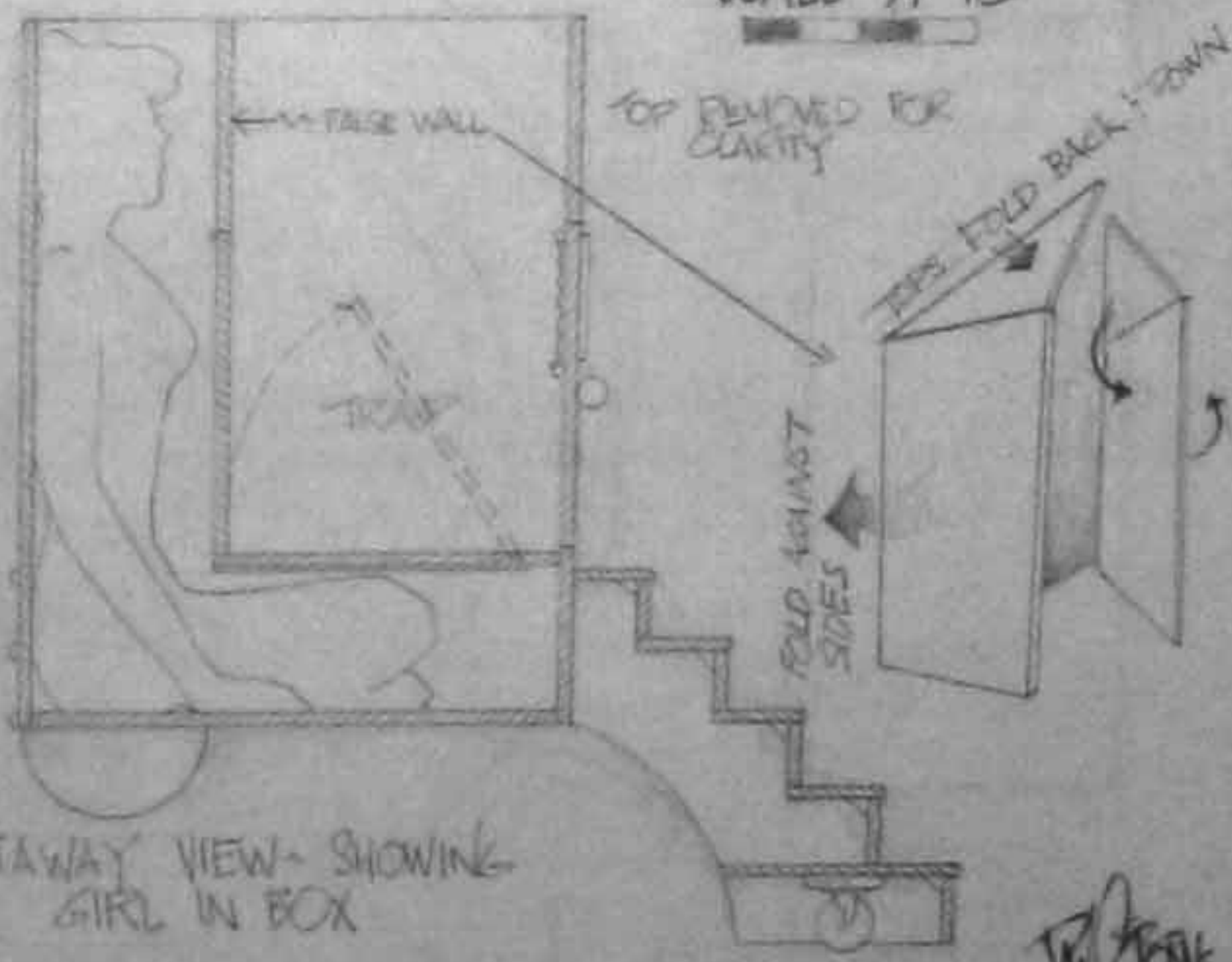


PLAN VIEW

THE CABANA ILLUSION

DESIGN © PAUL OSBORNE 1982

SCALE 3/4" = 10"



CUTAWAY VIEW - SHOWING
GIRL IN BOX

© PAUL OSBORNE



Paul Osborne's Passkey illusion being performed in a Canadian theme park. The young girl magically passes from the top box through a tiny keyhole into the bottom box.

Doug Anderson produces his second assistant from the Crystal Casket. Learn how he did it on page 42.



Magicraft

Recently I've had the pleasure of working with one of the newer magic builders on the scene today. David Mendoza heads up Magicraft and has the distinction of having built illusions and stage magic for some of the better known stars of magic. When you have the opportunity of seeing the craftsmanship and attention to detail David puts in his work, I know you'll appreciate these valuable tips:

1. "In building new illusions or refurbishing old ones, we often use pinstriping tape to accent the paint job. The tape is available in a wide variety of colors and widths and is relatively easy to apply."

Since it is tape, however, it has a tendency to peel off in areas after constant use of the prop. To eliminate this problem, we always give the prop a clear finish coat of lacquer after the tape has been applied. Not only will this protect the tape, but also the original paint job."

2. "One of the more common materials we use in building illusions, especially contemporary styled ones, is polished aluminum. In addition, we sometimes use brass. Both metals, as nicely as they polish, tend to dull in a very short time, especially when handled often. To keep the bright finish from oxidizing and eliminate the need of polishing over and over again, we always give them a clear coat of lacquer."

3. "Plywood is one of the most commonly used materials in building box-type magic props. Its cross-grain laminated construction makes it a remarkably strong material."

However, a box is only as sturdy as the methods used in putting it together. Always use glue and nails, and before applying any glue make sure of a good fitting joint. Both pieces should make contact at all points for lasting strength."

When you do apply the glue, remember that end grain absorbs glue rapidly so it should be given a preliminary coat. Apply a second coat only after the first has had time to soak in."

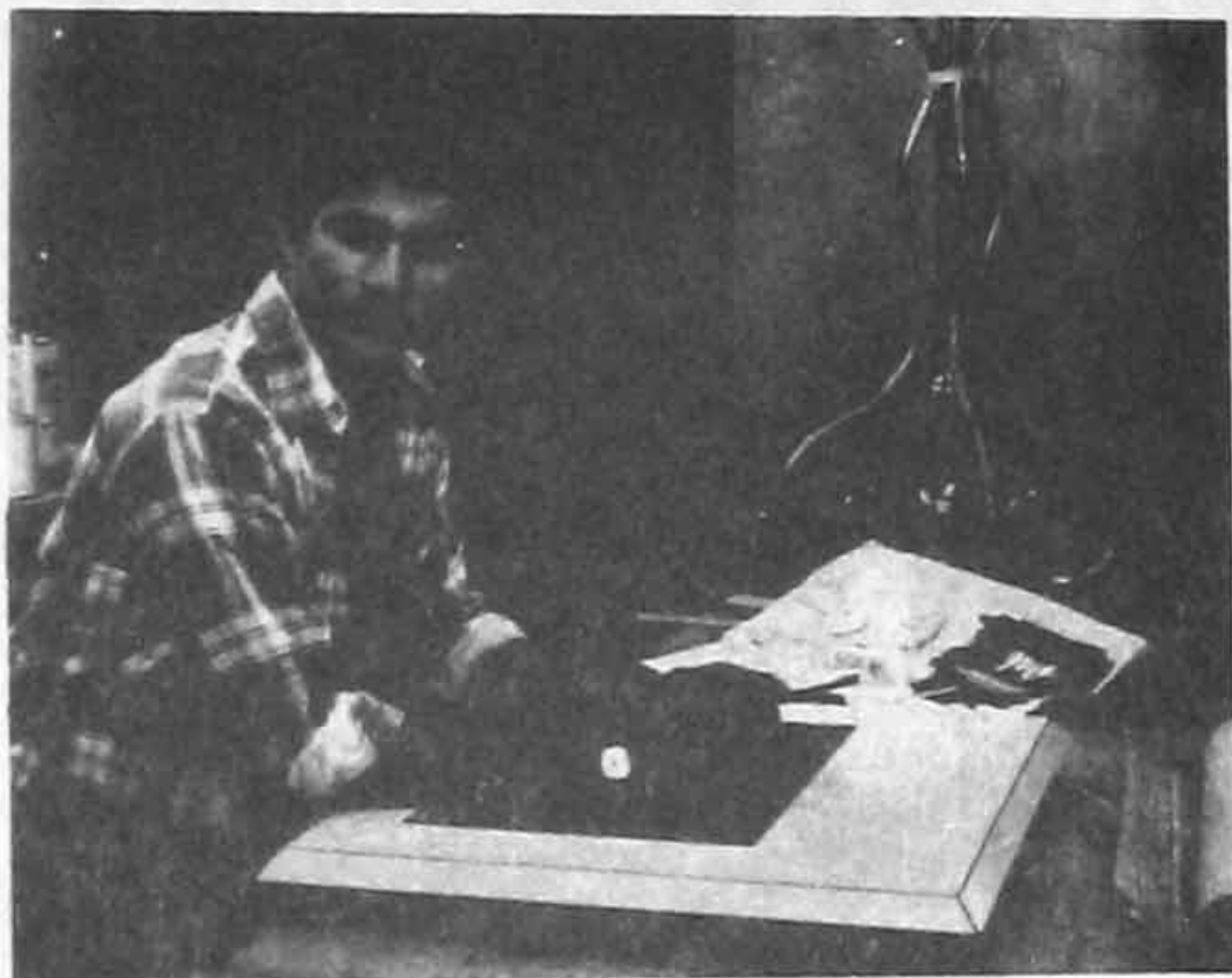
4. "Anyone who has ever been faced with the annoying problem of stem-and socket type casters falling out of a prop will appreciate this tip."

The problem, first of all is due to the fact that the hole in the wood made for the socket has become enlarged from continued use and the socket no longer fits snug. To make it fit snug once again, simply take some fine wire and wrap it around the outside of the socket, cover it with epoxy glue and tap it back into place."

5. "In recent years, one of the materials we have been seeing more of in the construction of both small magic and large, is acrylic sheet, also know as Lucite or Plexiglass."

Anyone who has ever owned a prop made of acrylic knows how easy it scratches and how often it requires cleaning.

Unfortunately, much of the damage done to acrylic is caused by cleansers that are much too abrasive. After trying several acrylic cleaners on the market, we have found that the most economical and most effective is simple household rubbing alcohol. Of course you will also want to use a soft rag and never one that leaves lint."



David Mendoza

Magicraft

PO Box 446, Montebello, CA 90640
phone 213/724-2279

Doug Anderson's 2 from 1

Doug Anderson first came up with this concept at our Cypress Gardens illusion show. If you have a Crystal Casket illusion, here's a way you can update it and get literally twice as much production value. The crystal box is first brought out without the plexi-glass in place, but the cover is over the top, sides and back, allowing the audience a view inside the empty container. Girl #1 is behind the drape (figure #1) and girl #2 is in the base. Once the drape is lowered in front, girl #1 begins to crawl inside (figure #2), then the entire illusion is spun around showing all four sides. A magical gesture, the drape is pulled off and there rests girl #1. Now out comes the plexiglass; one each for the bottom, front, sides, back and top - a glass box is formed. Another cover is



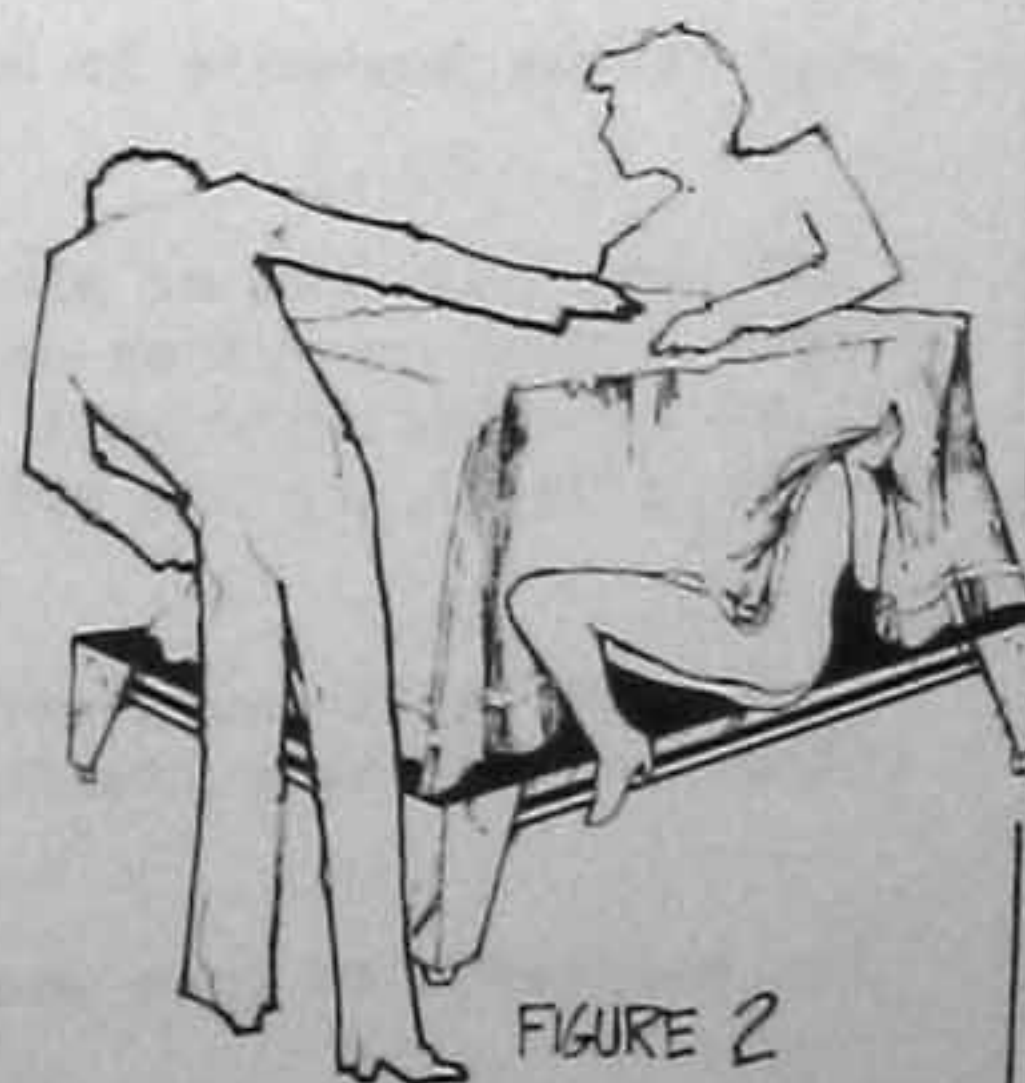
brought out and this empty container is draped and revolved to show all four sides. A magical gesture, the drape is removed and there rests girl #2. The top glass is removed and out she pops!

We have found this works with most Crystal Boxes. If you have at least a 5" lip on the base of your illusion this is enough for the girl. As she is hanging on the back, make sure the back "wings" formed by the drape, in addition to where you and your assistant position yourselves, all act to block the audience's view. Her grip on the inside of the illusion should not be too obvious.

Most girls, at first, have a tendency to put one foot on the ground to stabilize themselves as they crawl inside. This is an obvious "No, No"

and a good reason to put in some good rehearsal time on the presentation of this one.

Finally, as with most illusions that have angle problems (Disembodied Princess, Shadow Box, etc.), you should always view rehearsals from the "worst seat in the house" to see exactly what the audience can see. You might have to work the illusion more upstage, block it with your body more or adjust the girl's position. With fine tuning in rehearsal you will find that this illusion can get you twice the applause you'd hoped for.



THE DeKOLTA CHAIR

INTRODUCTION

This illusion has been around for years, however, only recently has it enjoyed a re-birth on television and Las Vegas stages. The basic effect is so wonderfully simple that it lends itself to all sorts of staging and themeing possibilities. And suffice it to say, because it's so simple, it fools even the most knowledgeable audience member.

EFFECT

Your assistant takes his or her position on a simple antique styled chair. You cover them with a large cloth and, within the twinkling of an eye, you pull off the cloth and they have vanished!

METHOD

Although tradition has it that this illusion be performed with a floor trap, later in this section we'll show you a way of avoiding this stage problem. For now, let's assume your stage has a floor trap and you're building your chair with this in mind.

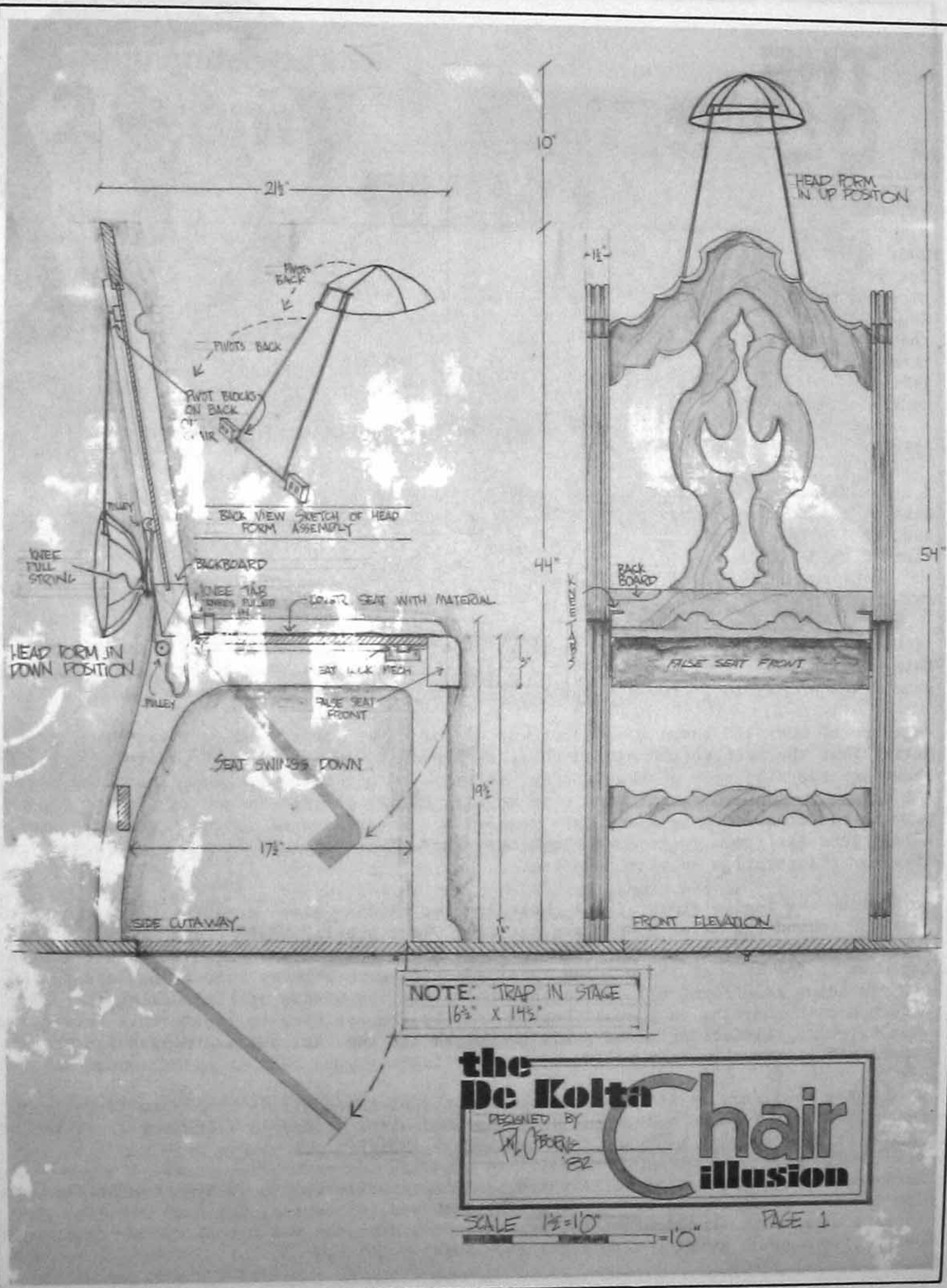
Page one of our plan shows a side cutaway of the chair positioned over the stage trap. Notice that the seat to the entire chair is hinged to swing down. Page two of our plans shows an underside view of the locking, machined, steel mechanism that keeps the seat in the up position as your assistant sits on it. Either your assistant or a stage hand beneath the floor trap releases this mechanism. The action of the seat swinging down allows your girl room to go down the floor trap without disturbing the cloth cover, much like our illustration on plan page two.

Built into the inside sides of the chair are two sliding knee mechanisms as drawn on page 2. Behind the metal guards are the 1/32" bent steel "knees". These are part of the sliding tab and are mounted into a notch in the chair side behind the metal guards. Attached to the back of the sliding knee is a string which runs through pulleys to the other sliding knee form, all behind the chair. In the middle of the back of the chair, attached to the string is a small button used by the magician to locate this string. So, when he pulls this string as he pulls the cloth off the chair, the string pulls the "knees" back into the chair walls and out of sight.

Notice the head form as it's mounted to the back of the chair in the up and down position. This form is made from 1/16" diameter wire, welded as illustrated. This form should pivot freely up and back from behind the chair.

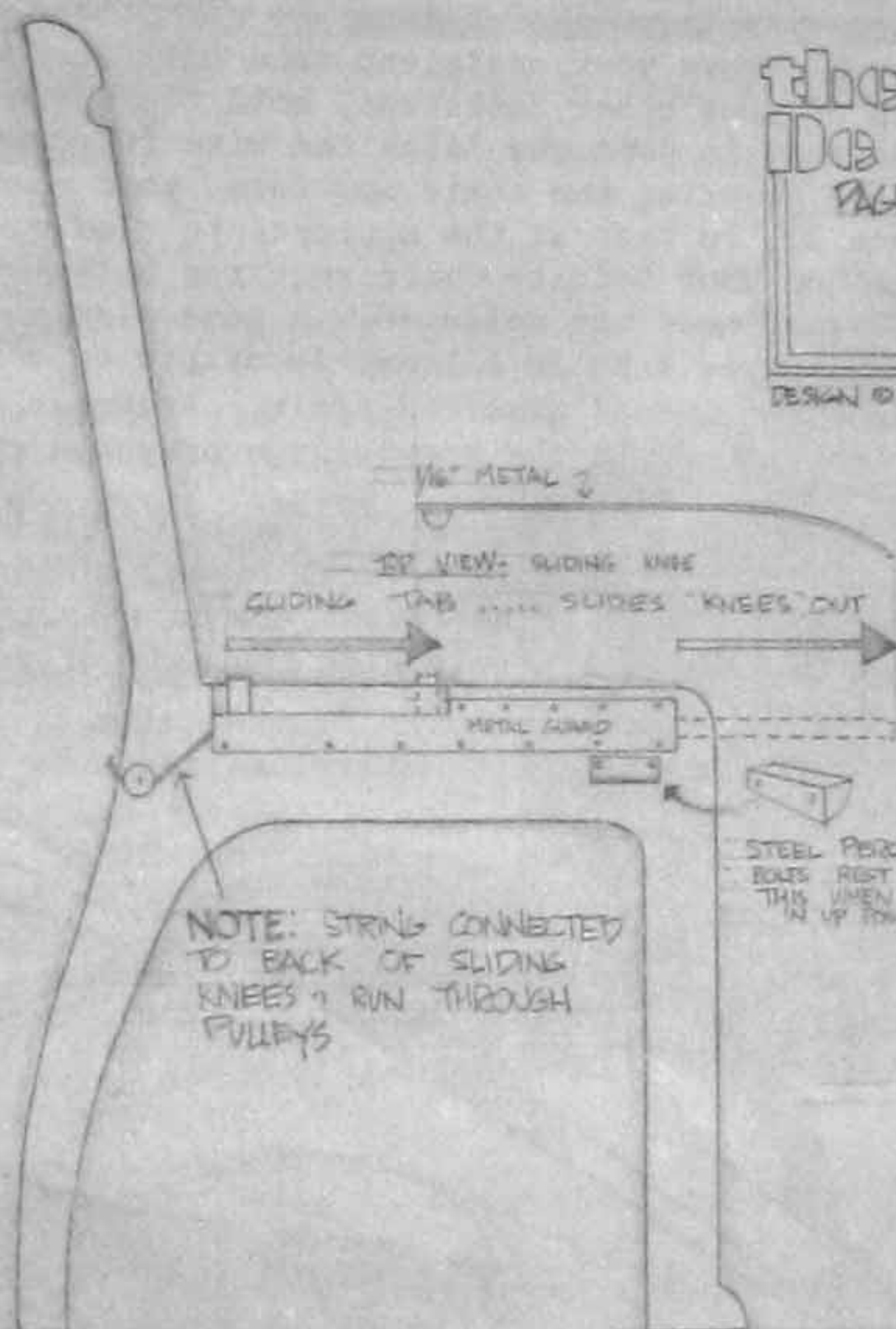
Hardwoods are best for the entire chair as it's actually only held together by the backboard. This piece should be a strong oak block and, of course, the seat piano hinges to this backboard. The rest of the support comes from the chair back and the one piece decorative support running across the back legs.



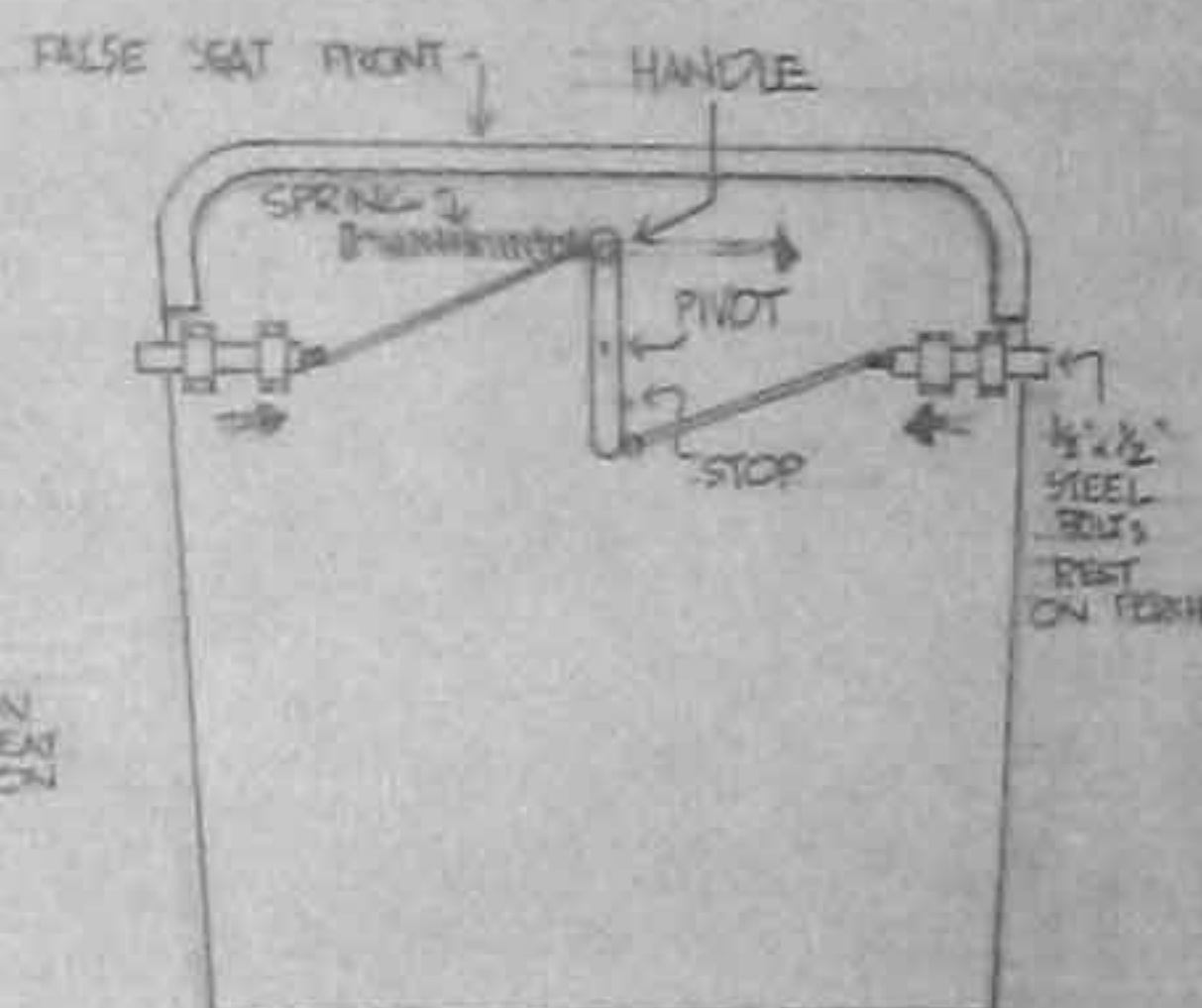


the The Koltan Chair PAGE 2

DESIGN © PAUL CHORNEY SCALE 1/2" = 10"



NOTE: STRING CONNECTED TO BACK OF SLIDING KNEES & RUN THROUGH PULLEYS



UNDERSIDE VIEW OF SEAT

INSIDE VIEW - CHAIR SIDE

SHOWS SLIDING KNEE MECHANISM

NOTE:
CLOTH COVER
SHOULD BE APPROX.
10'6\"/>

ONCE MAGICIAN COVERS ASSISTANT IN CHAIR:...

...AND HEAD FORM IS IN POSITION... ASSISTANT SLIDES KNEES OUT... BELOW STAGE ASSISTANT OPENS TRAP IN FLOOR... GIRL ASSISTANT RELEASES SEAT AND GOES DOWN INTO TRAP... PAUSING TO LIFT SEAT BACK INTO POSITION... THEN UNDER STAGE AND CLOSES FLOOR TRAP

MAGICIAN...

GRABS CLOTH AT BACK OF CHAIR BEING CAREFUL TO ALSO GRAB THROUGH THE CLOTH - THE "KNEE PULL STRING"... PULLING ALL STRAIGHT BACK CAUSES THE HEAD FORM AND THE "KNEES" TO RETRACT



the DeKolts SNEAK

Sometimes floor traps are hard to come by, so we incorporated this alternate method of using the DeKolts Chair: Position the chair stage right near a curtain, wing or even a large prop. Have your assistant take her place on the chair (figure 1). With the help of your other assistant, hold the cloth in front of the chair and girl. As this is done she lifts the wire form and sneaks off (figure 2). As you are covering the chair and form, your assistant is safely behind the wing (figure 3), so that at the appropriate time you can cause her to vanish! For this method your DeKolts Chair requires only the head form and retractable knees. The seat need not collapse. A good plan would be to buy the style chair you like at a local furniture or antique store and adapt the needed gimmicks to it. Remember the charm of this illusion is the seemingly unprepared chair.

As with any illusions subject to angle problems, you should run through this several times, making sure you and your male assistant are in the correct position to properly hide the exit of your girl assistant.



FIGURE 1



FIGURE 2

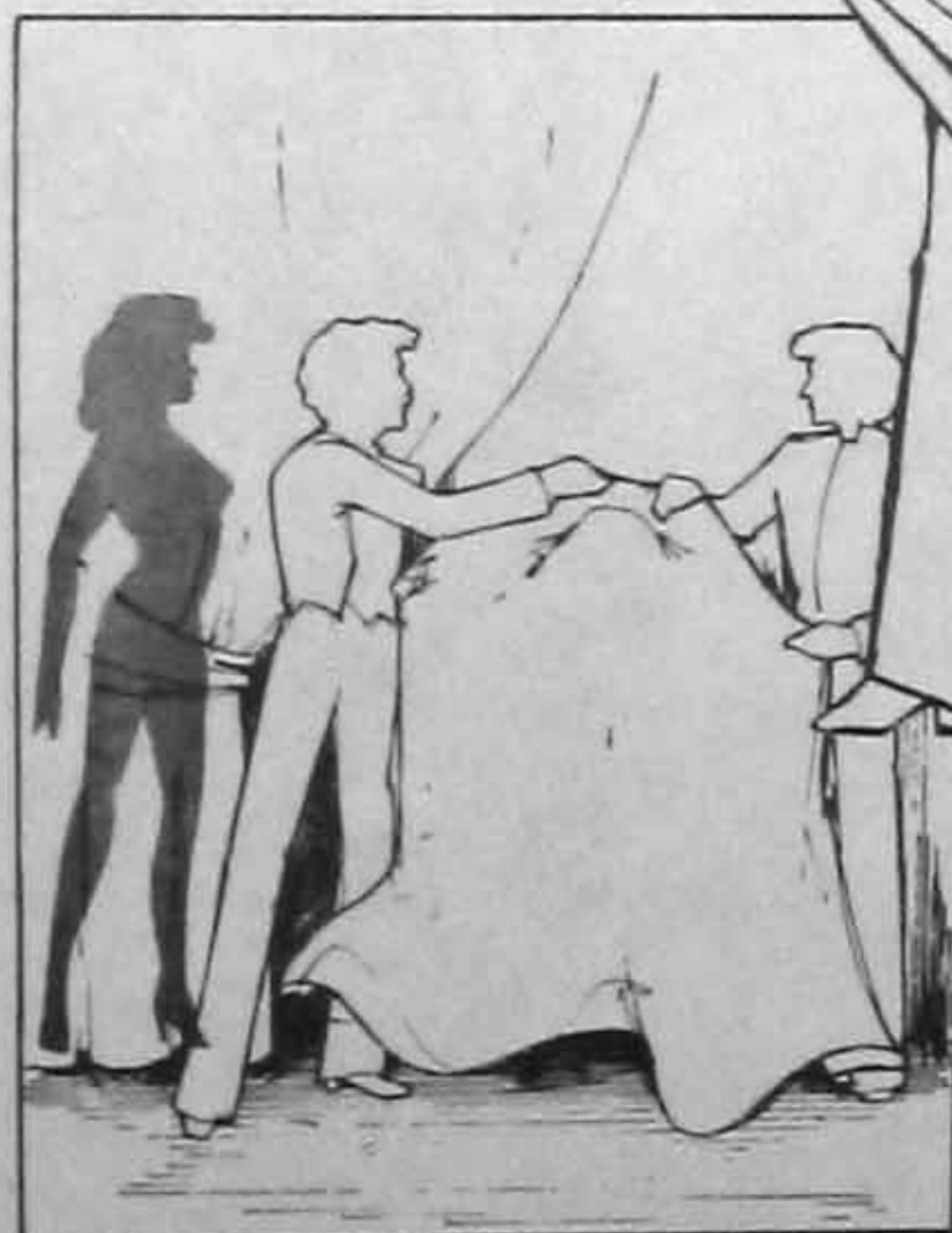


FIGURE 3



FIGURE 4



Owen Magic Supreme

734 No. McKeever Avenue, Azusa, California 91702

Telephone (213) 969-4519
969-4614

One of the great traditions of my life has been Owen magic. Owen Bros., Thayer Mfg. Co., Thayer Studio and Merv Taylor are all synonymous with this historic magic manufacturing facility. A trip through the pages of their exclusive book, "Keep The Wheels Turning..." tells the fabulous story behind their success. Because most of today's modern illusions have their roots in the Owen Studios, I was thrilled when the proprietors, Gertrude Smith, Les Smith



and Alan Zagorsky agreed to share these tips and exclusive photos with us:

1. The enamel finish on most stage magic and illusions can be kept sparkling clean at all times by use of "Pledge", a commercial product available in most stores and groceries. Use sparingly and wipe gently.
2. Always make sure your casters and springs are properly lubricated. We recommend any good commercial silicone. There are several brands on the market that are all very good. Some casters come with instructions for specific maintenance.
3. There is only one way to crate a prop. Invest (that means buy!) in a good trunk to carry or transport it in. If you are earning money with a prop you use and it is part of your act, then it is important to protect it; both from prying eyes and from the nicks and abuses that can happen. These nicks and bruises may not seem important to you, but they do detract from the overall impression given to the audience.
4. Any panels or frames should be checked to see that they are square. A good method is to measure the diagonals; if they are the same length, the piece should be square. After gluing up frames, etc. all uneven joints should be planed level and sanded smooth. Fill all pits and holes with a surfacing putty and sand smooth.
5. Paint may be either brushed or sprayed on. For a base coat, paint all work with some neutral colored paint and sand down when dry. Use bright enamels or lacquers for rich contrast and choose colors for a harmonious color scheme. If stencils are used, cut them from regular stencil board. Transfer the designs from drawings to the stencil board with carbon paper and cut out the design with a

sharp knife.

6. Finally, the most important ingredient in magic building is time - time for you or your builder to do the job right. Always allow enough of it and remember, creating miracles is no easy task.

Alan Zagorsky

Owen Magic Supreme

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the ARK of TIBET

INTRODUCTION

At the risk of sounding like "Jarret", this one is worth the price of the book. It breaks down flat, can be done surrounded and lends itself to some nice themeing opportunities. It's also easy to build and, as far as I know, this is the first time a girl has ever been hidden in the middle of an illusion.

EFFECT

Wheeled out on stage is a Moorish styled cabinet resting within a framework crate. The magician introduces the recently discovered Ark Of Tibet. Lifting the Ark up, the magician and his assistants slide a support board under it as it rests on top of the crate. The front, back and side doors are opened to show the Ark completely empty. The four doors are closed and the entire unit is revolved to show all sides as the magician explains the mysterious qualities of the Ark. From a small curtain in the front of the illusion, treasures from around the world are pulled as well as silks, animals and jewels. A final drum roll, the sides are let down and, resting within the once empty Ark is a beautiful young princess!

METHOD

The secret to this illusion is the 10" x 21" x 33" black box elevated on four legs. Within it is the girl and all her production items. This box is made from 5/8" material with a 3/4" ply bottom. The four legs are made from 1" x 3" ripped down to a true 1" x 2", joined at right angles and bolted on to the gimmick container at each corner. In the top of this box is a set of 27" x 8" traps.

Around this gimmick is assembled the framework crate cut from 3/8" material as per our drawings.

The Ark itself is made from 3/8" material with a door in each side. There is a top but no bottom. Bolted to the front and back are the handles which are cut from 1" x 6" clear white pine. In the front door is a framed 4" x 7 1/2" curtain for the production of smaller items.

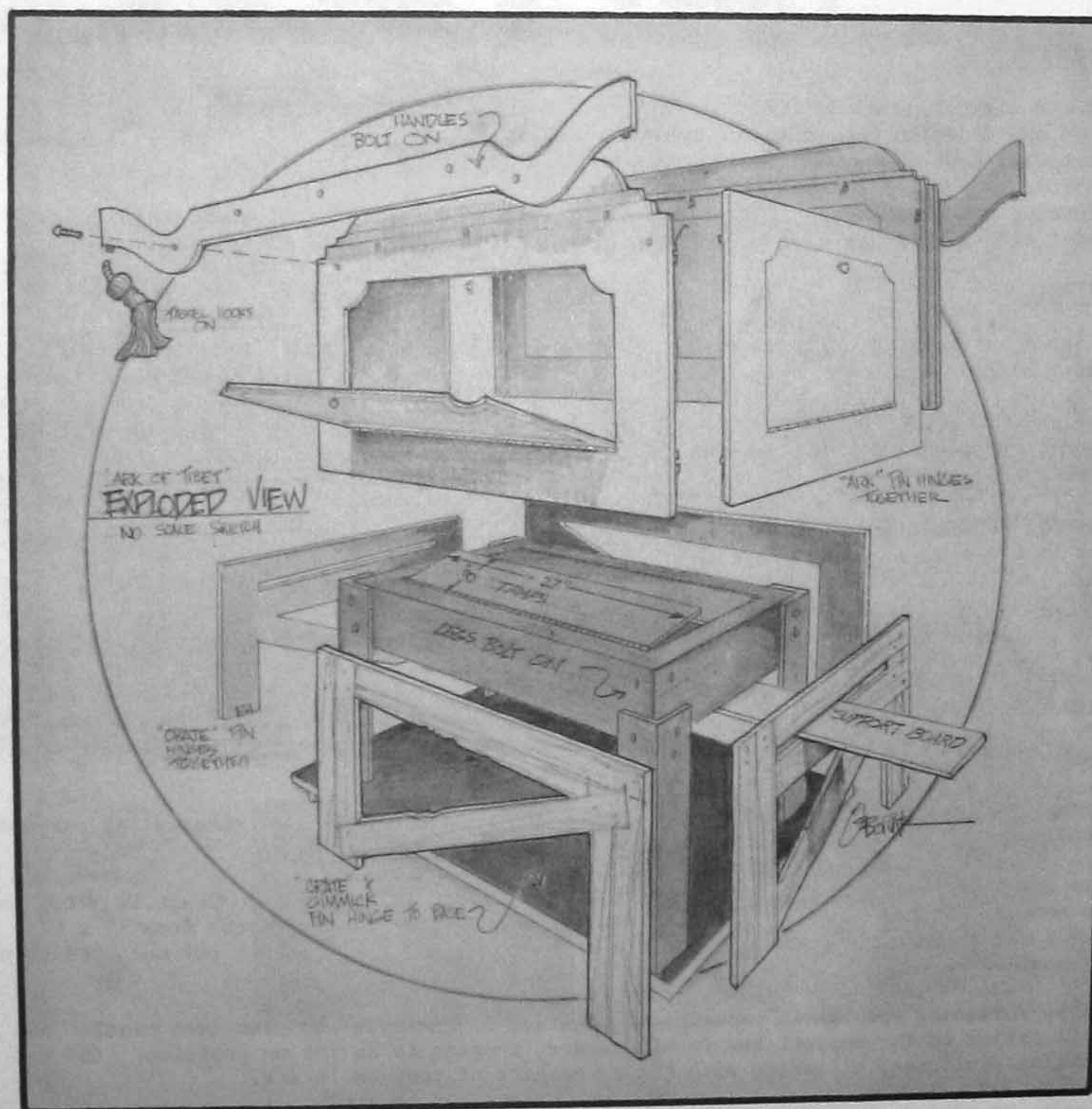
In performance, the Ark is brought out on stage in the down position (see plan). As it's lifted up the support bar is slid under, keeping it in the up position. The routine continues, climaxing with the appearance of your assistant.

Again, if you're shopping around for a new one to build, I can't recommend this one enough. It's practical and different - two qualities today's illusionist must have.



Below you will find an exploded view of this prop to use as a guide for assembly. Once the legs are attached to the gimmick box and it is pin hinged to the base the rest is basically formed around it. The crate's four sides pin hinge together and to the base. The bottomless Ark is assembled separately and set down into the case, around the gimmick.

You may want to add a door in the top of the Ark so the girl can enter the gimmick without the Ark being in the up position. Also, as always, this gimmick area is very tight. Before building, construct a cheap 10" x 21" x 33" box of cardboard or scrap plywood to make sure it's right for your girl.



Martin Eldridge & Associates

Martin Eldridge of New Jersey has been building magic and illusions since he was thirteen. Being self-taught in the unique career of magic building, along with a college education in industrial arts and three years of training with two cabinet makers, he began "Martin Eldridge and Associates", now over 2,000 square feet of office, showroom and magic manufacturing facilities. I was so happy Martin agreed to share some of his building and finishing tips with us. As you'll see by the photos at the end of this article, Martin's props reflect the thought and care of a true master craftsman:

"My references to finishing are directed to those of you who either own or have access to spray equipment or have a body shop that will do the spraying for you.

Use satin finish or semi-gloss paints as gloss turns white or just glares under bright stage lights. Of course, you should use flat black or flat colors when trying to hide or play down a certain area.

One technique I like to use to protect my projects from a rough work surface is to use an old piece of carpet or spend a few dollars to purchase a blanket on which you can sand your projects. Frequently clean the blanket or rug. Blow it off with a compressor, if available. If not, shake it off. Do this frequently to protect your project against scratches from discharged abrasive particles.

I use only birch plywood and hardwoods. They cost a little more, but the benefits and quality of the finished illusion far outweigh the extra cost.

I use Nitrocellulose and Acrylic lacquer paints. I spray them using a spray gun and compressor. Flat black latex paint works great in places where your spray equipment cannot go. Example: The inside of bases. In comparison to lacquers, enamel takes too long to dry and cannot be handled for a longer period. Enamel goes through a curing period and can take as long as 3 months to fully cure whereas lacquer is usually fully cured in 48 hours.

Nitrocellulose lacquer, the type I most commonly use in my illusion finishing, is composed of nitrocellulose (an ingredient in gun powder), various acetates, and toluol, plus other nasty stuff. You owe it to yourself to take adequate precaution against the dangers of using lacquers.

1. You should wear a good quality, chemically filtered respirator, even if you spray outside.
2. You could purchase a spray booth for finishing. (A very, very costly choice for the home builder.)
3. You could build a spray booth. Filters are needed, explosion-proof lights, and an exhaust fan with an explosion-proof motor. (A poor choice because of the cost, dangers and high risk of explosion.)

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WHERE IDEAS AND DREAMS BECOME REALITY

4. Your most feasible alternative is to spray outdoors or rent access to a spray booth from a school or body shop.

Under no circumstances should you spray finish in your home or garage because of the extremely volatile, poisonous, and potentially explosive nature of the materials.

I know I may get a lot of feedback from some of the other builders but here goes anyway:

I use white glue (or adhesive), such as Elmer's Glue-All to attach felt, cloth, and naugahyde. I use yellow glue (or adhesive) such as Elmer's Professional Carpenter's Glue or Franklin Titebond adhesive for wood applications. Sure, you can use white glue for woodworking, but I feel yellow is better and I can back up this statement with reports, articles and technical data along with countless personal experimentations. A few reasons why yellow adhesives are better for woodworking are:

1. They generally penetrate wood better and form stronger joints.
2. They tend to have better and faster grab and set up quicker than white glues, so the time necessary for clamping is reduced.
3. They are also more heat and solvent resistant.
4. They sand off better with less gumming of the abrasive paper.

As a little something extra for your assistant's new home, I like to use black naugahyde on the inside of the illusion base. Some builders prefer black felt, perhaps because felt may cost a dollar or two less, but you will replace it much more often as it does not troupe nearly as well as the naugahyde. Naugahyde is much easier to clean as stains just wipe up.

Before spray finishing your illusion, pick up some tack rags from your local auto body shop or auto body supply shop and wipe the illusion to remove any grit, dust, or other particles that would otherwise ruin a fine finish.

Here is another tip that will probably receive some argument from the traditional woodworkers. I prefer to use a sharp No. 3 or even a No. 4 pencil for marking lines. A No. 2 leaves too wide a mark and is rather soft for precision work. The traditional woodworker will tell you the only acceptable tool for marking is a scribe or awl. If you use a scribe, it should be sharpened to a long slender point to mark (scratch) a fine, accurate line.

My preference for pencil over scribe is due to the fact that the scribe line is almost impossible to see. The well sharpened pencil marks a fine crisp line that's much easier to see than the scratch line of the scribe. The key thing to remember is that the pencil be sharp. An unsharpened pencil lays out a wide line. Do you cut to the right, to the left, or in the middle of this line? This is a poor habit to get into. Also this is not the way to become a skilled cabinetmaker. Get into the habit of doing precise work.

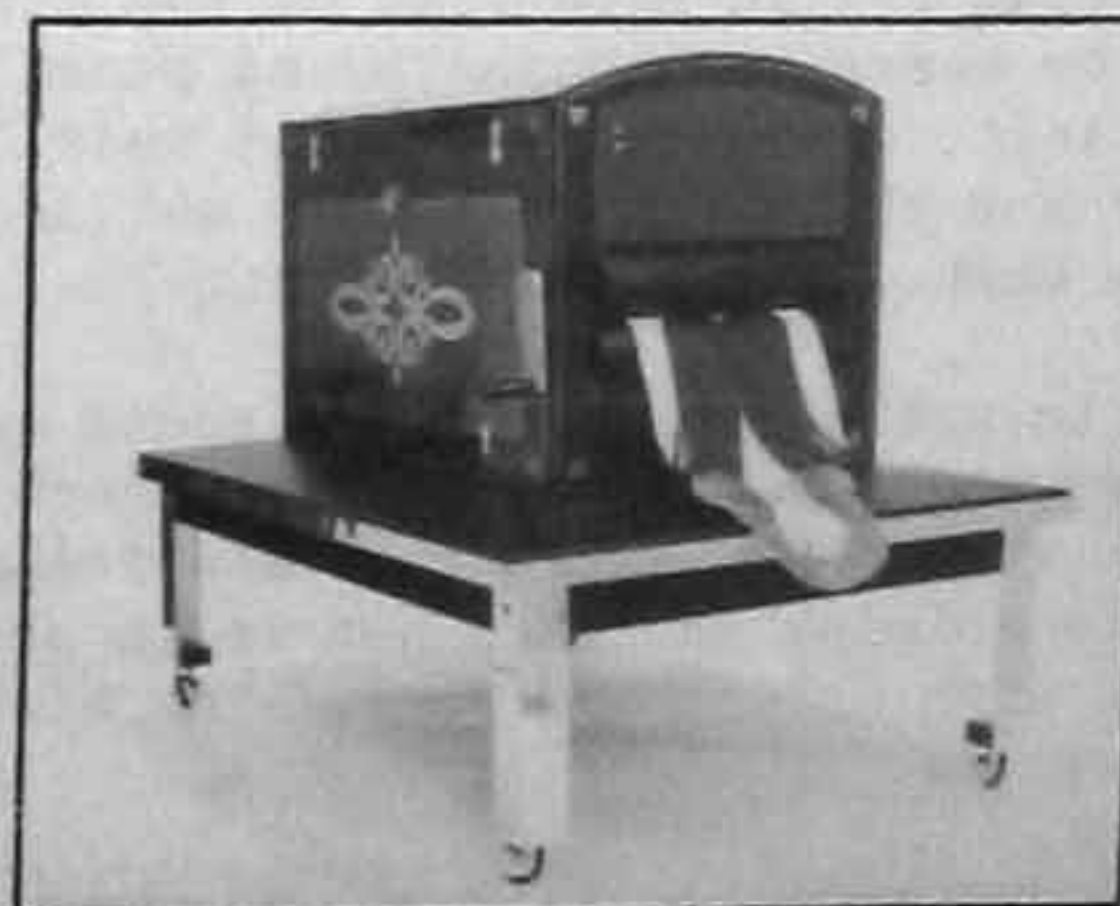
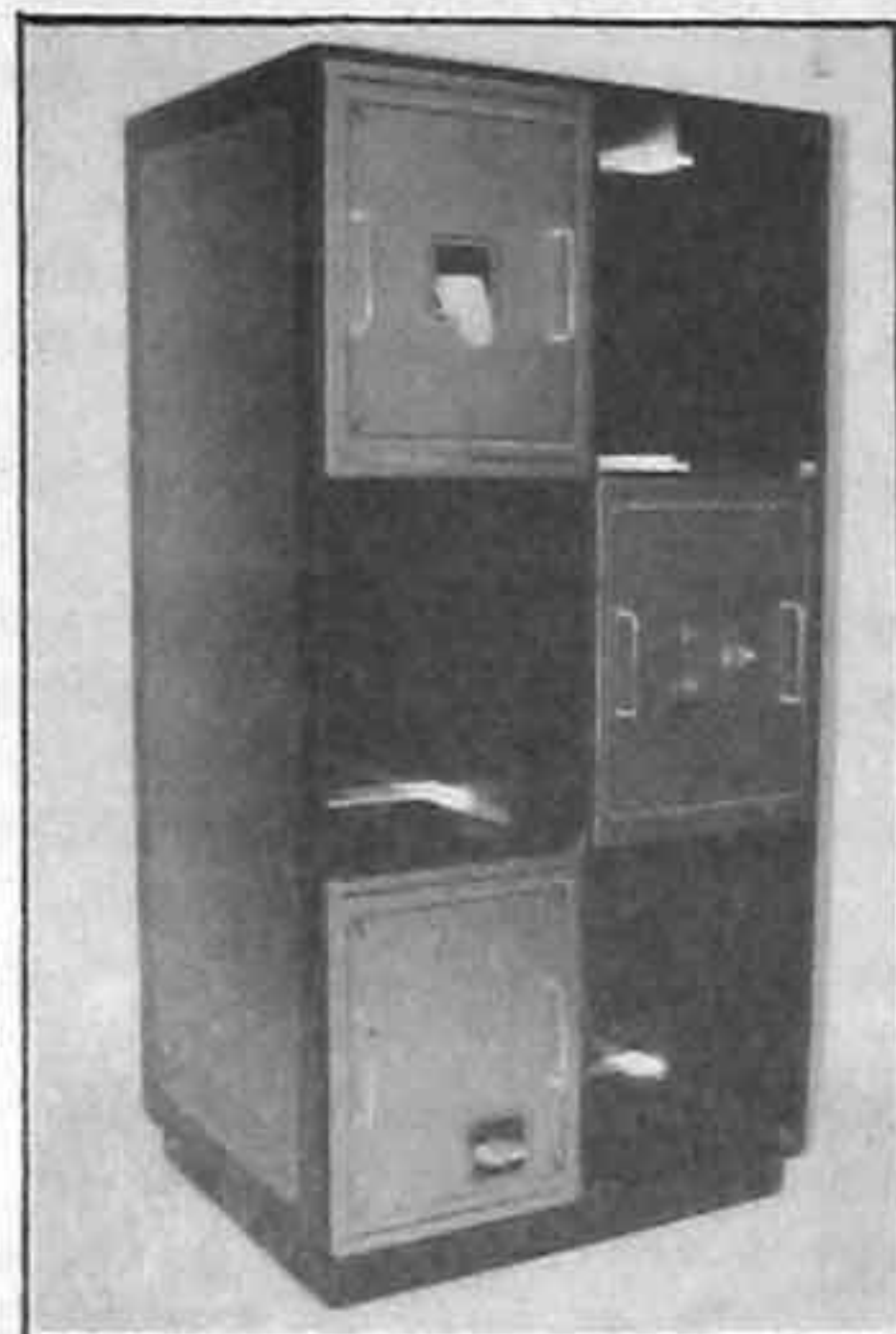
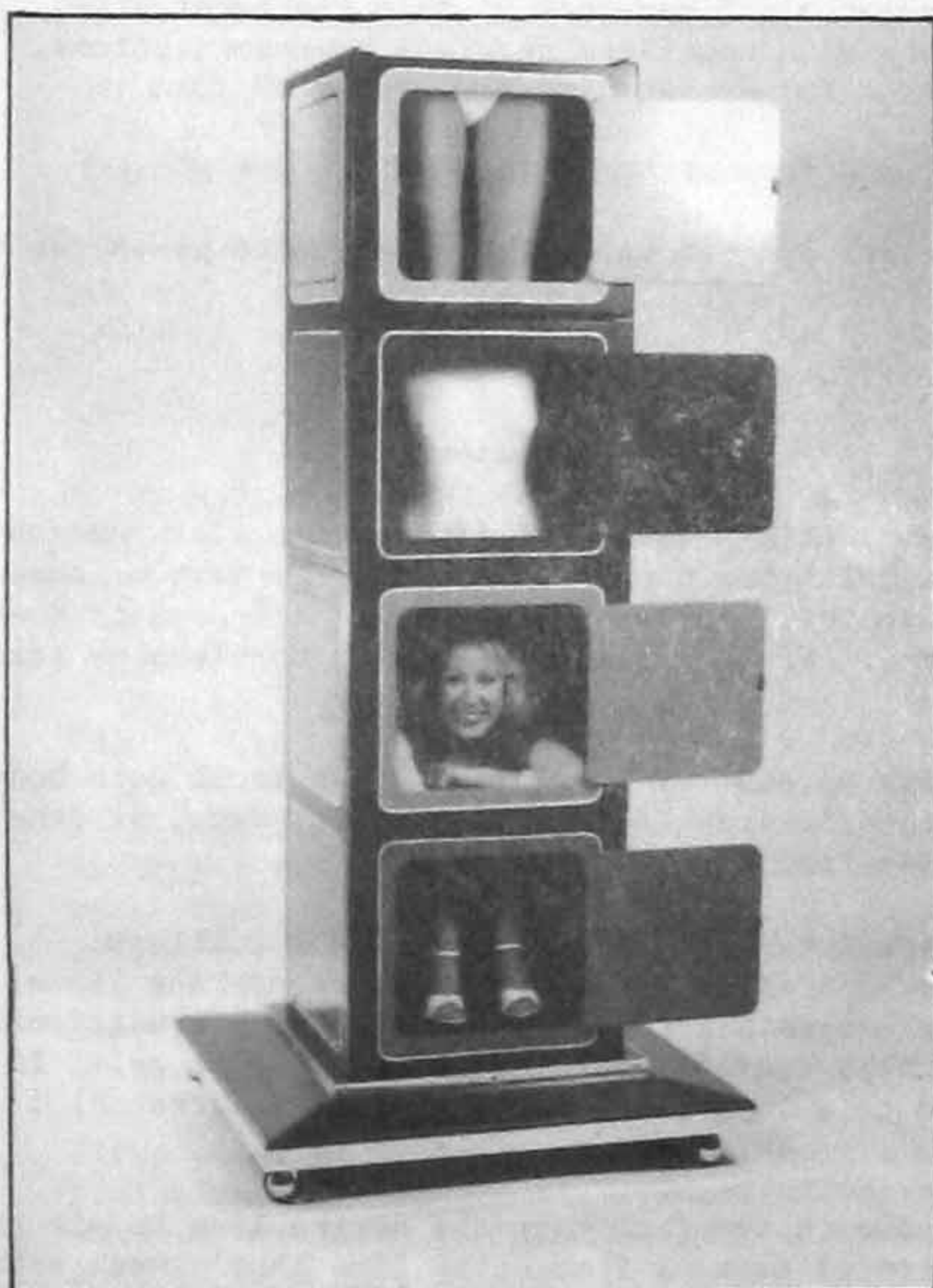
I like to use a lot of quarter round molding in the corners of my illusions to increase rigidity and give greater glue surface, making the illusion more durable. Attach the quarter round with a generous application of yellow adhesive. A good procedure is to coat the molding and then put it in place with a slight sliding action to make good contact with mating surfaces. The blocks can be secured with nails, but screws will do a better job.

Drill pilot holes in wood and plywood when using screws or nails that might split the wood.

Use a carpenter's square. Do not rely on your eyes for what you believe to be square. Check and recheck your work. There is nothing worse than a box that is not square. It throws off all your work and cutting.

One final note: Use only the best in terms of materials. Do not cut corners to save a dollar or two. If you want to have a professional looking piece of equipment, you may have to spend a couple of extra dollars on materials and outside services such as metal polishing and pinstriping. But when you step back and look at the finished illusion, you will be glad you spent the extra money. Take the time to do the job right - be patient.

Good luck."



**Martin Eldridge
&
Associates**

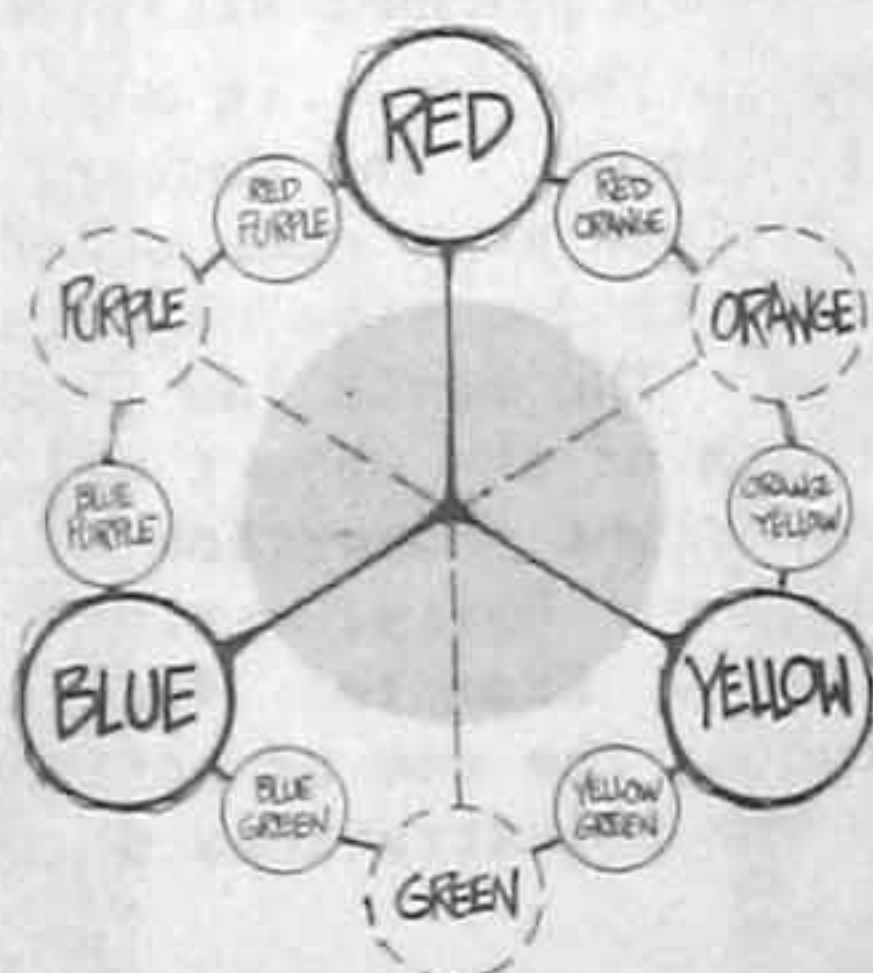
WHERE IDEAS AND DREAMS BECOME REALITY

DESIGN

by Bob Kline

Color and design are two of the most important factors to be considered in building any piece of apparatus for the modern day magician. So many of the effects we see today could be greatly enhanced by the proper design and intelligent use of color. I do not intend to be a super expert in this field but all my schooling has been in this field and, having taught in Art Education for forty years, I feel I should know a little about the subject at hand. However, it is impossible to make a designer or color expert over night. There are no shortcuts, it comes only after extensive study and experience. One doesn't try to do their own dental work or prescribe medicine for their ills, so have a professional do your design then you can, if you like, build it yourself.

I will touch upon some of the basics of color. One of the best known and used color theories is the Artist's color theory. In this theory we consider three colors as basic, that of red, yellow and blue. Below is the standard color wheel:



There are four basic color schemes as follows:

1. Monochromatic - Different shades and tints of the same basic color.
2. Analogous - Any three or four colors side by side on the color wheel.
3. Complimentary - Any one color plus the opposite of that color on the color wheel.
4. Split Complimentary - Similar to the complimentary color scheme, but instead of using the opposite color, you use the colors on each side of the opposite.

It has been said many times that only certain colors go well together. Actually any two colors will go well together IF they are the right value and intensity. In other words, two strong intense colors will not go well, but make one of these weaker in intensity and they may look much better together. The most common mistake made by most of us is the fact we do not describe color accurately. We say that color is green, yet there are many different shades and tints of green. Just as an object has three dimensions, so has color three. They are as follows:

1. Hue - The name of the color
2. Value - Degree of lightness or darkness
3. Intensity - Degree of brightness or dullness

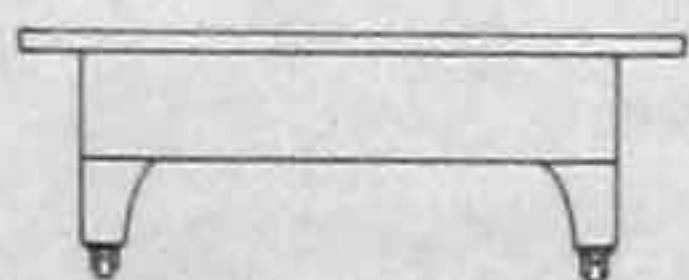
So in accurately describing the green as mentioned above, one should say it was a dark, dull green or whatever shade or tint best describes the actual color.

Color can play some optical tricks on us. For instance, a white area will look larger than the same size area in black. See how the white dot looks bigger than the black one.

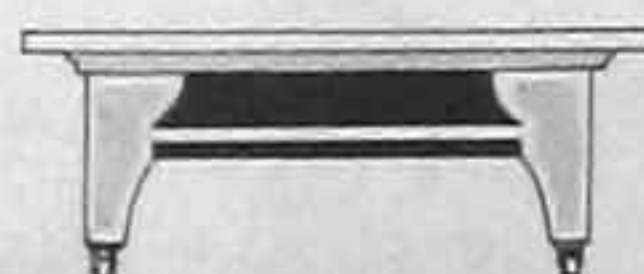


Remember also that light colors advance and dark colors tend to recede into the background.

Now for a few words about design. What is design? Design is a plan of the finished product. You can see what the finished product will look like before construction has even begun. It should be pleasing to the eye. It may be deceiving, it may be misleading, but regardless, it should be well planned. The Modernistic refers to a period of the twenties and early thirties when designs were made up of circles, elongated triangles, etc. and the word should not be used to describe objects of the present time. The correct word if it applies is simply MODERN. The basic law for some of the best designs is FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION. The necessary form of the object will be determined by its use or function. The design must have the right proportion of space divisions. This will be determined by the following principles: Unity, variety, balance, dominance and subordination. Design can be very deceiving. Example: The base of the Doll House can be made to look thinner by several techniques, the use of horizontal lines and by extending the legs up to the top of the base. The illustrations below show how sketch B is much preferred to sketch A.

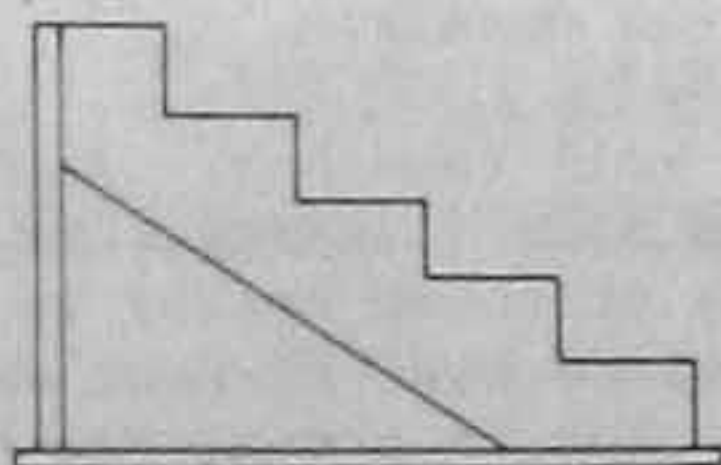


SKETCH A

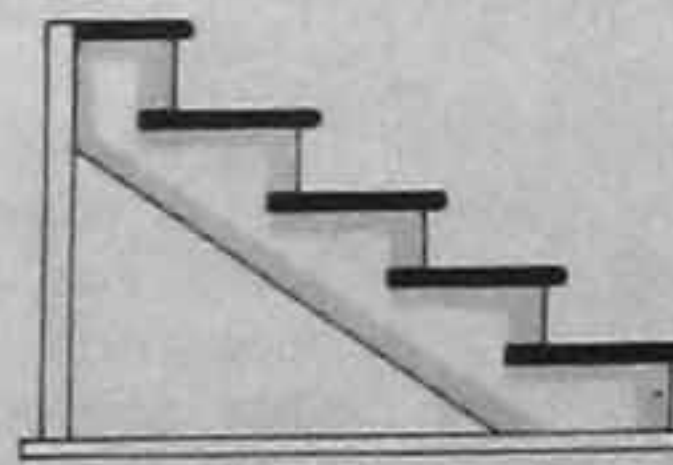


SKETCH B

Another example would be the steps as shown below. Note how thinner they look in B by extending the edge of each step.



SKETCH A



SKETCH B

For the beginner, I would suggest making several sketches on paper, all to scale and playing around with different lines and spaces to help the area to look thinner or smaller, depending on the purpose of the illusion.

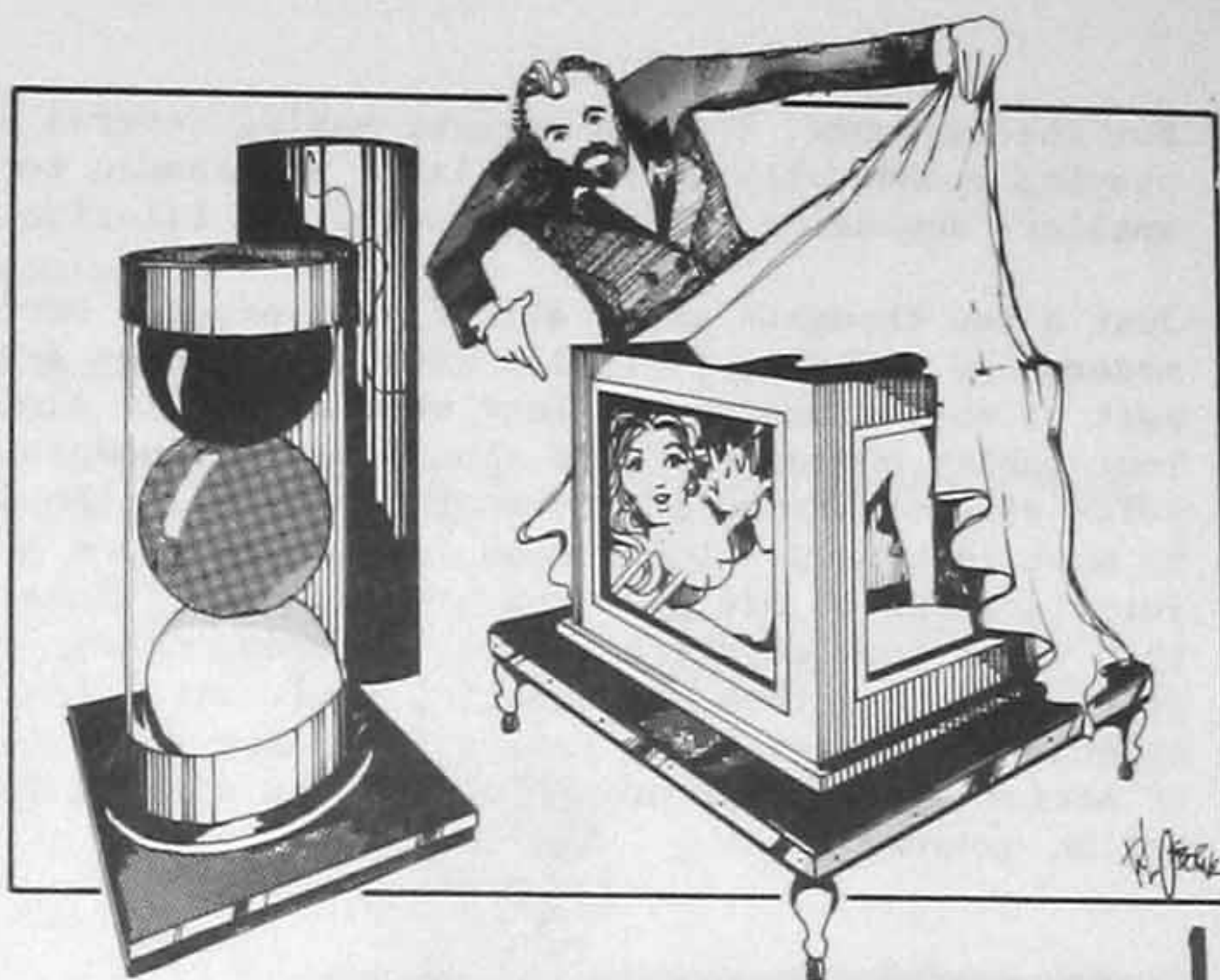
Just a few thoughts about all of your props. Don't have old fashioned equipment for the modern day audiences. Tables with long drapes are taboo. There was a time in the early part of this century when they were common in almost every household, but not today. Your tables and side stands should be very modern and there are ways of having black art wells without drapes if you must have them. The use of heavy turned legs are not modern in most instances. The common French leg dates a piece of apparatus. Study modern furniture and it may give you some ideas. I have seen plastic accessories in some stores that would look terrific on stage. Many successful performers today have hired drama critics to help them with staging their act. Learning the correct way to walk on, hand objects to an assistant, take a bow, exit and enter, etc. Why not have an expert designer or artist design your props or plan the effects for you to build yourself? It pays to get an expert.



ORBS

INTRODUCTION

Since my photo in Book One of this illusion, I have had many requests to publish the working drawings. Obviously based on the smaller Stratospheres, this prop has been used in my park shows for over 1,500 performances and is still going strong. If you want an unusual effect, this is it.



EFFECT

In a somewhat educational vein, the magician offers to demonstrate the unique characteristics of molecules. A clear tube containing three large molecules is introduced. In an effort to keep track of each molecule, the performer pours these three large spheres into a nearby trough. A chrome tube is brought out and the now empty clear cylinder is covered. One by one the balls are dropped into the nesting tubes; green, yellow, red...so the one on the bottom is green. Right? Wrong, it's red, the green is in the middle. This unusual procedure is repeated with the same results?! And again, but this time the red ball ends up in the middle. Clearly it's the red ball that's the culprit. A small covered glass case is brought on stage. The red molecule is placed in this case and covered for safe keeping. The other two balls are dropped into the covered cylinder. In a twinkling of the eye the tube is uncovered and all three molecules are back together and under the glass case! The cover is removed and out pops a beautiful young lady.

METHOD

In viewing our plan you will see the four elements of this effect; the box, the tube, the chrome cover and the ball holder. The box is made much like a Doll House/Girl To Lion combination. The four sides are constructed from mitered 2 1/2" x 1" clear white pine with 1/2" x 1/2" trim to stabilize the 1/4" clear plexiglass. Notice the top opens all the way back and the latched front opens as well. The girl sits in the base, Doll House style behind the second of the three-way traps. The gimmick vinyl wall hangs in front of her and, of course, the 7' x 7' cloth is draped over the box, allowing only a view in from the front.

The ball holder is constructed from 1" x 6"s bolted together with bolts, washers and wing nuts. Marine netting is used to contain the three balls.

The plastic cylinder we used was bought at a local dealer for plexiglass. It was 12" exterior diameter with a 1/4" wall. Once we found the balls we had the cylinder cut to 37" tall. The 3" chrome bands were added top and bottom and the cylinder was mounted to a 14 1/2" diameter disc with the base constructed as drawn. The cylinder must be removable from its small casted platform to pour the balls into the trough.

The 1/8" metal tube was made in a sheet metal shop and chromed. Assuming the balls are a 10" diameter, a spring is attached within the chrome tube 12" down to hold the second red ball in place.

Believe it or not, the hardest part of this trick is locating the balls. Do this first. There is no standard among ball makers. Year after year, new colors and sizes are made, seldom to be repeated the following year. Find what you want and buy as many as possible.

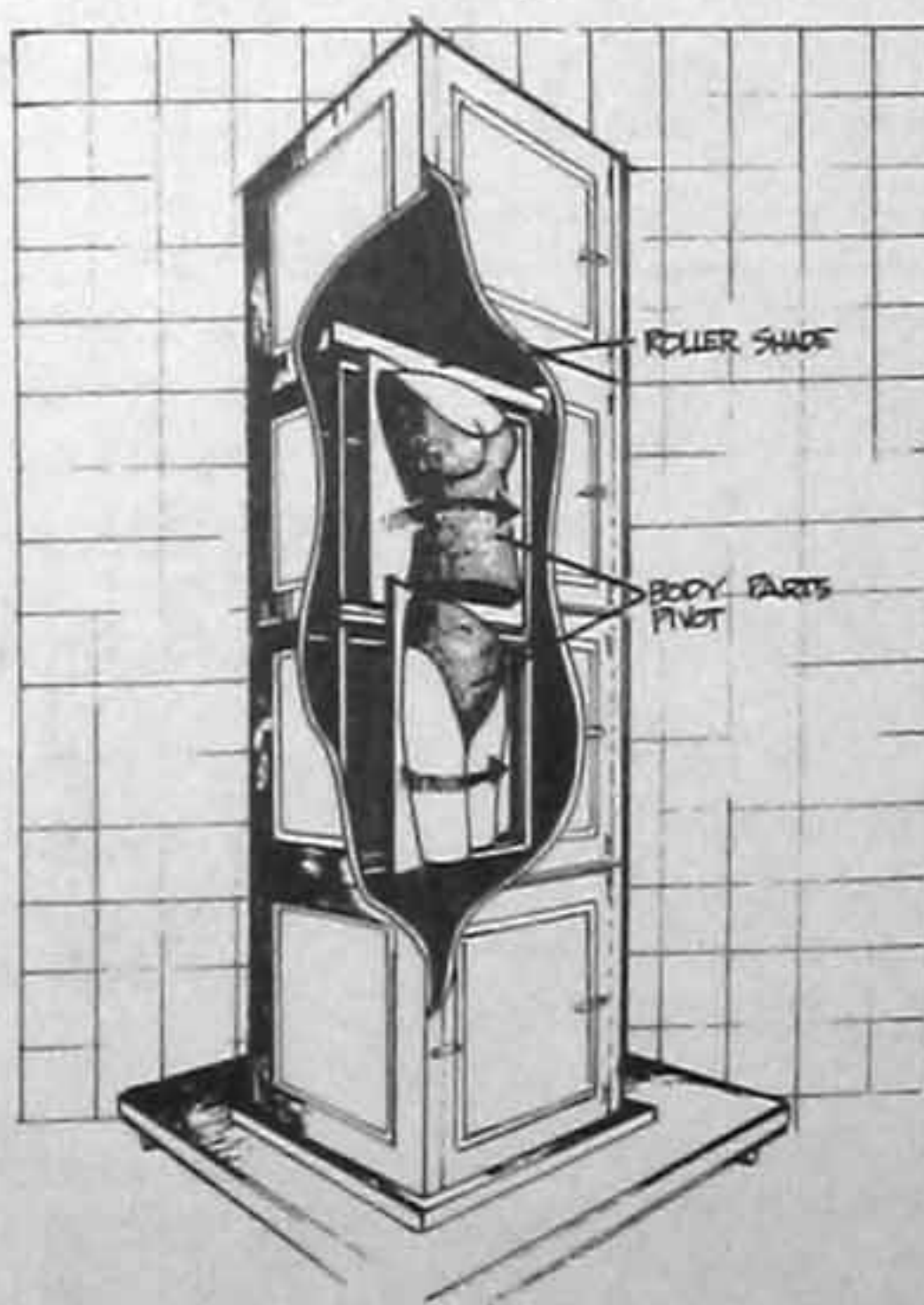
As I have said, this illusion is based on the smaller Stratospheres trick. Like its smaller version, Orbes holds one ball back in the chrome tube. When you cover the empty clear tube with the chrome one, a duplicate red ball is positioned on the spring in the chrome tube. When you push in the first green ball, it stays, pushing in the red. Then the yellow stays and pushes in the green. Finally, the red stays and pushes in the yellow so when you expose the stack the duplicate red ball is on the bottom of the yellow and green and the original red ball is in the chrome tube just above the spring, like the Stratospheres. During all of this "molecule stacking" your assistant is patiently sitting Doll House style in the glass box. When you are ready for the finale, a red ball is placed in the box (front door) and the drape is pulled all the way over. As the box is revolved, the girl drops the gimmick vinyl wall and pulls the ball into the base as she gets in position on the trap to stand straight up. At the moment of truth the magician pulls the cloth off as the girl stands up. Then the magician "catches" the hinged top as it flies back and throws the cloth in the box as the girl kicks open the front door and steps out.

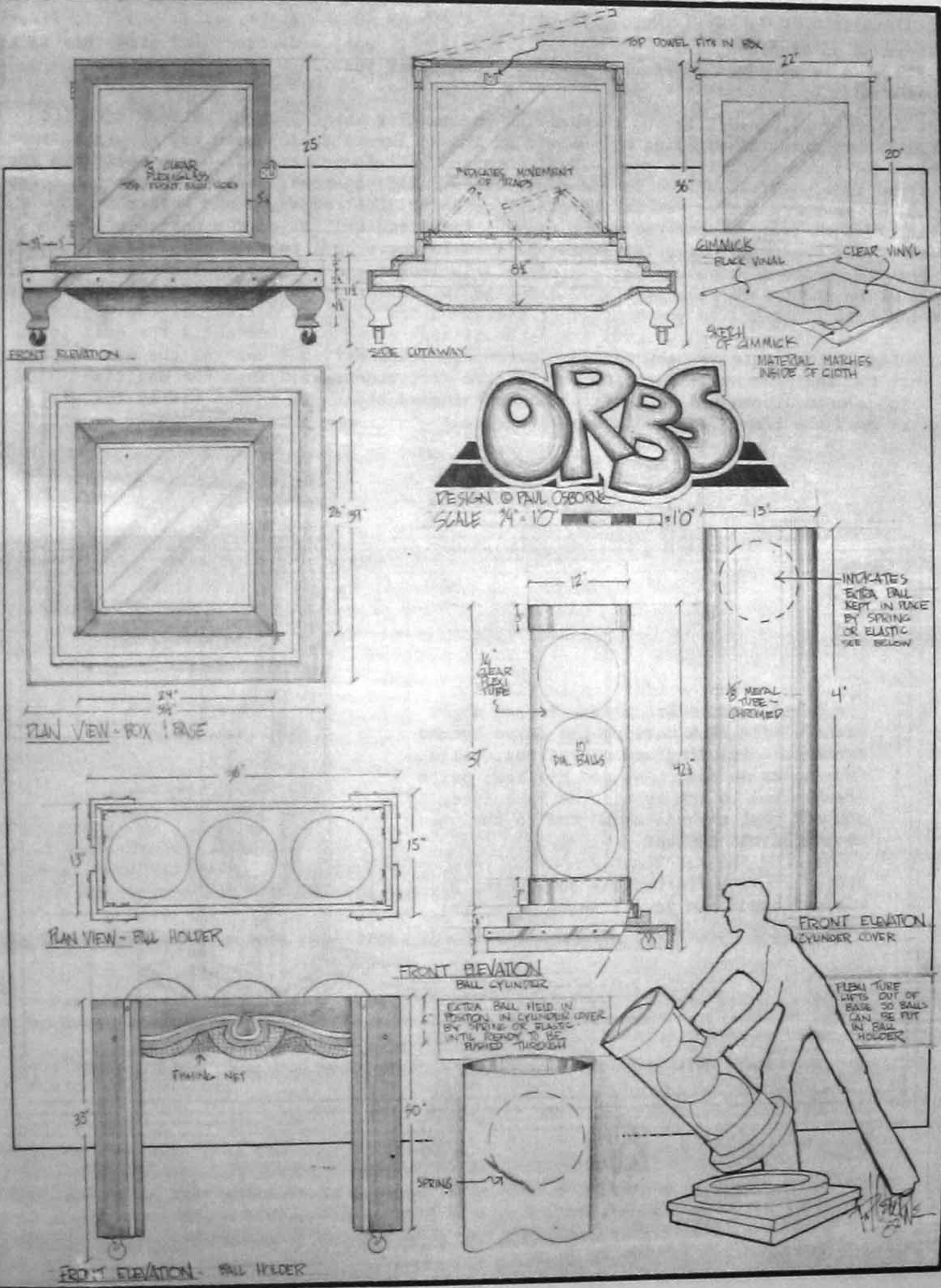
TIP...

The Mismade Girl

Here's a great new addition to Illusion System's Mismade Girl plan: If you don't want to mess with turning the boxes around during the stacking and unstacking, build your boxes so the chest and hip body parts pivot! And to run behind the fake feet, a black roller shade connected to the bottom of the top box.

These simple modifications could make a big difference in your Mismade presentation.





THE BULLET PROOF GIRL

by Jack Dean



INTRODUCTION

Jack Dean is probably one of the better known magic tinkerers of the South. You may have seen his ideas popping up in various magic publications all around. Jack has a very clear drawing board style so I've attempted to faithfully re-print his initial designs. Because of space I have had to reduce all art by 50%, so when he says "full size", it's actually half size.

EFFECT

"A lady from the audience holds a previously selected and autographed card in front of her while she stands in front of a piece of glass suspended before a target backstop. The performer loads a pistol and fires it at the card. The glass behind the lady shatters and the chosen card is now shown to contain a bullet hole. The lady is unharmed.

PREPARATION

With the target lying on its back on a table, open the face of the target by inserting the tip of your finger into the small lip directly above the top rivet head and pull out until the top fastener is disengaged. Now, insert a finger of each hand at each side of the face of the target about on the center line, and lift up until the other two fasteners are disengaged. Lift the target face up a little more until the fasteners are clear of obstructions, and then pull the target away from the glass support hooks and set it aside.

The spring-loaded arm, which breaks the glass, should be pulled up and swung all of the way towards the top of the target. If the release lever is in the way, it should be moved up so that the arm will lay flat. Now, move the release lever down to the stop screw on the spring arm and hold it there while you let go of the arm. The spring arm should now be locked firmly in the top position.

Replace the face of the target by sliding the two slots onto the glass support hooks so that the target face will be aligned with the unit. Press the bottom two fasteners down first and the top one last.

Place the target into position on top of the table base and it's ready to go. It should be positioned downstage left.

Put the box of bullets, which also contains one blank shell, on a tray with your blank pistol and a piece of glass and then place them all on a table downstage center or downstage right.

A deck of cards and the punch gimmick are put into your right coat pocket. The crayon pencil is put into your breast pocket or your inside coat pocket where it can be reached easily.

You are now ready to perform the no-assistant version. If you want to use your own assistant, have the tray backstage and let her bring it onstage when you're ready for it.

If you plan to use a spectator as your assistant, select one and talk to her beforehand. Just explain to her that she will be shot at by a completely safe blank pistol that can't possibly hurt her. If she agrees to this, tell her that the card will have a hole in it, and that she is simply to cover the hole with her finger when you hand her the card. She is also instructed to move her finger away from the hole after the gunshot, but that's all she knows. The main reason for talking to her is to see if she is gun shy and to assure her that it's all perfectly safe.

WORKING

Have a card selected by a spectator. Hand him the crayon pencil and ask him to sign his name on the face of the card. While he is doing this, drop the deck back into the right coat pocket and steal the punch gimmick in the right hand. (I hold it just behind the first joint of the first two fingers, with the small rod clipped between the fingers, but another position might be found to work better for you.) Replace the pencil when the spectator has finished writing, and then take back the card with your left hand. Display the card to the audience and secretly punch it as you take it with the right hand to display it further. Leave it on the punch while you're showing it with the right hand. Return to the stage, disengage the card from the punch and then lay it down on the table. Ditch the punch gimmick into your pocket, as it has served its purpose.

Enter assistant - either yours or the spectator in the audience whom you've previously selected. You may blindfold her for effect if you wish, but this will slow up the ending when you have to remove it. Also, you might muss her hair, and that would never do.

Hand her the punched card, seeing that she covers the hole in it as she's supposed to, and position her in front of the target. She should be at least three feet from it and facing stage right. Caution: Be sure that she is far enough away from the glass so she won't be hit by flying fragments! Finally, position the card for her so that it will be in alignment with the target.

Show the glass and hang it by its tabs onto the hooks in front of the target. Now, and only now, turn on the switch at the bottom of the target. Be careful and do not jar the target as you move the switch.

Cross right to the table holding the tray and pick up the box of bullets. Open the box, spill the bullets onto the tray with a great clatter, and then pick up the gun. Select the one blank cartridge from among the bullets and place it into the empty chamber of the gun. (You should use a blank 'start' pistol which will not fire or even chamber a real bullet. All of the chambers should be previously loaded except one.)

Point out briefly to the audience what you have done and what will happen. It'll all be over so quickly that you want to be sure that they know what they'll have apparently seen.

Aim at the card and fire. The glass will break and the girl should move her finger aside, disclosing the bullet hole in the card. Quickly cross to the girl and take the card from her. Remove the blindfold (if there is one) and display the bullet hole (?) in the card. Scale the card into the audience in the direction of the man who selected it. Thank your spectator-assistant profusely and escort her towards her seat. Then make your closing remarks and take your bow.

The switch on the target should be turned off as soon as possible, since the batteries will soon run down if you don't. This can easily be done as you move the target after

you take your bow.

MAINTENANCE

Batteries: The batteries in the solenoid circuit will need replacement most often, as they must be fresh to furnish enough power to release the spring-loaded arm. Three 1.5 volt alkaline 'C' cells are used for this, such as Eveready No. E93. The positive ends must be towards the red marks, or damage to the solid-state trigger circuit may result.

The other battery is a 9 volt transistor type, such as Eveready No. 216, and it should rest in its cushion beside the amplifier.

Glass: Replacements should be 7" x 10" single strength window glass. You can have these cut at any hardware store that sells glass. Fasten two index tabs to one long edge and punch them with a paper punch to fit the two glass support hooks.

Punch gimmick: Pencil lead should be periodically rubbed on the base of the punch portion of the gimmick so the hole in the card will more closely resemble one made by a lead bullet.

ADJUSTMENT

The volume control knob should be adjusted so that the unit will trip reliably when the gun is shot, but is not too sensitive. (Turning the knob to the right will increase the sensitivity, while turning it to the left will reduce it.) It is wise to try the unit out on location if possible, or at least to practice with it under different conditions, such as outdoors, in a large hall, in a small room, etc. It is possible that a more sensitive setting may be needed in some locations, while a less sensitive one will be more than adequate for others. Temperature can effect the setting too, even though the circuit is temperature stabilized. A cold area might require a higher setting, while a warmer one would need a lower setting.

As a general rule, the sensitivity control can be left alone once you have determined the best setting for your purposes.

CREDITS

U.F. Grant is the originator of the 'Bullet-Proof Girl Illusion,' while Clyde Powell was the first to make a sound-operated version. Jim Farney is the inventor of the punch gimmick, which he described in The Linking Ring, November, 1946, page 68.

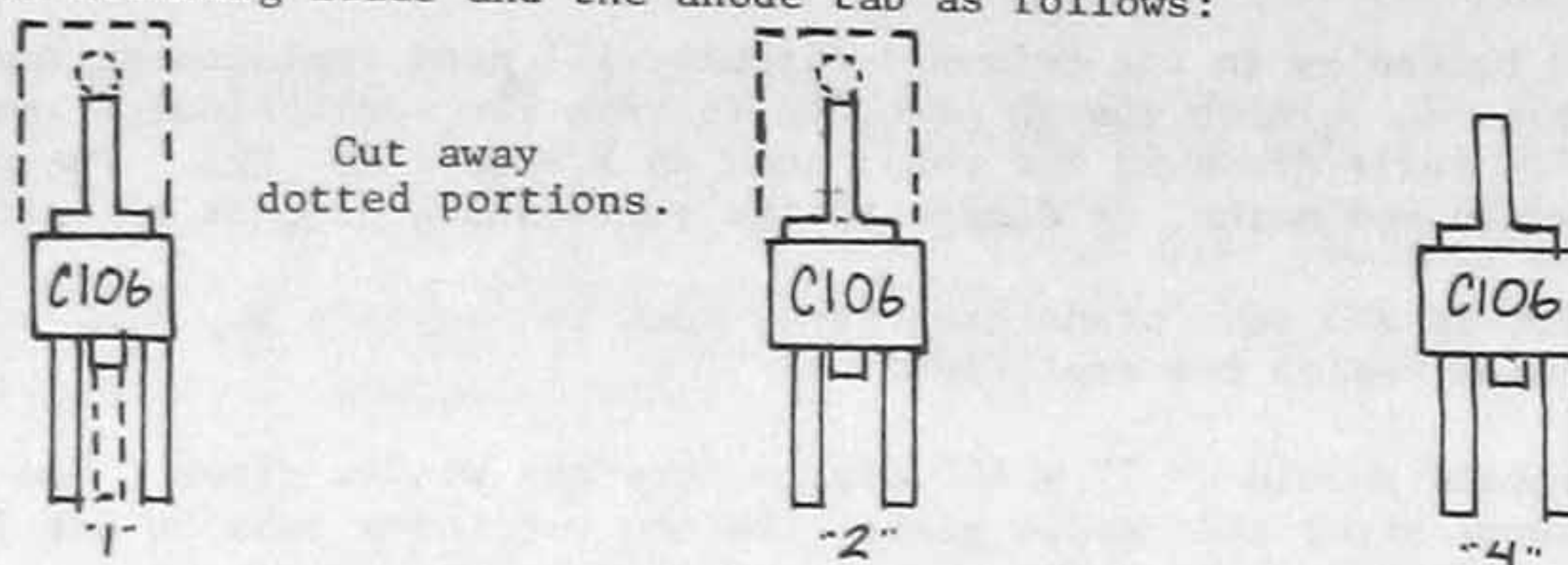
THE CIRCUIT

The units I have built have both been constructed using discarded inexpensive Japanese tape recorders, from which I obtained the audio amplifier, the sensitivity control, and the crystal microphone. The amplifier listed in the parts list should work very well, however, and no impedance matching transformer is required between it and the microphone.

The solenoid in the parts list is not the one I used. I used the continuous duty version but its power was marginal and made the adjustment of the release lever quite critical. I believe that the solenoid specified will do a better job, due to its greater pull. The battery-saver switch (S-2) makes possible the use of the stronger solenoid, which draws almost twice as much power as the other unit.

SCR-1 may be a little hard to find, but by substituting a similar one you should have no trouble. You can use any of the following: C106Y4, C106A4 (preferred), or C106Q3, C106Y3, C106F3, C106 A3, C106 Q1, C106Y1, C106F1, or C106A1 (acceptable). Q = 15 volts, Y = 30 volts, F = 50 volts, A = 100 volts. Also, G = 150 volts, B = 200 volts,

so 'G' and 'B' units can also be used. The last digit is the physical configuration. The '4' type is shown on the circuit board, and the other types may be converted to '4s' by cutting and trimming leads and the anode tab as follows:



Please note that the type '2' cannot be substituted in this circuit, due to its physical configuration.

Other parts may be substituted for those listed, the 5000 ohm sensitivity control, the 5.6 ohm resistor, the 10D2 rectifier, and the crystal lapel mic; but it's best to stay with the recommended parts and values.

Finally, the parts will have to be obtained from both of the sources listed, as neither of them has all of the parts alone.

When constructing the circuit board, be sure to heat sink the leads of the diode and the SCR when soldering them, so that they will not be damaged by the heat. Drill the holes in the board where shown. They should be just large enough to allow the leads to pass through.

THE TABLE BASE

The 'Eureka Table Base' of E.F. Grant's is highly recommended, but of course you can substitute any other one you like. The first outfit I built had an old Star Magic Co. base on it and it was quite nice. The coupling in the plans (Detail 7) is to fit the 'Eureka' base, so if you substitute you'll have to change this part to fit.

STRIKER/RELEASE MECHANISM

This is the heart of the entire outfit and it should be built up complete as shown in Detail 3 and adjusted and tested before it is installed into the target.

Cut the mounting base (Detail 1) first and machine it as shown on the drawing. Mark the centerlines for future reference when mounting parts.

Make the shaft (Detail 2), the shaft mounting brackets (Detail 4), the release lever (Detail 5) and the two switch contacts (Details 8 and 9). The striker (Detail 3) can be made a little long and cut to size after the shaft and striker have been assembled to the base. It is also a good idea NOT to drill the solenoid mounting holes in the solenoid mounting bracket until after you're SURE of the position of the solenoid.

Screw the solenoid mounting bracket (6) to the mounting base (1).

Screw the striker (3) into the shaft (2) and solder it into place. NOW drill and tap for the 5-40 socket cap screw. It is a good idea to use 'Loctite' thread adhesive when installing the cap screw into the striker. The screw can be cut off and filed down after it is installed. Measure 1/32" out from the cap screw head and cut off the striker with a clean, smooth cut. Cut it long and file it to length.

Install the shaft mounting brackets (4), the shaft and striker assembly (2) (3) and the

1/4" x 1" x 2" rubber onto the base (1). OMIT THE SPRING AT THIS TIME. (Note that the cap screw just overhangs the edge of the rubber pad.)

Pivot the striker to the top position and place the release lever (5) into its position. The release lever should be touching the cap screw on the striker and extending at a right angle to the cap screw on the striker and extending at a right angle to the centerline. Fasten the release lever into place. (Lubricate all pivot points and the end of the striker with powdered graphite.)

Fasten the solenoid plunger to the release lever with the pin that comes with the solenoid. Position the solenoid so that it will have a pull of 1/16". Mark its position, lay-out the two mounting holes and attach the solenoid to its mounting bracket (6). Apply power (4.5 volts DC) to the solenoid and see if the parts are positioned so that the striker will be released when the solenoid pulls in. You can pull up on the striker with your fingers while you try this. If the release lever is not holding properly, try filing the cap screw head back a little to allow more surface on the end of the striker. Also, the release lever may need to be bent (twisted) along its long axis slightly so that the edge which holds the striker down is a little lower than the other edge.

Disassemble the mounting brackets (4) and install the spring. Watch your fingers, as it is a strong spring. Reassemble the parts and try the solenoid release again by applying power to the coil. Further adjustment, as described above, may be necessary. Once you have this part working correctly, and it CAN be done, you've got it made.

Finally, install the switch contacts as shown in Details 8 and 9. (Contact 8 is shown too low on the drawing.) Contact (8) should be positioned so that it will clear the spring on the striker and so that it will make good contact with the striker. It should be glued, as well as screwed, into position. This goes for the mounting brackets (4) as well.

Paint the assembly, except for the solenoid, flat black.

THE TARGET

Make the mounting posts (11) and the mounting post assemblies (12).

The target back (13) is a HEAVY aluminum cake pan, 9" dia. x 1 1/2" deep from Sears - Roebuck.

BEFORE you cut into it you can position the striker/release mechanism, the three batteries in their holder, and the mounting posts to see how it all fits together. At this time you'll probably see that one of the mounting posts needs to be cut, or sanded off to clear the batteries.

Glue the mounting posts (5) and the mounting post assemblies into the pan with epoxy cement and clamp them until it is set.

Now cut the holes for the table base rod, the mounting holes for the coupling (7) and the holes for the switch. DO NOT DRILL THE HOLES IN THE MOUNTING POSTS OR THE MOUNTING POST ASSEMBLIES YET.

Position the striker/release mechanism and cement it into the target with epoxy cement. Let it set up, of course.

The 9 volt battery holder can be riveted in and the 3-cell holder can be cemented in. Do this after painting the inside of the target flat black. Actually, I found it convenient to paint it before I cemented in the striker/release mechanism and left a large bare area for the cement.

Paint the table coupling (7) flat black and screw it into place.

The target front can be made from a heavy duty aluminum cookie sheet, also from Sears, or .040 aluminum. It should be laid out dimensionally and then sawed on a band saw, jig saw or with a saber saw. After the holes and notches are in it, place it into position on the target back and mark the locations of the holes on the mounting posts (11) and the mounting post assemblies (12). Drill these holes now.

Install the three 'Trimounts' to the rear of the target front with the three type 'U' drive screws by placing the 'Trimount' into a clearance hole in a piece of scrap wood and driving the drive screw through the target face and into the head of the 'Trimount' with a hammer. You'll have to squeeze the prongs of the 'Trimounts' back together somewhat with pliers after you're finished. Place the front onto the target and work with it and adjust the 'Trimounts' until it goes on and off fairly easily.

Bend the lip into the target by laying the target onto the edge of a piece of scrap wood and hammering a piece of 1/2" diameter rod held against the edge of the target.

Paint the back flat black and spray paint the front bright red.

Cut the diamond shapes from black felt by taping a cardboard pattern to the felt. Glue them to the front of the target with contact cement as shown on the drawing depicting target front.

Slit the felt over the striker clearance slot down the center and at each end as shown on the drawing.

Disconnect the spring on the striker and check to see that the striker swings freely through the slot in the target front. Replace the spring and visually check to see that it still clears. It is possible to bring wires out through the gap at the edge of the target front and actually operate the striker for a final clearance check. If all is OK, you can complete the target front as described above.

You should also install the hooks (16) so that the slots on the target face can be filed to fit them before you paint the target face.

FINAL ASSEMBLY

The audio amplifier, along with the additional circuit board, should have pieces of self-adhesive foam plastic or rubber stuck to their bottom sides in strategic locations. They can then be cemented into position, by applying contact cement to the foam material.

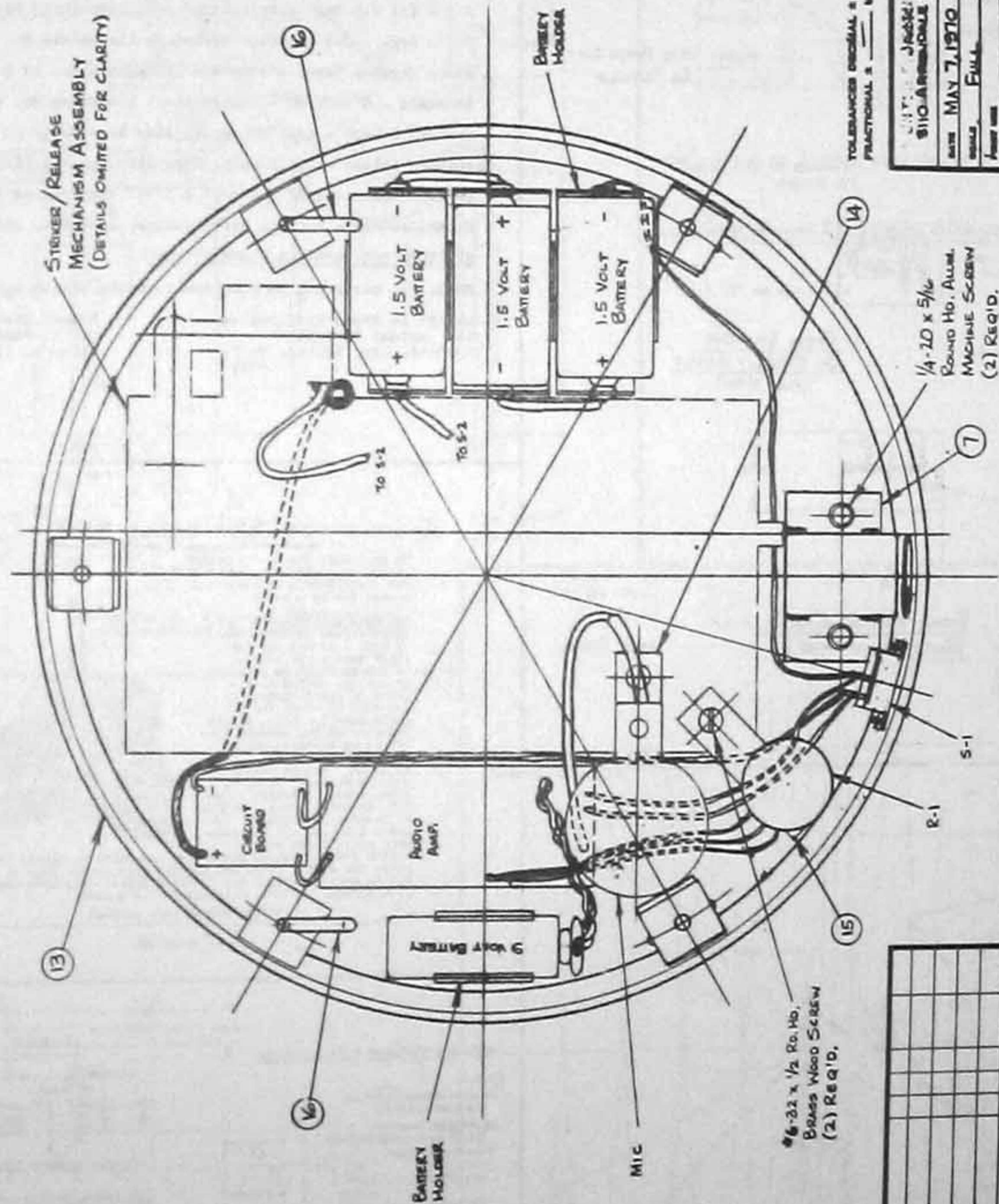
Install the switch into its position with screws if the switch has threaded holes, or with screws and nuts if it does not.

After the microphone bracket (14) is installed, clip the lapel microphone to it. DO NOT allow the microphone to touch the mounting post assembly (12) as it does in the assembly drawing. If necessary, stick a piece of the foam material to the post to cushion the microphone at that point.

The sensitivity control bracket (15) is purposely vague in that I do not know whether or not you will have a place for mounting screws on the control (R-1) that you use. Some of them mount with two screws, while some of them mount by sticking the threaded nozzle through a hole, etc. I have also mounted them by using adhesive foam and simply gluing them into place. I'll have to leave the actual mounting of the control up to you.

Follow the schematic and the assembly drawing for the wiring. Also put a daub of red paint in the bottom of the 3-cell battery holder at the end of each cell position.

That finishes it. You're now ready to cock the striker, turn on the unit and clap your hands. Good luck!"

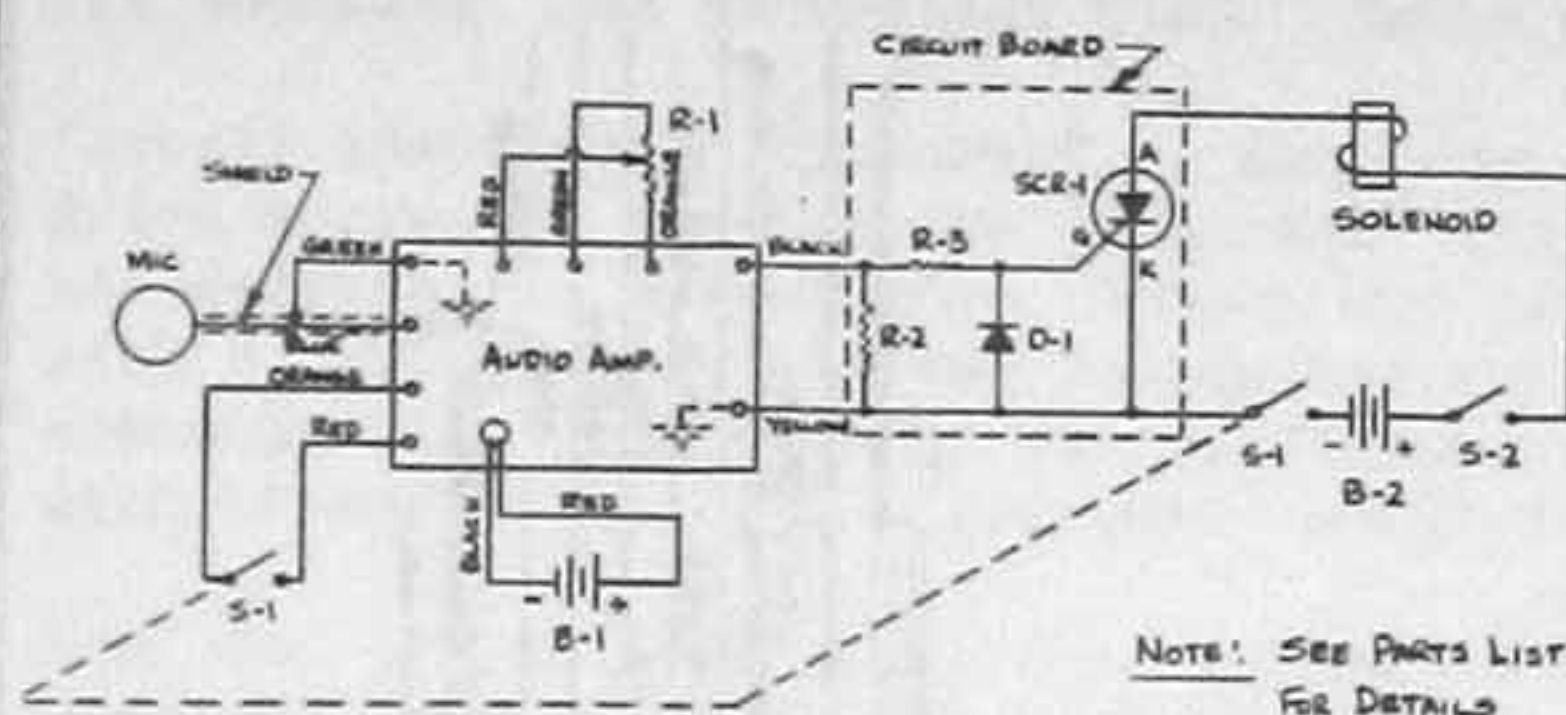


TOLERANCES DECIMALS & FRACTIONS UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED

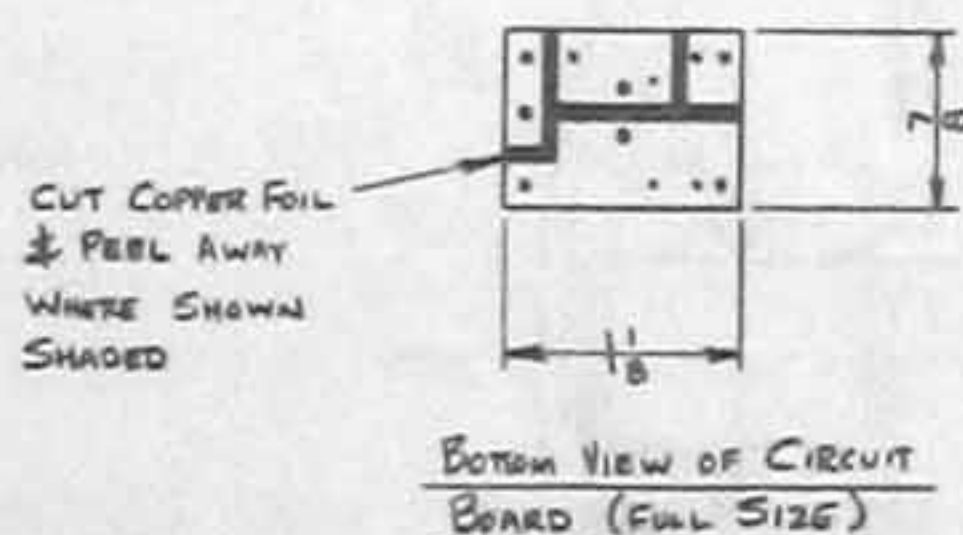
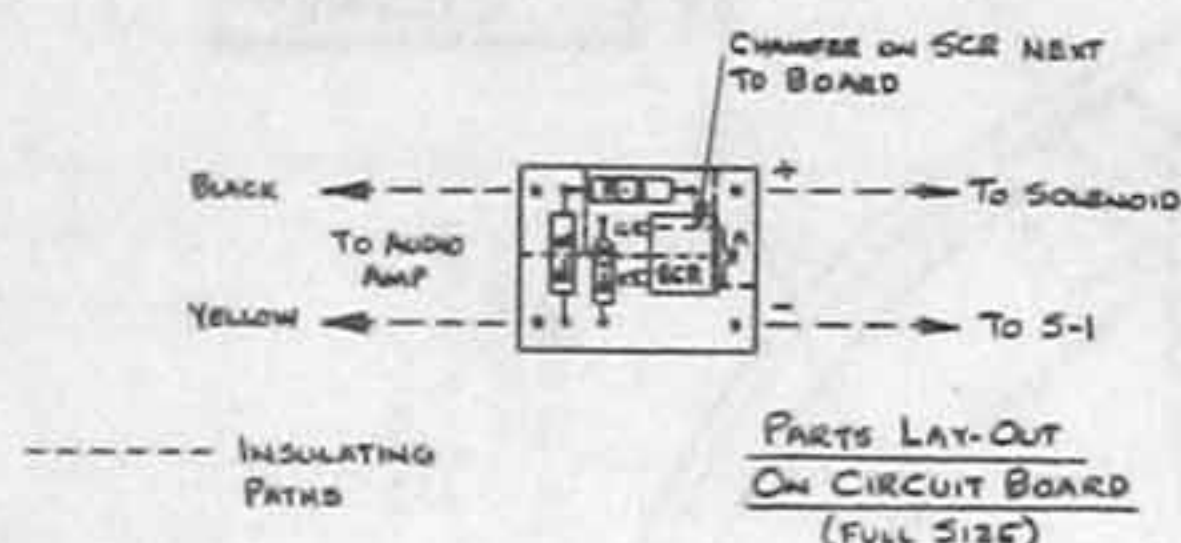
DATE	MAY 7, 1970	BY	JACK DEAN
DESIGN	Full	CHK BY	
APP'D		DATE	
PART NAME		PART NO.	
MINE IV BOMB, BOMB		GREL ASSEMBLY	

NO.	REV.	DATE	BY	CHK.	APP.
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SCHEMATIC CIRCUIT DIAGRAM **MARK IV SOUND-OPERATED BULLET-PROOF GIRL**



NOTE: SEE PARTS LIST FOR DETAILS



JACK DEAN

CIRCUIT PARTS LIST

- R-1 - 5000 ohm sensitivity control (Lafayette No. 99 E 60196)
- R-2 - 5.6 ohm $\frac{1}{2}$ watt carbon resistor, 10%
- R-3 - 3900 ohm $\frac{1}{2}$ watt carbon resistor, 10%
- D-1 - 1N2069/10D2 silicon rectifier (International Rectifier)
- SCR-1 - 0106Q4 silicon controlled rectifier (General Electric)
- S-1 - Double pole single throw (DPST) slide switch (Lafayette No. 34 E 39114)
- S-2 - Special switch (see text)
- B-1 - 9 volt transistor battery (Eveready No. 216)
- B-2 - (3) 1.5 volt alkaline "C" cells (Eveready No. E93)
- Audio Amp. - 3-transistor miniature (Lafayette No. 99 E 90391)
- Mic - Crystal lapel microphone (Lafayette No. 99 E 45106)
- Solenoid - 6 volt DC - intermittent (Guardian No. 28)
- Battery holder - (3) "C" cells, side by side (Keystone No. 187)
- Battery holder - (1) 9 volt transistor battery (Keystone No. 203P)
- Circuit board - 7/8" X 1 1/8" X 1/16" copper clad XLX phenolic
- Miscellaneous - Hook-up wire, solder, hardware, etc.

SEE TEXT FOR POSSIBLE SUBSTITUTIONS

NOTE: All parts may be obtained from the following:

Lafayette Radio Electronics
111 Jericho Turnpike
Syosset, Long Island, N. Y.
11791

Newark Electronics Corp.
500 N. Pulaski Rd.
Chicago, Ill. 60624

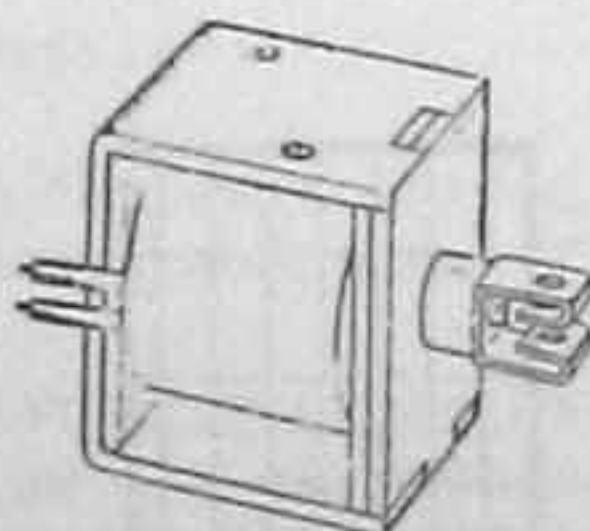
EUREKA TABLE BASE

We gave this the name 'Eureka' as it is a table base which has EVERYTHING a magician has wished for in a base!

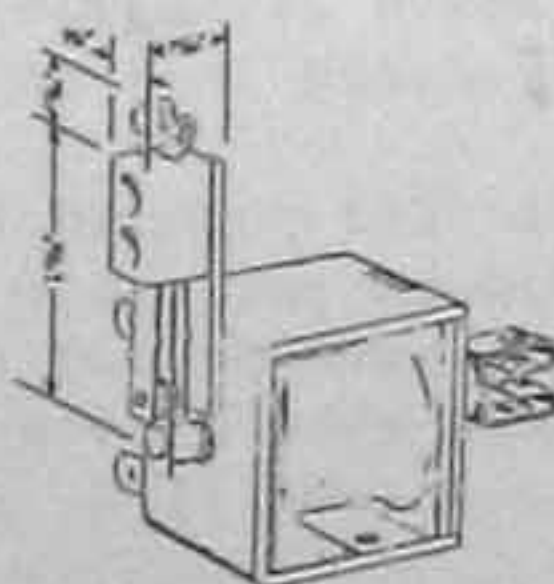
The base is RIGID, has a large spread of 22 inches so it will hold a large top. Folds down to 26 inches, raises up to 50 inches. It raises and lowers with a touch of the fingers. If you want it short for a large square circle, slight pressure on the upright lowers it in elevator style!

It is in a bright silver non-tarnish finish. ZIP-ZIP, it folds down! ZIP-ZIP, it sets up! No loose parts, nothing to unscrew or tighten. Just press a button and the legs come out. Press another button and the center rod raises and locks in place! Anyplace you stop! There are plastic tips on the legs so as not to mar. The tips are 'suction like'. Supplied complete with flange. Weight, a little over 3 pounds.

PRICE: \$13.00 plus postage



4.5 VOLTS
3.8 ohm coil = 1.36 AMPS
7.7 ohm coil = .58 AMPS



SOLENOID SWITCH:
Contact Form: SPDT
Contacts: 1/2" x 1/2" silver with gold flash
Rating: 10 Amp. @ 115 Volts 50Hz
Non-inductive

NO. 28 DC SOLENOID

COIL:
Standard Voltages: 6, 12, 24,
115 & 230V AC or DC

AC Operating Frequency:
50-60 Hz; also available: 50Hz

Power Requirements:

DUTY CYCLE

Intermittent

Continuous

13.0W
19.0VA
6.3W
8.5VA

10.0W
15.0VA
5.0W
6.3VA

10.0W
15.0VA
5.0W
6.3VA

10.0W
15.0VA
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6.3VA

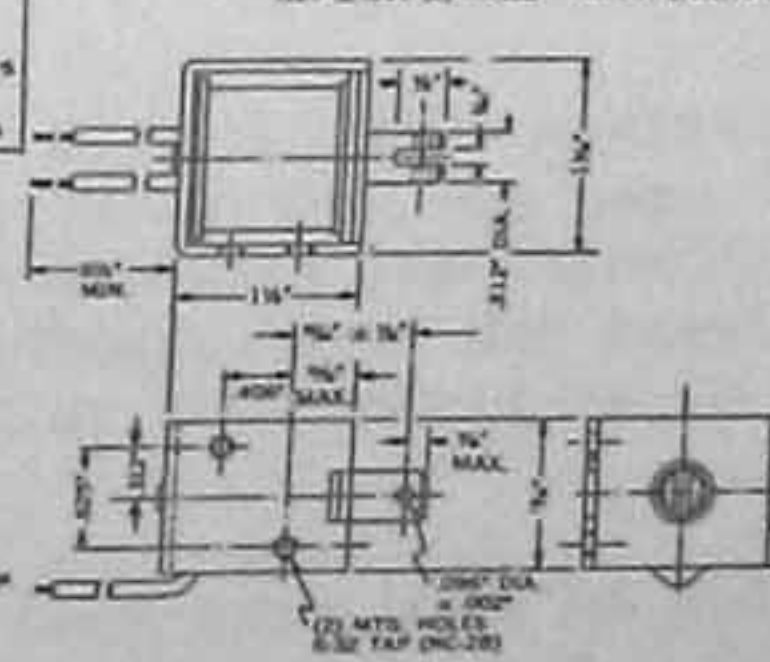
10.0W
15.0VA
5.0W
6.3VA

10.0W
15.0VA
5.0W
6.3VA

LOCKCLIP

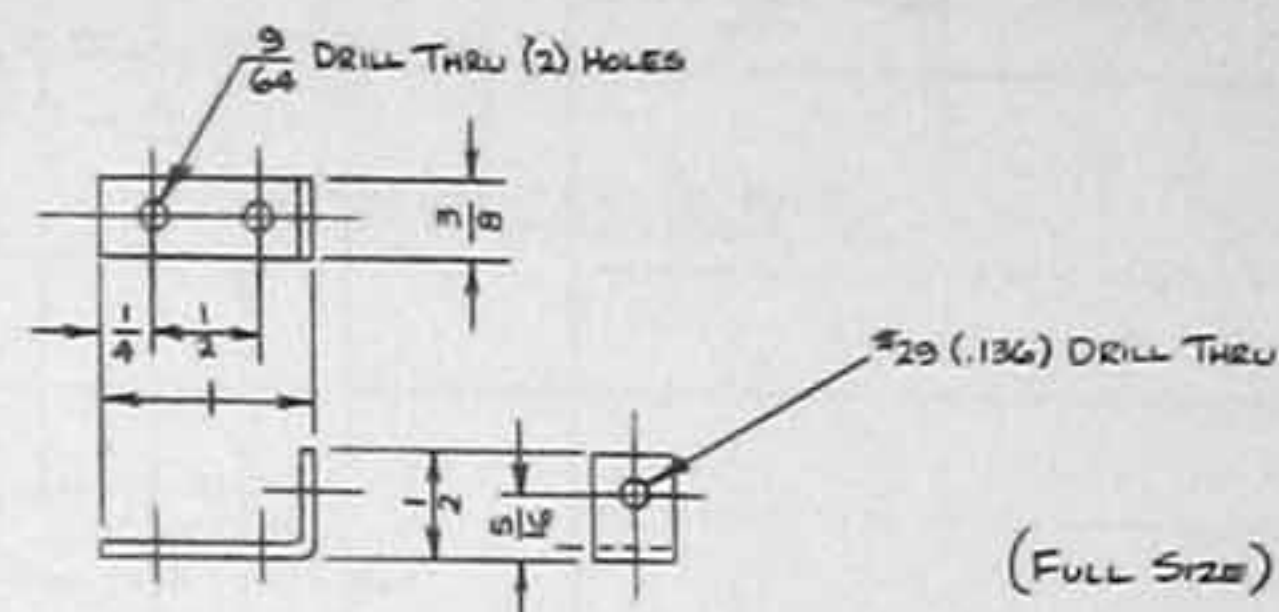


.127 ± .001 (2) HOLES *IN APPLICATION

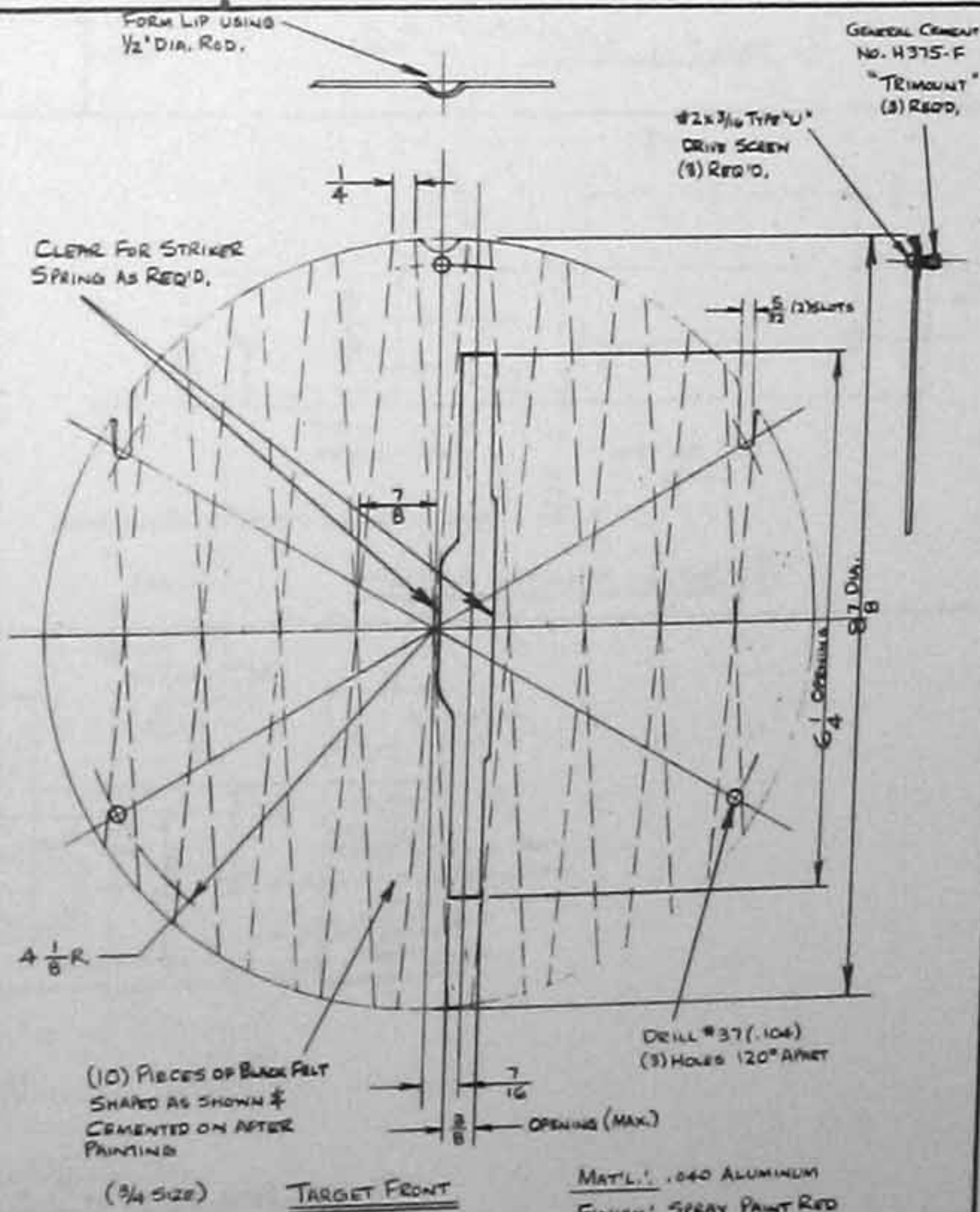


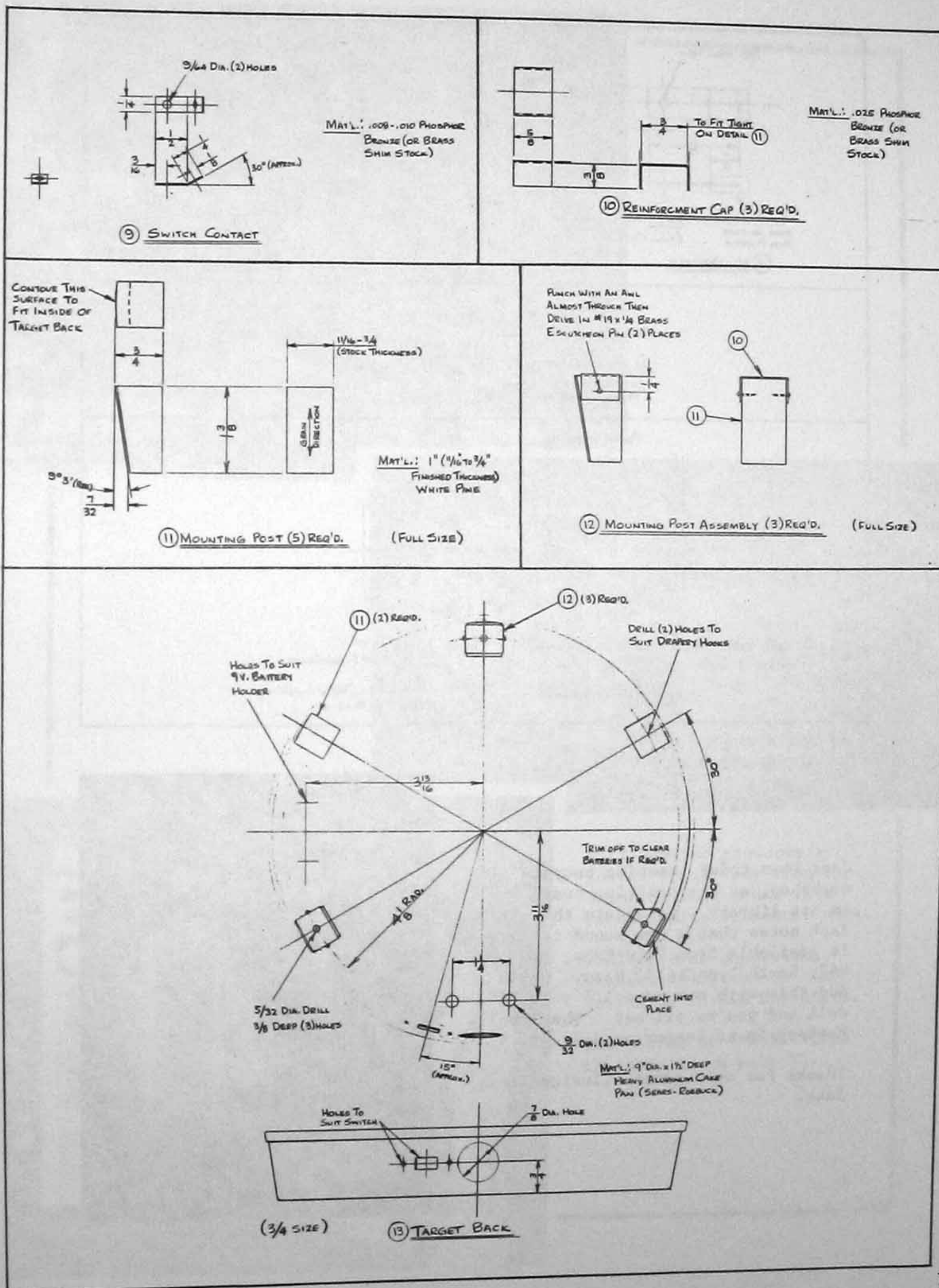
Life Expectancy at Rated Load and 1/2" Stroke: 2 x 10⁶

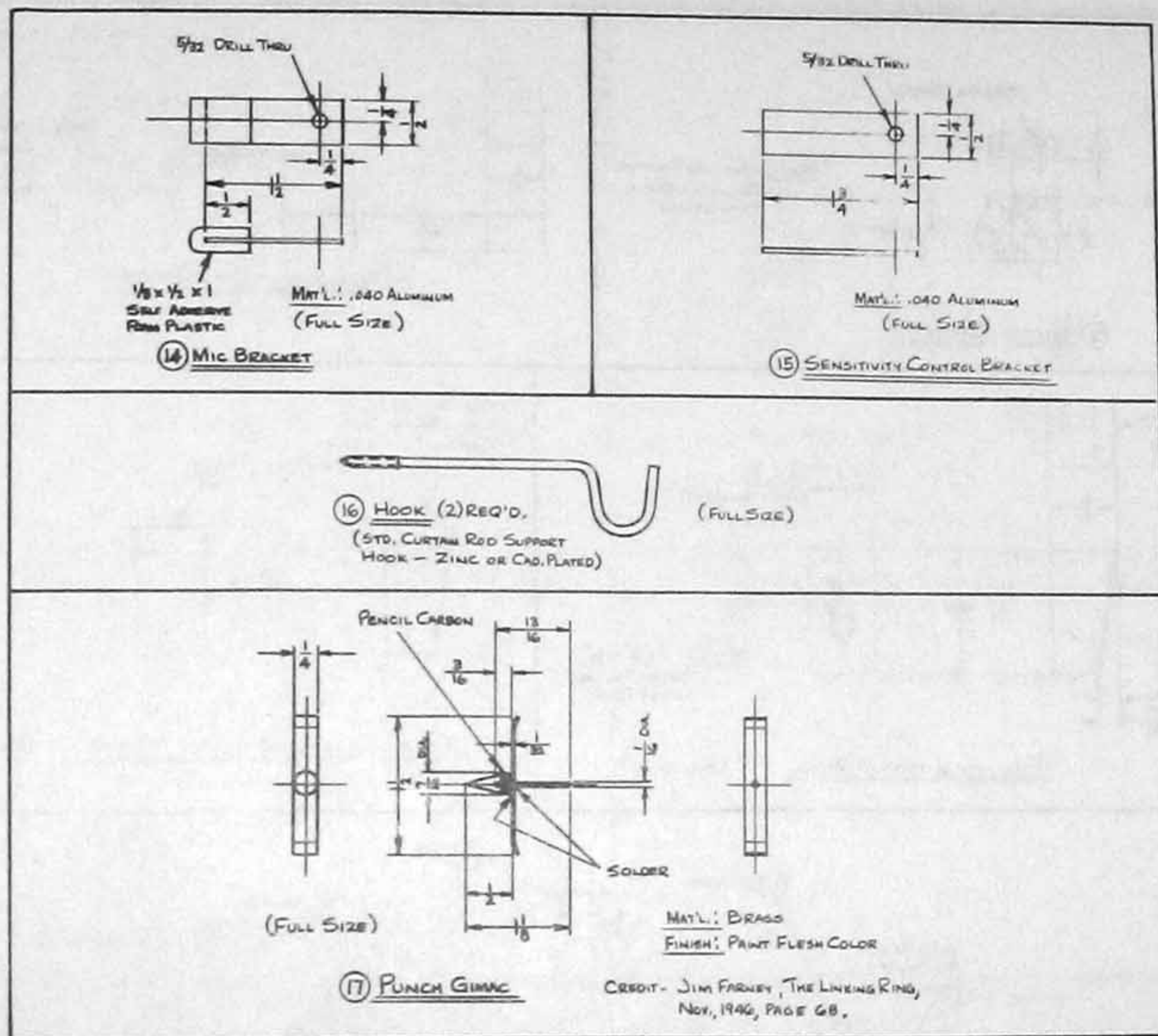
Plunger: Available with Slotted or Lockclip



④ SHAFT MOUNTING BRACKET (2) REQ'D.



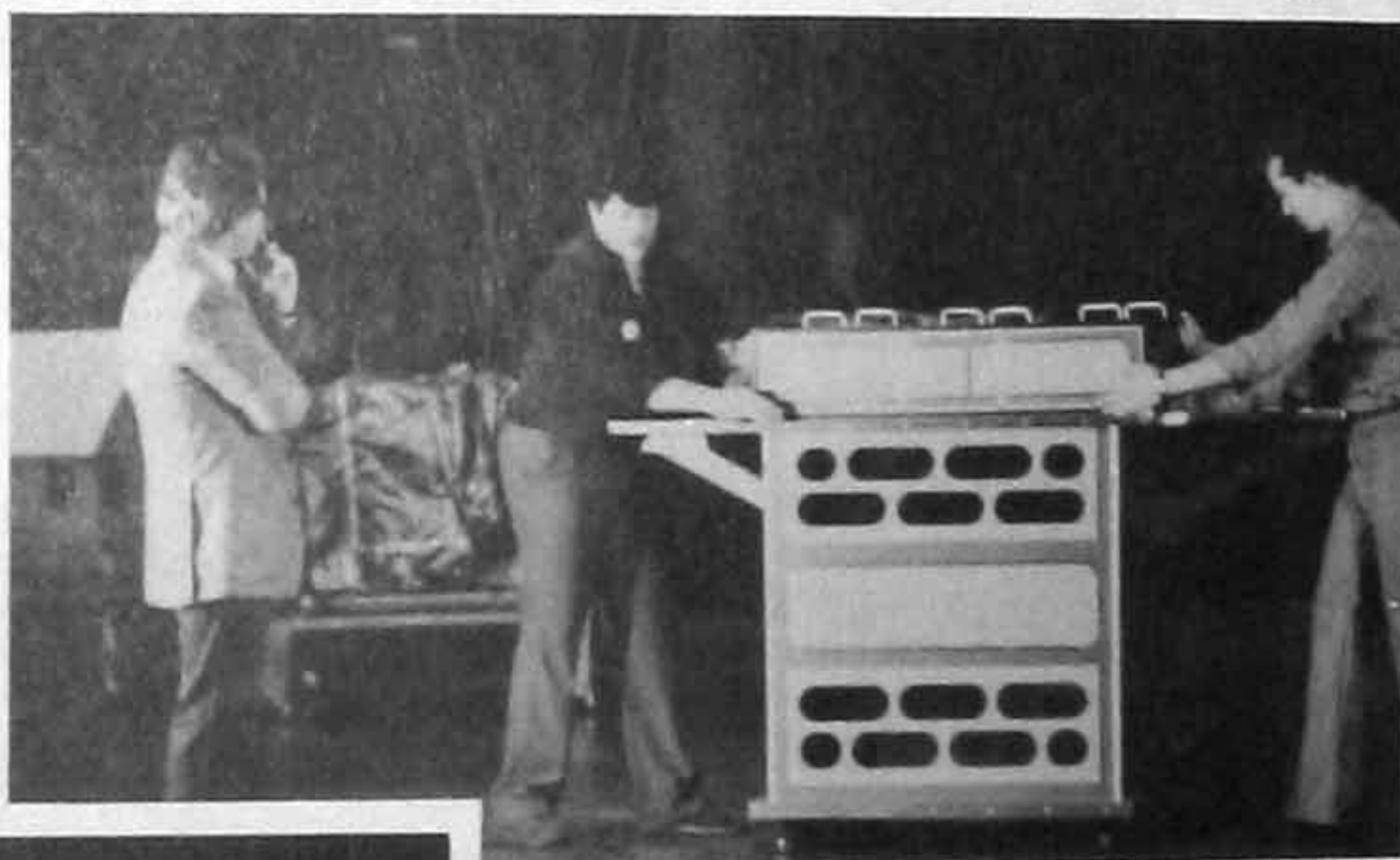




Jack Dean today, keeping busy in his workshop, at his drafting board and in his library. To update the plans, Jack notes that a new sound trigger is available from Poly Paks, P.O. Box 942, South Lynnfield, Mass., 01940. Add this with one more 1.5 volt "C" cell and you're all set. The 9 volt battery is no longer needed.

Thanks for this great illusion idea, Jack!



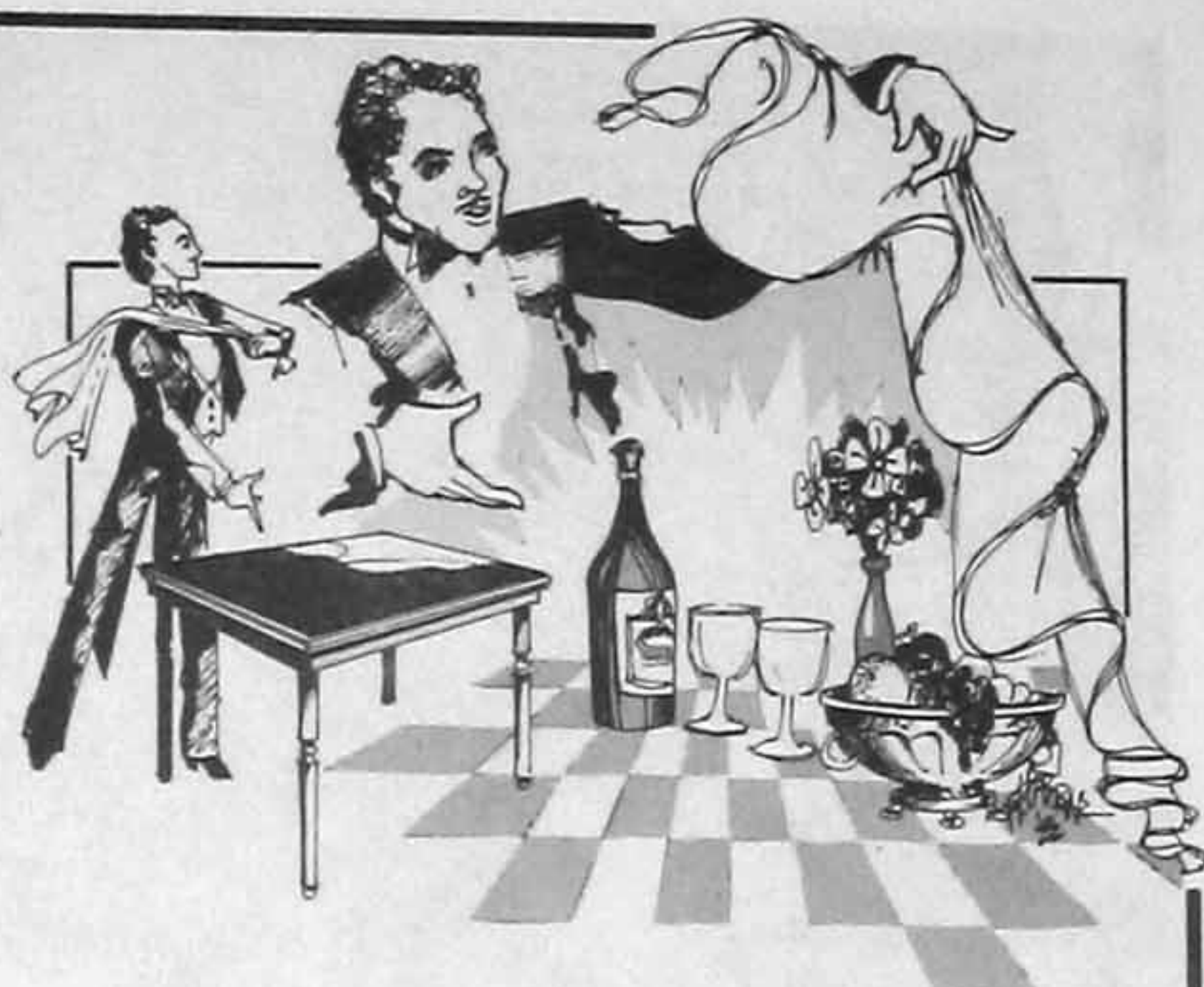


Fitz Houston produces a lovely young lady from the Oriental Doll House in a Pennsylvania amusement park.

Paul Osborne supervises rehearsals of the Cutting In Thirds in San Francisco.

The secret of the Bio-Tron is revealed on page 95.

DINNER FOR TWO



INTRODUCTION

In the touring days of Kalanag, Dante, Thurston, etc., one popular production number was "100 Mysteries Performed In 10 Seconds", or the world's fastest magic. Dinner for two would easily fit into that category.

EFFECT

An empty table is shown, covered and, voila, magically it's... "Dinner For Two" with wine, grapes, flowers, etc.

METHOD

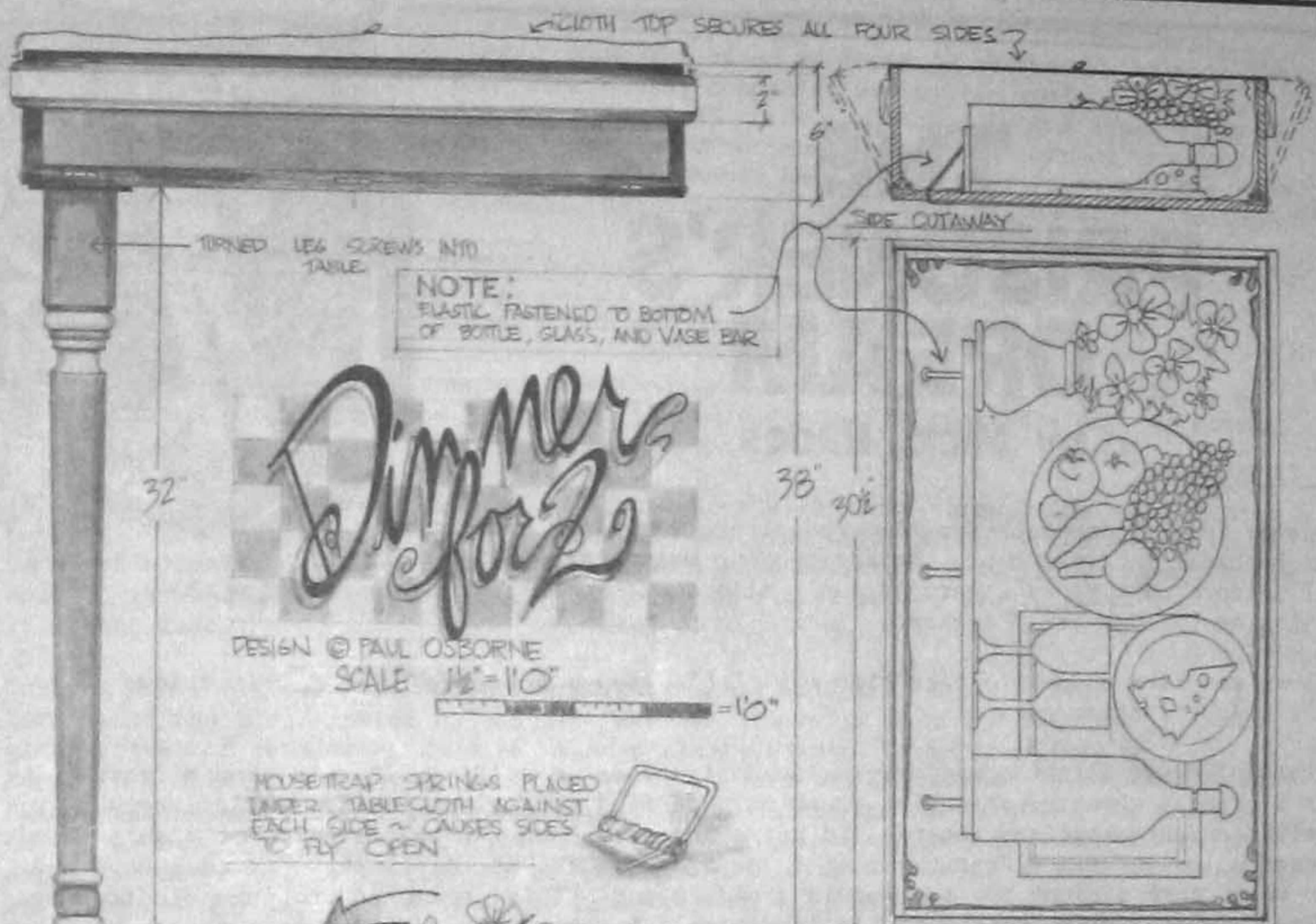
The table itself is constructed from 3/8" ply and is basically a 6" x 2'6" x 18" box hinged so the sides fall down as indicated in our side cutaway. Within the box is a 20" x 3" x 1" board hinged and attached to three elastic bands running under the table. Attached to this board are a plastic wine bottle, glasses and vase. Within this table/box are placed the various plastic fruits and display items that make up the transformation. Stapled down within is a table cloth which acts to cover the fallen sides after the magic has happened.

The outside of the table has some decorative molding running around the sides 1/2" down from the top. This forms the lip that the cloth top fits over, holding up all four sides. The four legs can be bought at most home/hardware stores and are of the screw-in variety.

Of course, the table is pre-set with its cloth top holding up all four sides with the bottle, et al, folded down within. Once the table is covered with your decorative foulard, you find the center tab on the cloth top and with a left/right movement pull the foulard and top cloth off the table. The mousetrap springs will push all four sides down and the elastic will pull the bottle, etc. into the up position. Of course the table has shrunk 6", but most audience members won't notice this. And by all means be careful how the table is brought on or stored backstage because to work right, it must have a hair trigger.

The paint job plays an important part in this illusion as well. To make the transformation as startling as possible, the table itself should be rather dull - dark browns with minor highlights here and there. But, when it transforms itself you should concentrate on finding bright tablecloth material, colorful fruit, wine bottle, flower and vase. Make the change as startling as possible.

Bon Appetit!



ACTION OF REMOVING CLOTH
TOP (UNDER COVER OF CLOTH)
RELEASES ALL FOUR SIDES
AND BOTTLE, GLASS AND
VASE BAR

SKETCH

MARK
52

THE PRISONER'S DREAM

by Micky Hades

INTRODUCTION

One of the best sources for illusion plans, ideas and references is Micky Hades International. In addition to maintaining a huge file of illusion plans, Micky's various publications on the subject are a must for the illusion builder or librarian.

Micky was kind enough to take time out of his busy schedule to submit this unique idea for a substitution/escape:

"The following illusion was originally designed as an escape. It came from a desire to do a crystal clear Substitution Trunk only to find that glass was impractical because of weight and breakage and plastic did not stand up. Even the scuff-resistant plastic can't stand up to the fancy footwork that takes place on top of the trunk. The idea occurred to me to make a clear box that would stand on end. This presented problems of dropping a curtain around it, so the Harbin 'Magician's Revenge' set-up was chosen for this.

EFFECT

The presentation is that four sheets of clear plastic are openly placed into a frame attached to the base of the stand and a top cover placed over this to form an upright box. But prior to the last panel being put into place, the assistant is placed inside the clear casket and totally enclosed. Four lengths of strong rubber anchor cords are then fastened between the top and bottom frameworks to secure the entire Crystal Casket.

The magician then goes to the back of the stand and begins pulling the curtain around the upper ring as with the Harbin illusion. Without a pause the curtain continues being pulled around until the opposite end is pulled open to reveal that the magician is now locked inside the crystal prison and the assistant is the one pulling the curtain.

The rubber cords are removed, the top pulled off and the plastic panels taken away to release the magician."

METHOD

In looking at the plan we have prepared for Micky's idea you will notice in the bottom right corner a plan view showing the "pivot panel". This panel combines with the top panel series to rotate the side piece of plexiglass which permits the exit of the magician and the entrance of the assistant. A centrally located bolt and nut permits the rotation of the frame sides (see lower drawing). In looking at the front elevation of the unit you will see it totally assembled. The four pieces of plexiglass fit into grooves in the top and bottom frames (see half size detail at bottom), the last piece of plexi inserted being the pivoting one. The entire structure is basically held together by tension. The top panel is pulled down on the four plexi sides by the eight



4'6" long bungee cords. These are the same type elastic cords used in some weight lifting supplies, trampolines, etc. They can often be found in hardware stores in the camping or ski supply area. Also some moving companies use bungee cords to secure furniture inside the truck. The eight vertical cords are hooked to the brass rings fitted on the top and bottom frame. Two other horizontal cords run around the four sides and are hooked together. These cords should have enough play to permit the side panel to pivot for entrance and exit. Use trial and error to find the right tension.

The curtain support is made from 1 1/2" steel tubing threaded at one end to fit the flange on the base and a pin hinge welded to the top. The corresponding hinge and support are welded to the top ring which supports the curtain.

This idea from Micky Hades has some flexibility. By making the box longer, the panel can open into the box and the horizontal bungee cords can be omitted since, to some extent, they will slow down the entrance and exit procedures.

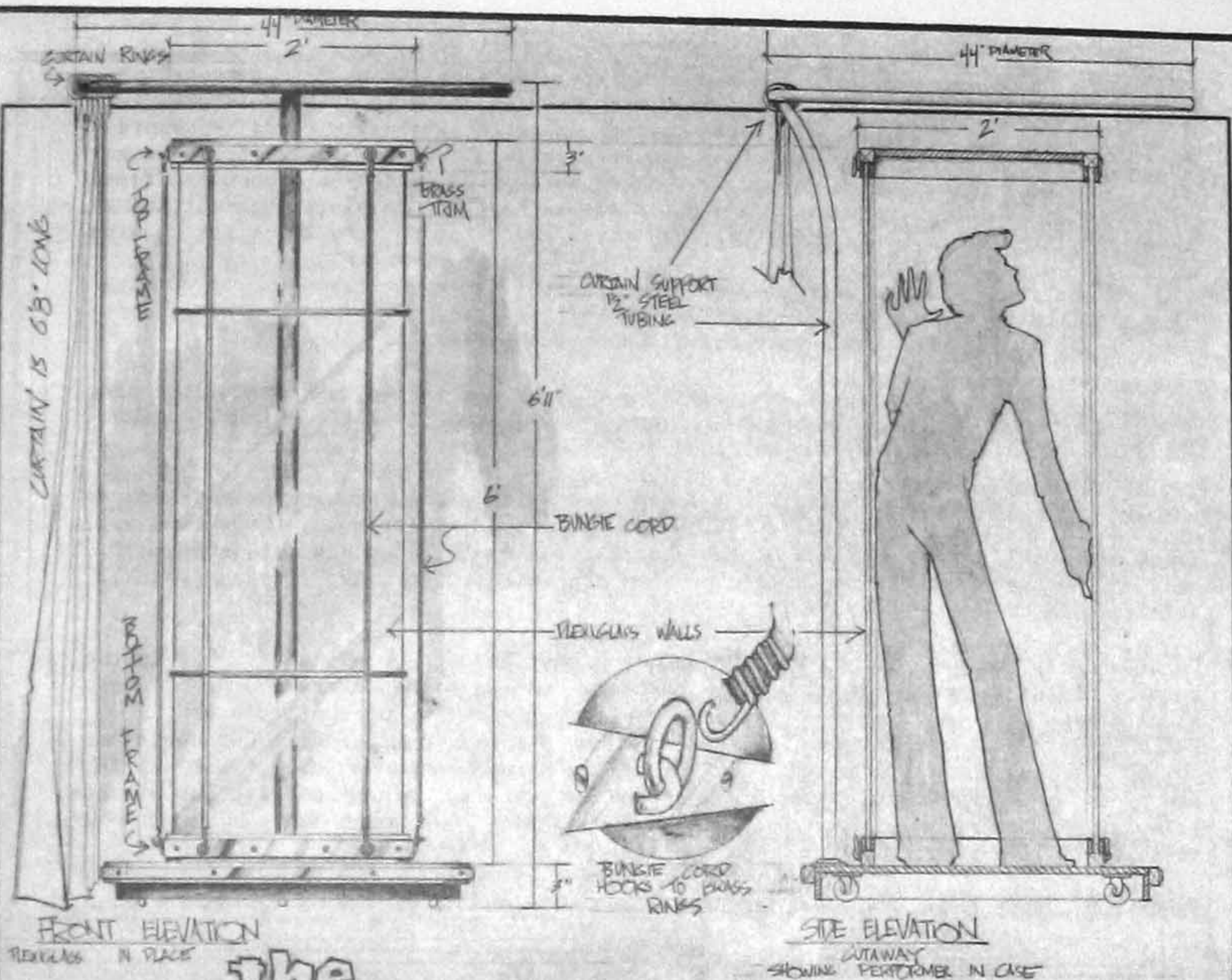
"Other presentations are possible. A large sheet with a rod through the top hem can be used. The assistant is locked in the casket...the magician holds the shroud up in front of himself, just in front of the casket...the assistant comes out, transfers the hold on the sheet and the magician pops into the casket...one, two,...guess who(?). It's that fast.

Unfortunately the same method in the form of a box will not be effective. It is the forming of the clear casket on a solid base and framework that provides the psychological effect of this being a solid, though clear, prison. Thus the title of PRISONER'S DREAM. The patter could be on how we are all imprisoned in our own clear cells, watching the world go by...hoping for the things on the outside. But only a few of us are lucky enough to make use of the magic in our minds to break out of these prisons. But there is a price to be paid for all things. For as we gain our freedom, we automatically imprison others who take our place. Heavy, eh?"

Thank you, Micky Hades for this terrific illusion idea!



MICKY HADES



the PRISONER'S DREAM

BY MICKY HADES
DESIGN © PAUL OSBORNE SCALE 3/4" = 10"

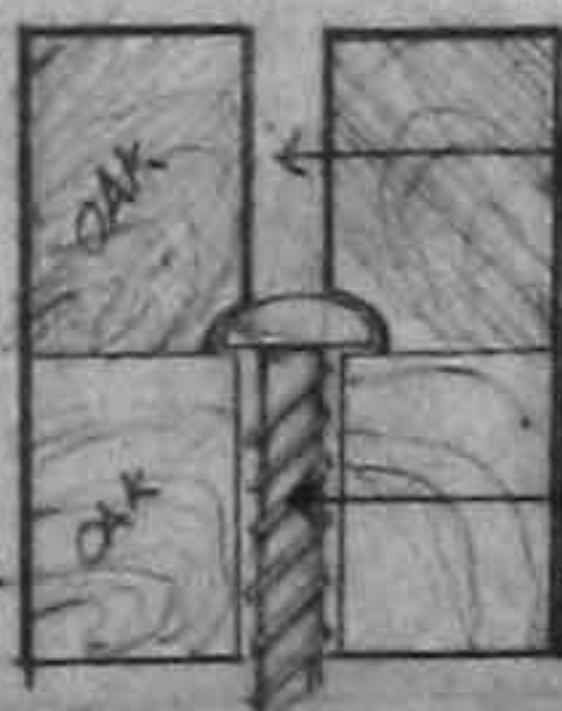
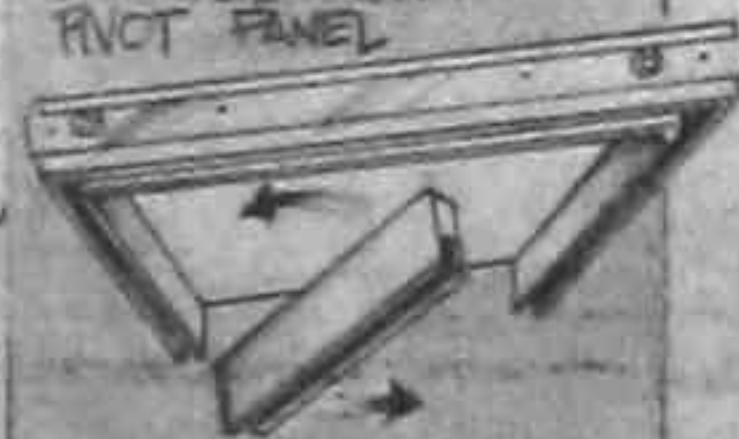
FLEXGLASS SIZES

FRONT	5'10" TALL	1'11" WIDE
SIDE	5'9 1/2" TALL	1'11" WIDE
GIMMICK PANEL	5'9 1/2" TALL	1'11" WIDE
BACK	5'9 1/2" TALL	1'8" WIDE

ALL FLEXGLASS IS 1/4" THICK

HALF SIZE
PIVOT PANEL
(TYPICAL)

TOP IS MADE
IN SIMILAR FASHION
AS BASE: WITH
PIVOT PANEL



GROOVE FOR FLEXI

PLAN VIEW

PIVOT BOLT

57" DIAMETER

PIVOT PANEL REVOLVES

MAGICIAN

ASSISTANT

PIVOT BOLT

NOTE: THIS
FLEXI GLASS
IN LAST

FRONT

FORMICA

by Tom Gibbon

"Several years ago, I built a couple of Zig Zags and these two illusions were completely built and painted by hand with a brush in the kitchen of my home. A very tedious and time-consuming job and, of course, messy.

Later on I was asked to build some more Zig Zags for a magic dealer, but I couldn't face up to all the effort of painting by hand, the fronts especially, which are so important in the visual deception of Harbin's wonderful illusion.

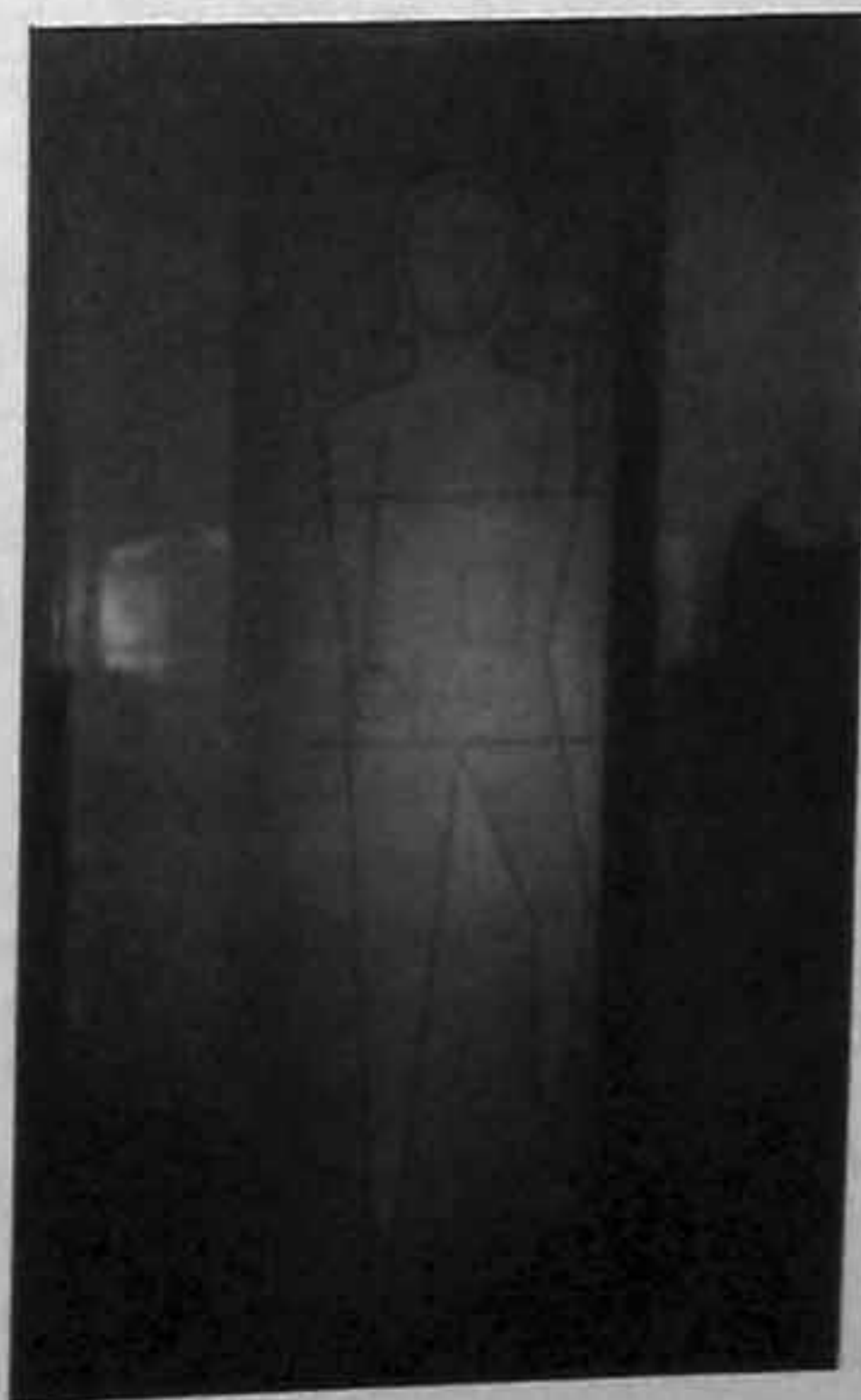
The solution to my problem came from my brother who owns a cabinet-making business. He suggested covering the illusions with Formica which, through the trade, can be had with any design you wish made into each sheet. You may not be aware, but Formica and Laminex are made up of resin impregnated sheets of paper which are pressed together with heat under very high pressure in a special large hydraulic press.

This turned out to be an elegant solution for the following reasons:

1. The illusion is actually finished at the beginning, instead of at the end of construction. The Formica is attached to the plywood first and after cutting, one has only to assemble the various panels, etc.
2. The only paint I used was flat black for the inside surfaces of the panels and I used a modern water-based paint which dries in twenty minutes and leaves no smell.
3. The cost is reasonable when one considers the stencils and skill, plus time and, of course, the mess with spraying when one has only limited space. Also the danger to health when using spray enamel in confined spaces without professional filtering fans.
4. Formica is available in a vast array of colors and surface finishes. The illusions shown in the photo is covered with a Formica sheet with what is called a velvet finish (a sort of partial gloss.) This was done to stop flaring under performing conditions so that the illusion would appear evenly lighted from all positions in the audience.

Because Formica is attached to plywood with contact adhesive, a little extra care is necessary in lining up the sheet with the plywood. The method I use is to cut the Formica sheet about a quarter of an inch larger all around and then use a hand router to trim down to the plywood edge and finish off with a sanding block."

Thank you, Tom Gibbon, for that terrific tip. We also might point out that Formica is one of the most durable and easy to clean surfaces you can put on your illusions. A trip through your local phone book will assist you in finding the dealer to work with. Also, keep in mind standard Formica comes in hundreds of colors including some brushed metal surfaces! Shopping for Formica could open an all new area for your do-it-yourselfers.



SHE'S COME UNDONE

INTRODUCTION

If you perform in situations that permit a Disembodied Princess and you're accustomed to gimmick faces and legs, then this illusion will work for you. It's a unique twist on the Girl Without A Middle with a little Zig Zag thrown in.

EFFECT

On the stage sits an upright cabinet decorated to suggest a silhouette of a young lady, as per the top illustration on our blueprint. As your assistant enters, side doors are opened on the cabinet to permit her entry into the illusion. Once in, three front doors are opened to show her face, midriff and legs. All doors are then closed. Four solid blades are introduced (two front and two side blades), one blade is pushed into the front bottom of the middle section, one into the front top of the middle section, one into the side top of the bottom section and one into the side bottom of the top section. The girl has now seemingly been divided into three sections.

From the side of the cabinet a hinged tray is lifted into position. As this is being done, the top section of the box is slid over onto this tray. The magician steps to the other side of the cabinet and slides the lower one-third compartment over on its extended base. The illusion now looks like the bottom illustration in our plans. At this point the entire cabinet can be completely revolved showing all sides.

To further confuse your audience, the top door is opened, and there is her head; the bottom door is opened and there are her feet, but when the middle door is opened, there is nothing! And to prove it, the back door is let down and you can see completely through the center section.

Quickly now, the doors are shut, boxes pushed back together, blades removed and out steps your lovely assistant feeling three times better than before.

METHOD

By looking at our plans, side elevation, you can see the basic layout of methods used to accomplish this illusion.

The top box is equipped with two handles (to be explained) and a 1/2 head cast mounted on a revolving trap door. The blade that is inserted into the bottom of the top box, from the side, goes just beneath this revolving head. The bottom one-third section has a similar situation with a revolving set of 1/2 legs. The blade that is inserted into the side top of this bottom section goes just above this revolving trap door.

To understand the working of the middle box, one must talk through the effect. First the girl steps through the side doors into the cabinet and stands still as the side doors are closed and the front doors are opened to show her in position. Once the front doors are shut, she pivots the fake legs in position then grabs the handles in



the "head" box and pulls herself up into the middle box as the bottom of the middle box blade is inserted through the front. Once this blade is in place, the girl lowers herself, in a sitting position, onto it. Obviously, this blade and the runners that guide it through the middle box must be substantial enough to hold the weight of your girl. After she revolves the false head and the other blades have been inserted, the top and bottom box are slid over and the entire unit is revolved, with her sitting in the middle box, as in the bottom drawing on our plans.

As the top and bottom doors are opened to reveal the false body parts, your assistant pulls the inner trap over her lap (see side elevation) and scoots out the back double traps, as in the old Disembodied Princess. You are now ready to open the front middle box door and the back middle box door (with her behind it).

To complete the illusion, your assistant merely reverses the above procedures. Now, if you think you're confused, wait 'til your audience sees this one!



Paul Osborne and Les Smith, Owen Magic, Alhambra, California, 1965. And all that's left of a famous sticker from a famous crate from a famous Broadway show, 1975.

THE RADIO ILLUSION

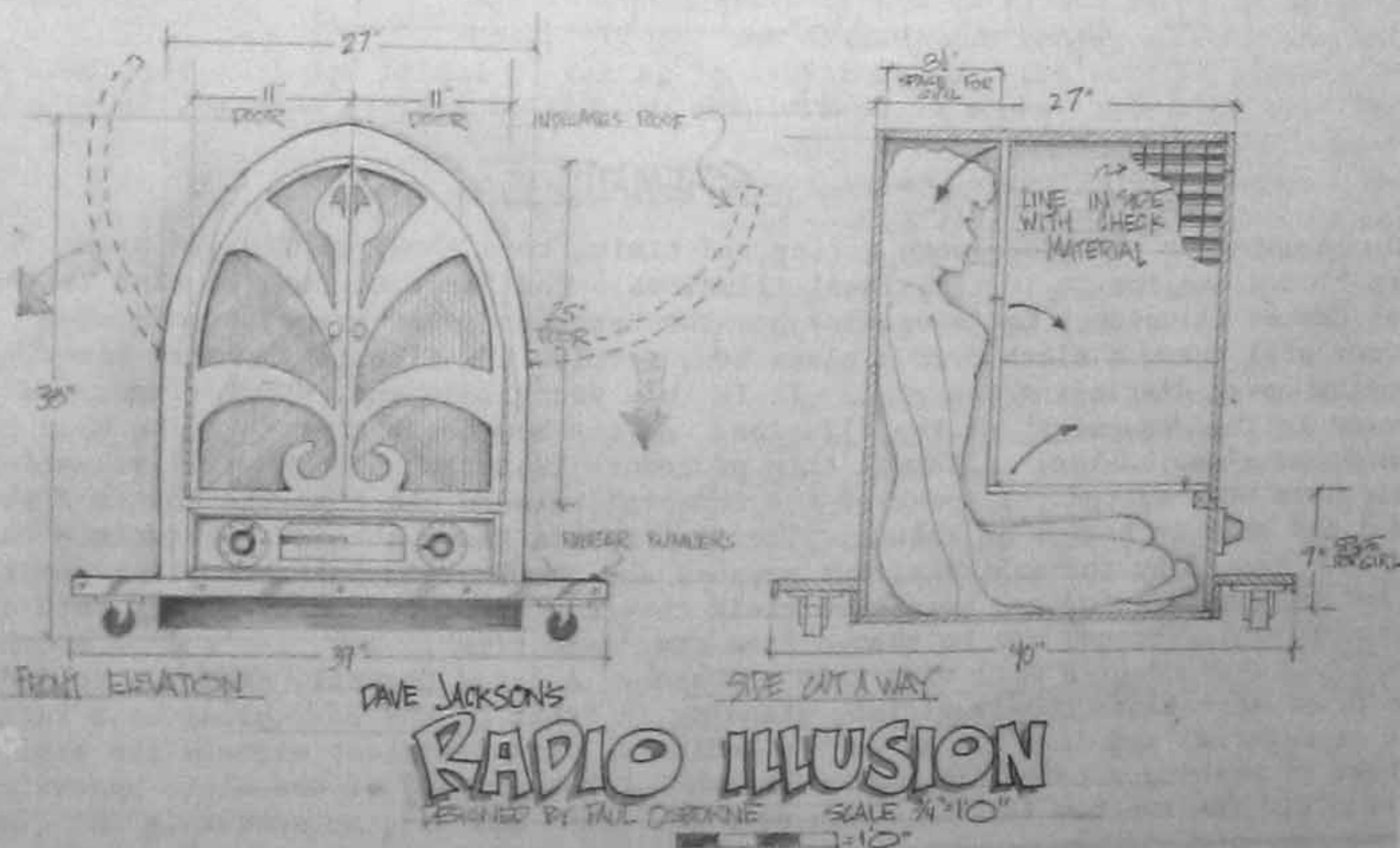
by Dave Jackson

Since its inception, magician's have been re-themeing the Doll House illusion. Dave Jackson sends us this unique new look for the classic illusion. What makes this approach so novel is the potential for routines and story line. Perhaps you could produce old radio stars like Groucho Marx, Mortimer Snerd, Charlie McCarthy and finally, a much larger Edgar Bergen. The radio could supply all the background music for its own performance.



Below is a quick sketch of its basic dimensions. The illusion itself can be made from 3/8" birch, stained and finished to resemble an antique radio. The working is exactly like the classic Doll House with the front doors being the "speaker" area of the radio. The curved roof sections open to the sides as your assistant stands. If made to pin hinge together, this prop could break down smaller than most any other illusion you may own.

Thank you, Dave Jackson, for this great illusion idea!



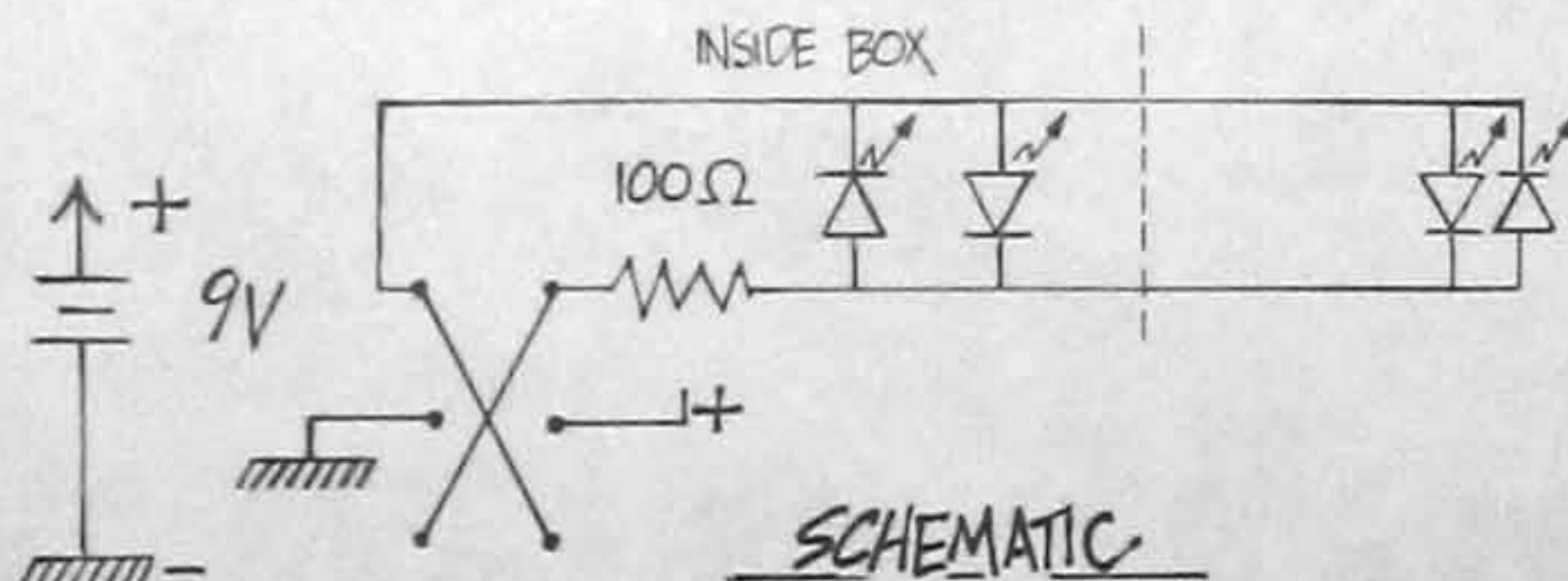
IDEAS

by Owen Redwine



"I believe that it was Pete Biro, in his well known Genii column, that first described a device used to signal an MC when the next act was ready so he could quit stalling. It consisted of a small switch box and a length of wire terminating in two small light bulbs, one red, one green. The stage crew can signal the MC in front of the curtain by positioning a switch to display either a red light (for stall) or a green light (for all systems go). The light bulbs are small LEDs, easily hidden on the microphone stand or positioned where the performer can keep his eye on them as he speaks. One can easily understand how this device can help keep any show moving smoothly. The illusionist, for example, will find such a device an asset as he is performing in front of the curtain. As is often the case, the illusionist is performing a small trick in one as his assistants set the next large illusion. Obviously, seeing the little green light go on will give the performer added assurance that everything is running as planned backstage.

The unit itself is contained in a small plastic box housing a battery and two LEDs which correspond to the lights on the end of the wire, some 35 feet away. The box also has a switch which controls which light is on. The schematic should clarify everything.



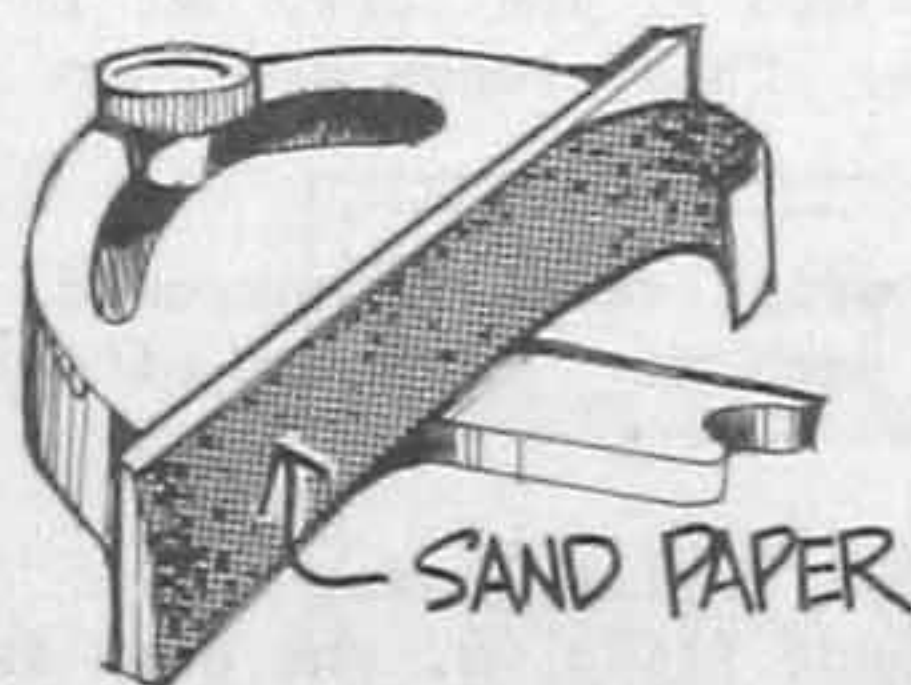
An LED communicator can add smooth pacing and timing to a show, as we have seen. I now wish to find a use for it in individual illusions. The first to come to mind is the Crystal Casket illusion. Let's examine how the average Casket is performed. The performer will throw a cloth over a glass box, revolve the illusion several times, then remove the cover disclosing the girl. It is this young lady who, seconds ago, was concealed in the 'basement' of the illusion. As the box began to rotate she made her way into the glass casket. Although this procedure is acceptable, several valuable seconds have been wasted. I speak of the interval between the time the box is first covered and when it begins to rotate. The girl inside knows she is to enter the box as it is spun around by the magician, but suppose she could begin to take up her position even before the illusion has been completely covered. By introducing an LED into the illusion's base, seconds can be shaved from the 'dead time'. Now, let's take another look at how the audience will view this illusion. A large Crystal Casket is rolled on-stage by an assistant. The magician, standing in front of the box, holds up a large piece of material and displays it to his audience. His assistant signals the girl in the base by pushing a concealed button and then takes the end of the cloth opposite the magician's. The two now lay the cloth over the glass box and, no sooner is the cloth

down than the magician peels it off again. It seems only a second has elapsed since the audience last saw the box empty. This added speed can make the illusion appear to be a visible appearance. With a little practice your assistant can learn to move with incredible speed. Not unlike the Sub Trunk, the audience reasons that a girl concealed in the base would not have time to work up into the box.

Now that we have explored the possibilities of signaling a concealed assistant, let's examine the possibility of an assistant communicating with the magician. The popular Mis-Made Lady illusion will suffice as our example. This is one illusion that really gives the females a workout. The girl working in the illusion must first conceal herself in the lower box as she is being unstacked. Then, as the magician is mis-stacking the boxes, she must arrange herself to appear dissected. As one can easily see, the girl has little time to waste. In order to assure the magician that she is ready for public display, the girl flips a switch in the box that lights a concealed LED which the magician can see. Once the magician sees the LED light up, he knows she is ready and he won't open the box prematurely. This could turn big problems into small embarrassments, i.e.: Your assistant absent-mindedly puts a solid blade in the bottom of the top box. This would prohibit the girl from entering the 'head' box, but if the magician doesn't see the LED come on, he knows right away something is wrong. Without the LED device inside the box, the magician will find out the problem the same time the audience does.

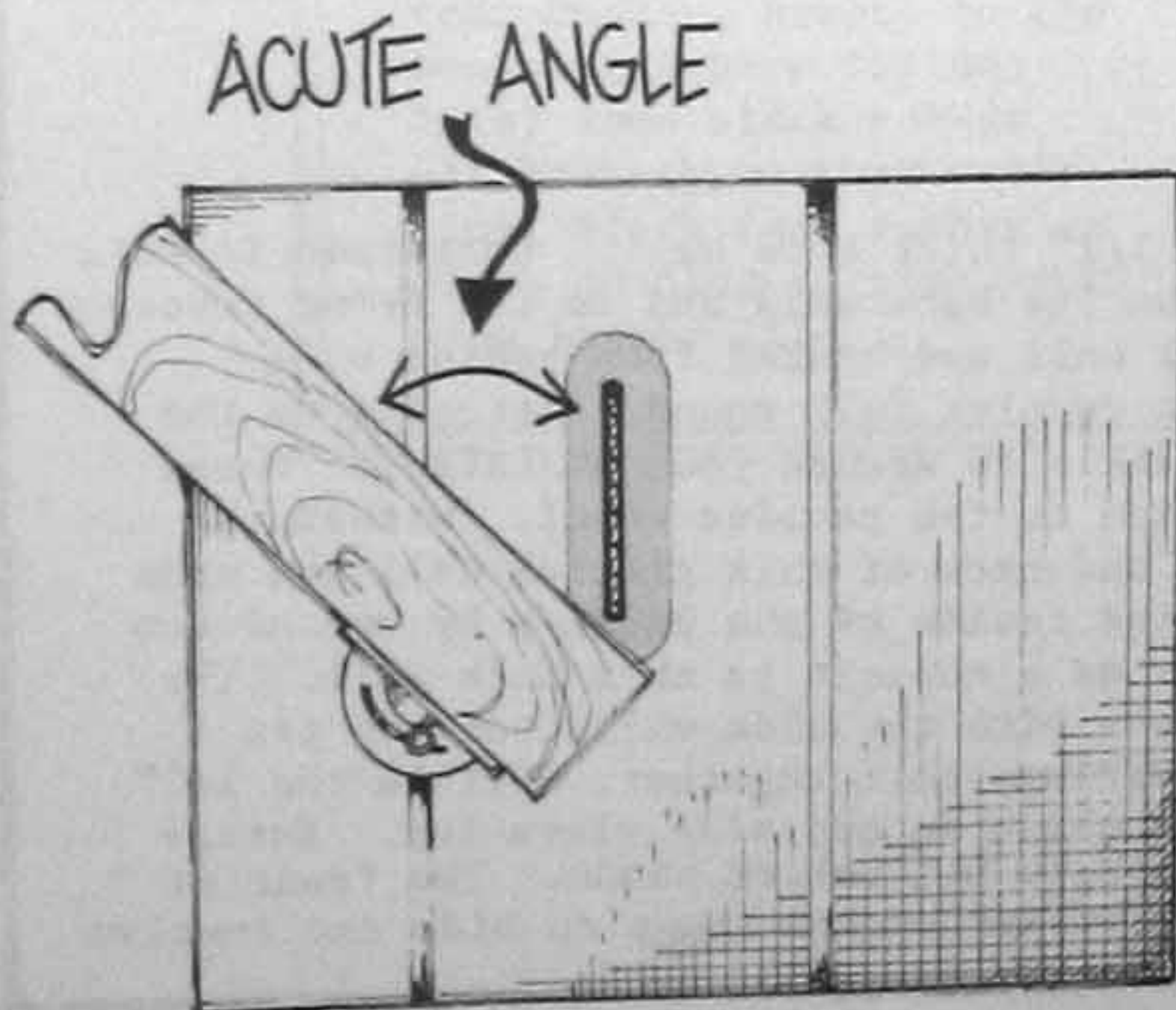
I have given you only two examples of how you can put an LED communicator to work in your show. With a little imagination you will find hundreds of uses in both your illusions and during your show to signal assistants, sound and light crews, etc."

And finally, here's a few tips that may come in handy in your shop:



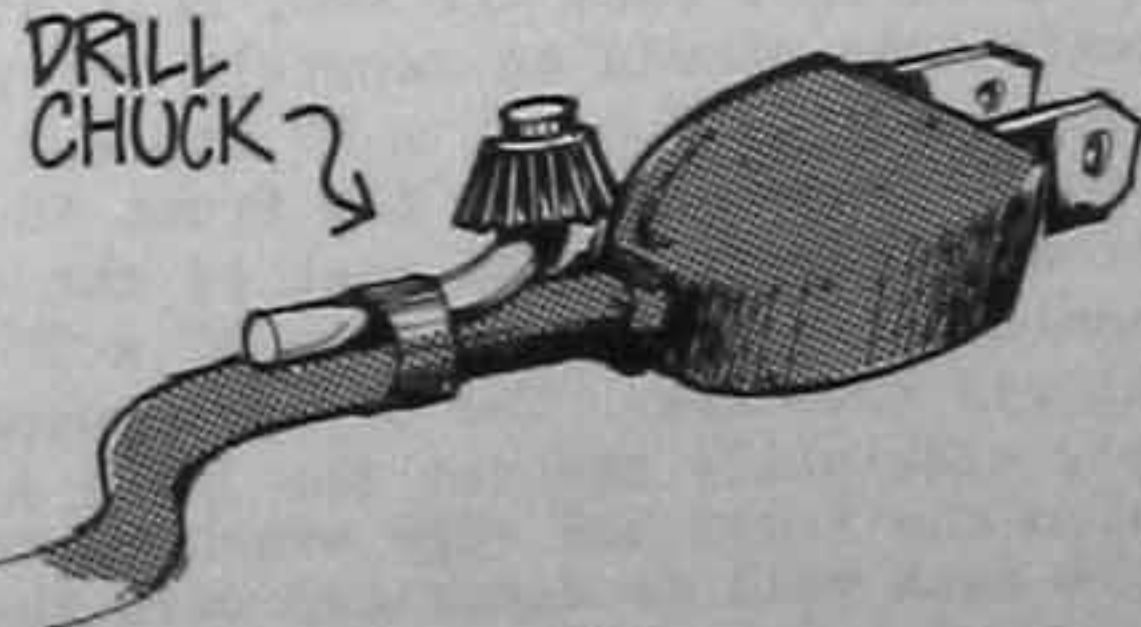
"The table saw is not the ideal tool for cutting a miter joint. However, for most magic purposes it is more than adequate. One phenomenon which hinders accuracy of a mitered joint is creep. Creep is the result of the blade moving the wood as it travels across the saw. Here is a tip which will help you eliminate creep. Buy some press-n-sand sandpaper (sandpaper with adhesive on the back) and apply it to your miter fence. If you use an extended fence, so much the better.

The sandpaper will add friction, making it easier to hold the wood in place. Remember, the edge of the wood closest to the saw should form an acute angle when mitering.



When using a portable drill, a good place to keep the chuck is taped around the plug. If you do this, you won't have to search all around to find it, plus you have to unplug the drill to make any bit changes (which is a good idea).

Find yourself an old leather belt which you can cut into small squares. Use these squares to keep clamps from marring your wood."



THE MISSPLACED MAIDEN

INTRODUCTION

Although I'm well aware of the new "look" of illusions, I still love the old style craftsmanship and design that went into the props of the '40s and '50s. Inspired by the Jarrett/Thurston "New Page" illusion, I think you'll find this Upside-Down Girl a unique twist on the old style mysteries.

EFFECT

An upright cabinet is brought out on stage as your assistant makes her entrance. Around her neck and ankles you secure steel shackles and assist her into the cabinet. As she stands against the back wall, the illusion's side doors are opened as you strap her in at waist level and attach ropes to her neck and ankle shackles. These ropes are then threaded through small holes in the side doors.

Two men are brought up on stage to assist in this miracle. A wrist watch is borrowed from one spectator and fastened to your assistant's wrist, as each man stands at either end of the box holding the ropes taught.

The magician counts one, two, three and on three he pulls down a roller shade, concealing the assistant for another three count. When the shade flies up, the girl is seen upside-down, wearing the same wrist watch and still strapped in place.

Once again a count of three, down with the roller shade. Up it flies and the girl is as she was to begin with, right side up. Quickly, the magician frees her, returns the watch and dismisses his two volunteers as the audience sits in wonder of the Missplaced Maiden.

METHOD

The secret to this illusion lies within the 3 1/2" thick back wall. Contained in this structure is a 12" bearing swivel bolted to the far back wall and to the front revolve wheel. This wheel is notched within the front wall and braced from behind by a circular aluminum brace. The wheel is free to revolve full round. Attached to the front of this wall are seat belt straps and buckle to secure your assistant. These restraints should be securely bolted and affixed to the revolve wheel. Within the back wall are four 2" x 4" braces. The front and back of this gimmick wall are made from 1" thick ply and the front is bolted to the inside of the cabinet by use of two iron "L" braces. The rest of the cabinet acts as a support to this back wall. The basic cabinet is made from 3" x 3" support posts with the side walls and top pin hinged together. The 3" x 3" support posts carriage bolt together. Within the 1/2" ply side walls are cut the 18" x 4'1" doors as shown in our side elevation. Notice also the front top edge overhang to allow access to the roller shade. The front of the back wall is decorated with the "Modern" circular person image to hide the revolve



wheel. Also, within this back wall are mounted four strategically placed refrigerator magnets to hold the ends of the magnetized ropes in place as your assistant is revolving within the cabinet.

The floor to the cabinet is made from 1" ply decorated to taste. The shackles can be made in a metal shop to suit your specifics with a latch in front, hinge in the back and ring hooks on the side. Line the shackles with a soft material or foam rubber.

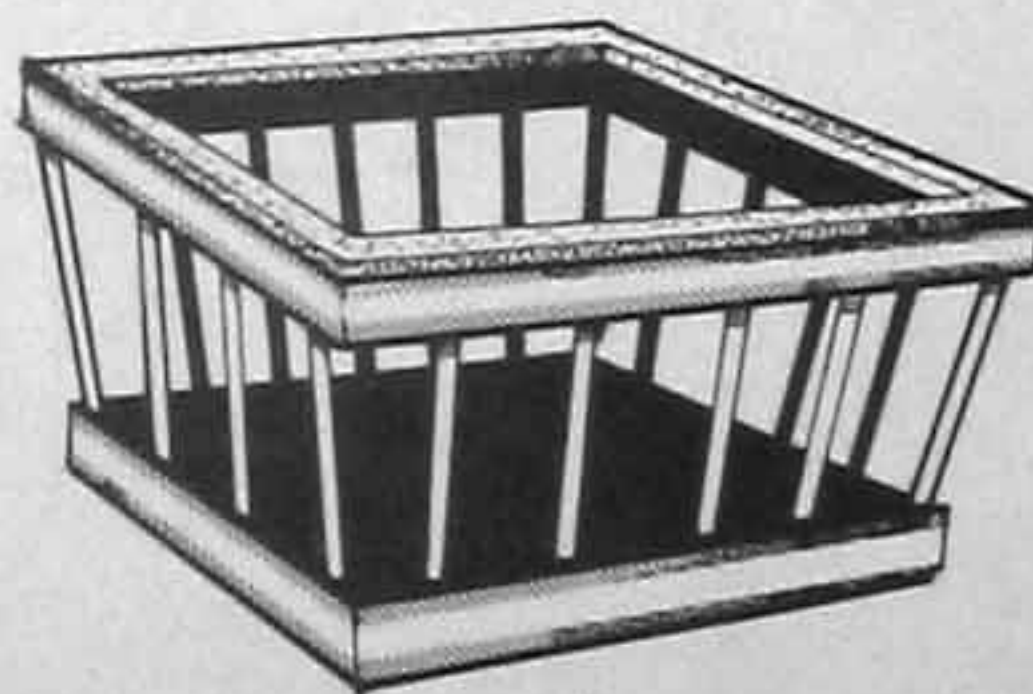
In performance, the shackles are put in place on your assistant. You help her into the cabinet. The side doors are opened and, leaning through those you tightly strap her against the back wall (revolve wheel), acting as if you hook the ropes to the shackles. (They are actually held in place by the magnets.) The ropes are threaded through the holes in the door and handed over to your volunteers to pull taught. Threaded through the rope at the appropriate place is a 1 1/2" long brass tube which acts as a stop so the rope automatically has slack within the cabinet. No matter how hard your volunteers pull, the ropes will not stray from the magnets. All that is left is for you to pull down the shade and your assistant quickly pushes off, partially tucks and works her way around within the cabinet. A feat which, of course, requires some rehearsal. Quickly have your volunteer check his wristwatch as she is upside-down, then repeat the procedure.

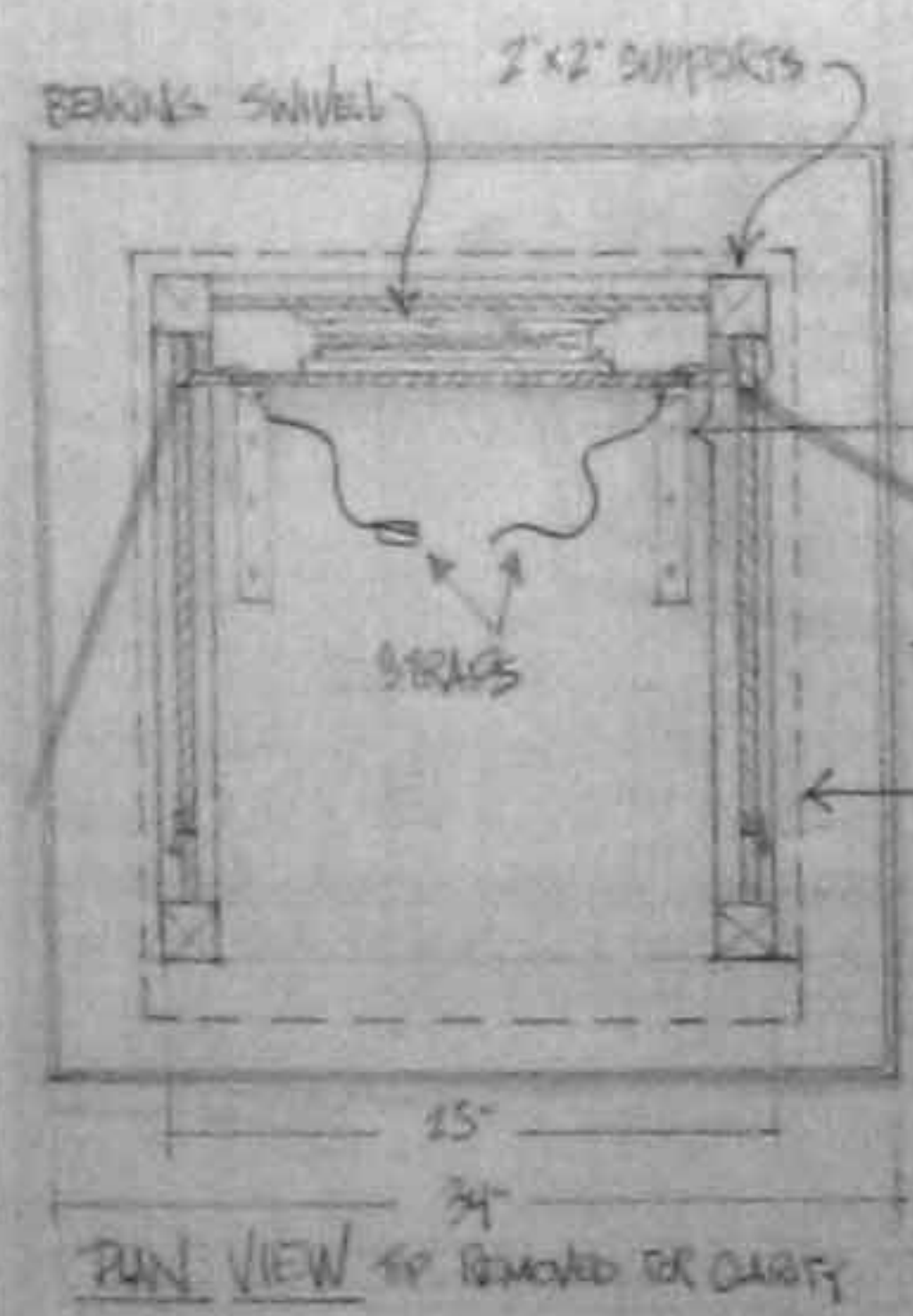
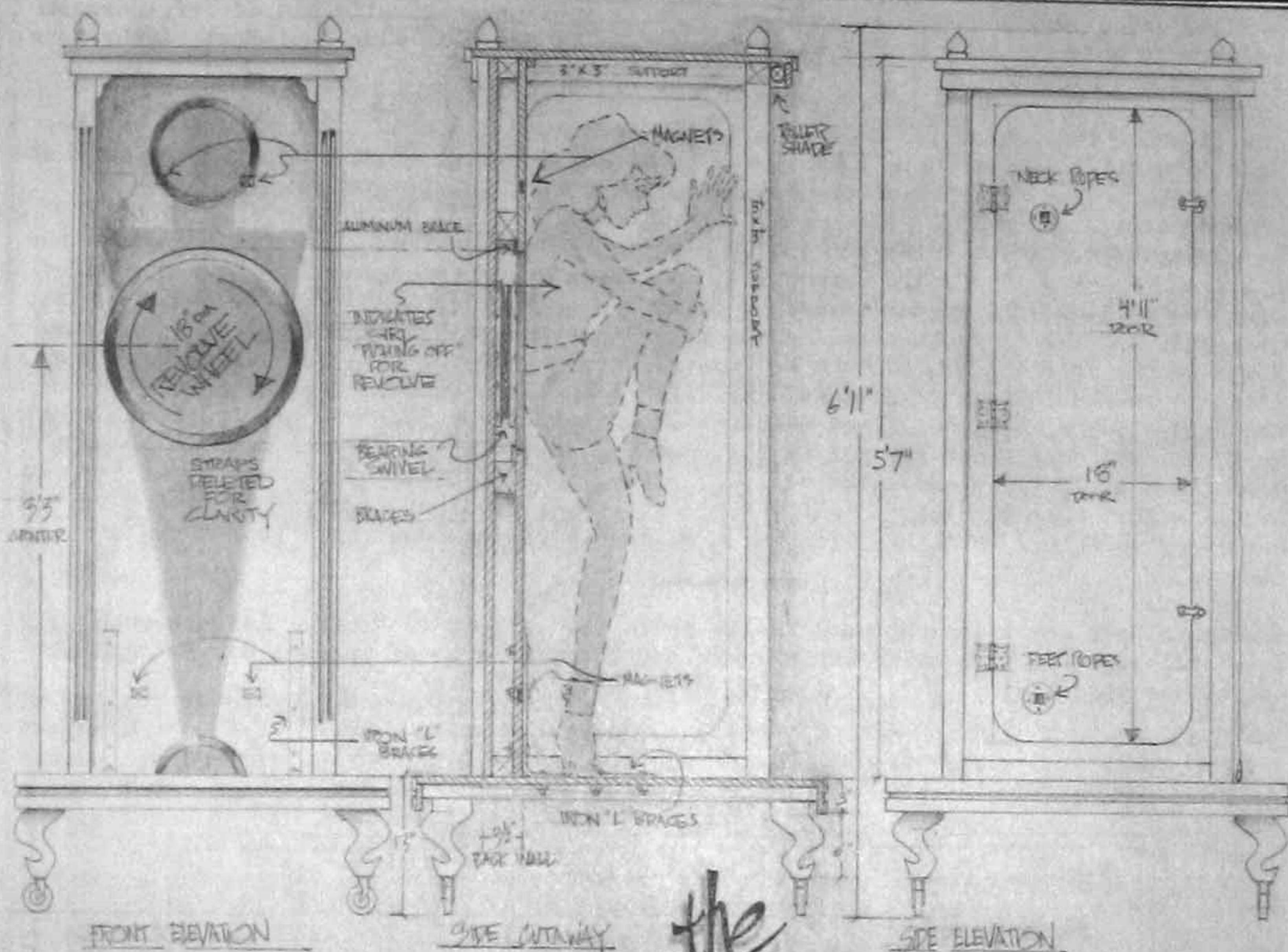
As with almost any illusion, what really sells this effect is speed. Allow enough rehearsal time for your assistant to work out the mechanics of turning upside-down as quickly as possible.

TIP...

Doves From Air

If you've ever worked the Doves From Air effect, you know the basket can take quite a beating as you bring the net down to "deposit" the magically caught dove. To prevent wear and tear on your basket, attach to the top part (where the net hits) some black rubber sticky-back weather stripping, black foam rubber or black cording to give your prop longer life.

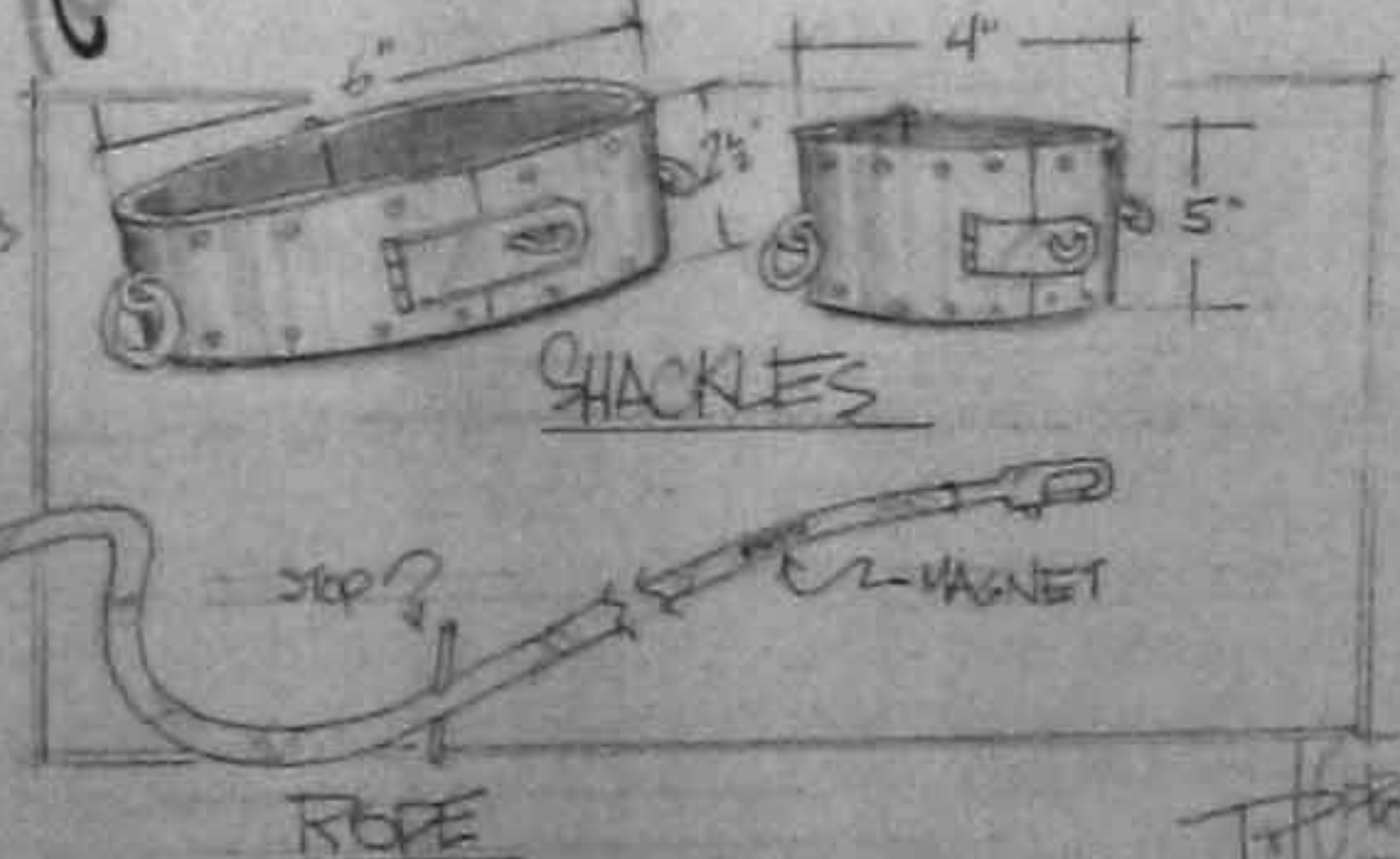




the **MISSED SIM** Maiden

DESIGN ©
 PAUL OSBORNE '82

SCALE $\frac{3}{4}'' = 1'0''$ $\frac{1}{2}'' = 1'0''$



THE STRETCHER ILLUSION

INTRODUCTION

I've always been fascinated with the concept of stretching a girl. But with the old version you need two unseen assistants in addition to your regular troupe. The prop itself was large enough to qualify for an FHA loan so, in an effort to simplify a truly wonderful idea, I discovered The Stretcher.

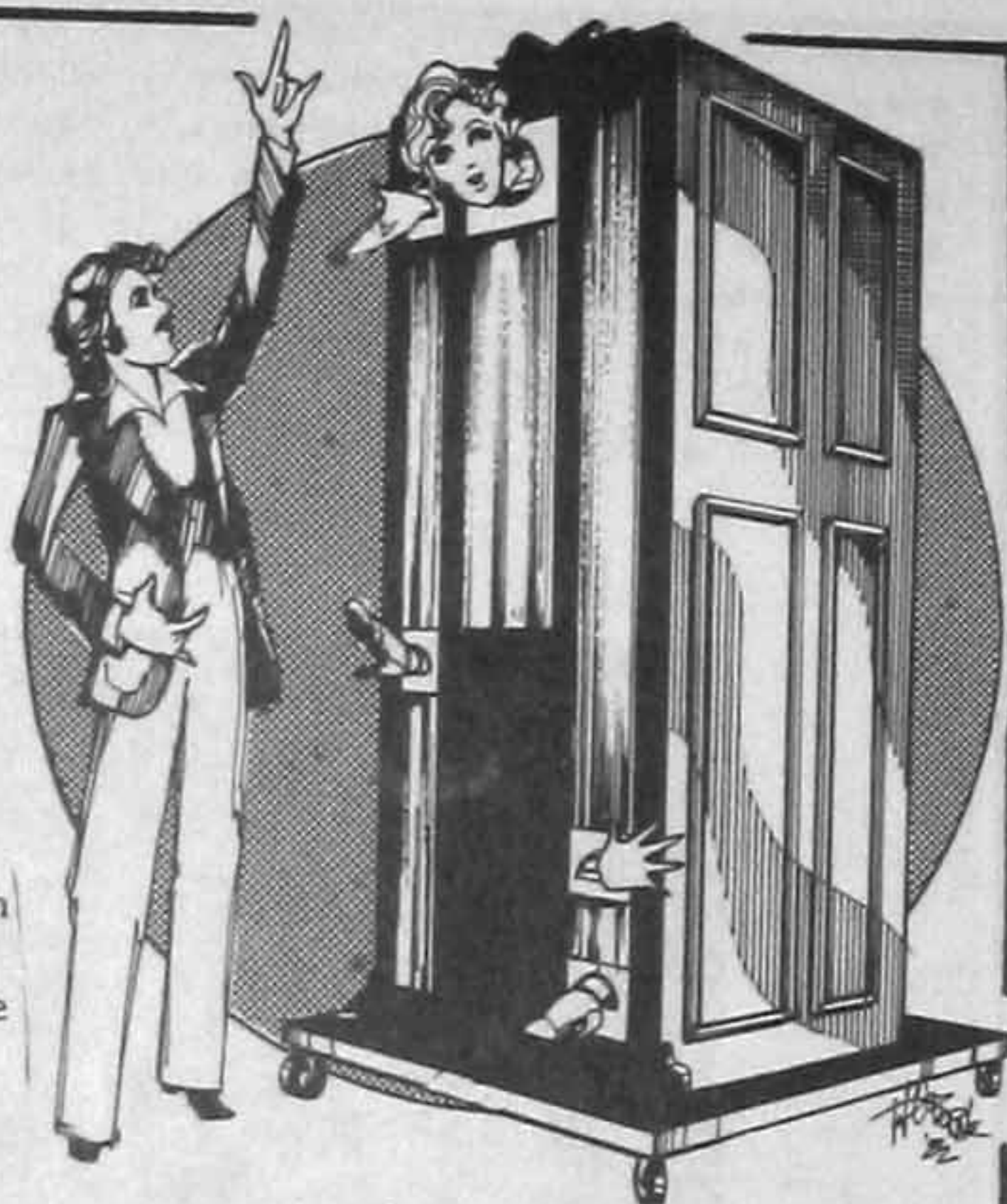
EFFECT

On stage is a tall cabinet with a front door permitting the entrance of your lovely assistant. Inside a small built-in bench allows her to sit as you close the front door. She is in the perfect position to insert her head, feet and hands through the corresponding areas in the front door and does so. Only true magic could explain what happens next. Slowly her head is slid up the front door until it's almost eight feet off the ground. One hand is slid up to the head, the other all the way down to one foot. The other foot is slid mid-way up and all other stretchable combinations are achieved seemingly without causing your assistant any pain. Finally, the body parts are returned to their normal position, the door swung open and out steps your once again normal assistant.

METHOD

The cabinet itself is made much like a Modern Cabinet with the double thick back wall. The illusion utilizes only one additional girl positioned in this wall and the stool as illustrated at the bottom of our plan. This places your unseen assistant in the perfect position to accomplish her duties. Six interior traps (A, B, C, D, E, F) enclose her within the cabinet and bench. She is in this position as your other assistant enters the cabinet and sits on the bench. Once the front door is closed, the hidden assistant begins opening the traps as your other girl quickly stands, then sits again on the unseen girl's lap. Your assistant inserts her left hand and head through the door holes, as the unseen assistant inserts her right hand and both feet. As you begin the "stretching" both girls end up looking much like the lower right hand drawing. As you stand in front of one body part to slide up or down another, the girls can switch hands and feet until almost any seemingly impossible combination can be achieved. For this reason there are no pull cords, the magician does it all as he stands in front of the prop.

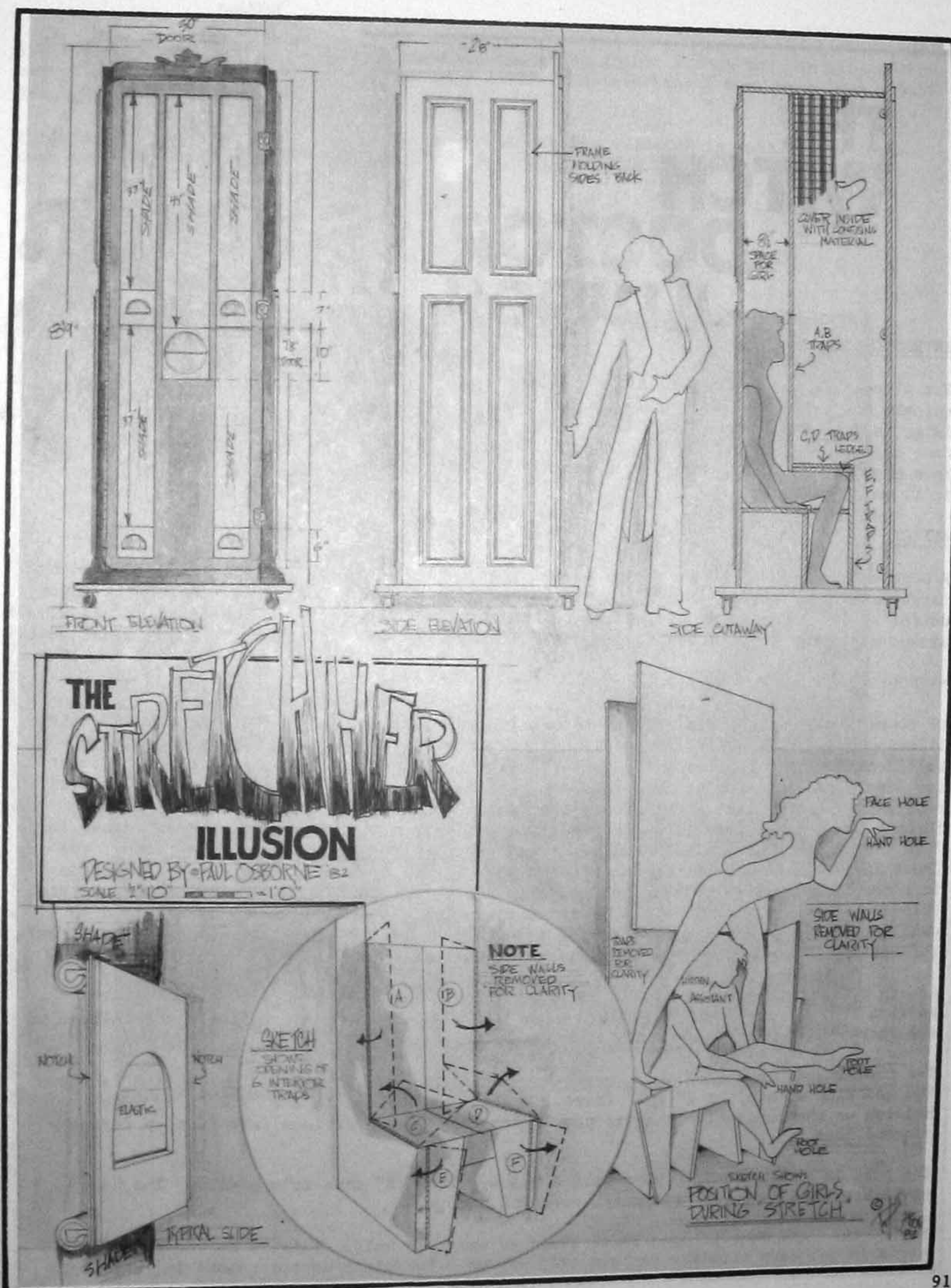
The basic illusion is made from 3/8" ply, with the bench and the base beefed up to 1/2" or 3/4" ply. Decorating the sides and back is an applied molding framework and the front door is hinged to the front frame. The head, feet and hand stocks are notched to slide up and down within the door. Behind each is a roller shade to feed out or take up the black material as needed. Behind each cut-out hole is black elastic for your assistant to stick her appendages through. The interior is lined with a plaid or checked, confusing material to hide the depth discrepancy. Of course, the entire unit can pin hinge together to break down completely flat.



Please note this is a "tight fit". As always we recommend you build a cardboard or scrap wood mock-up to make sure your two assistants fit as required. More than likely you will only have to temporarily construct the critical areas - the bench and back wall, being careful to measure from the front edge of the bench to the inside of the front door. This is the area that could give you some trouble unless you are using super thin assistants, which of course is advisable. Obviously, if my plans are not large enough, it is a simple matter to extend the side walls as needed to create additional room in the front. This is one of those illusions that reads much better the smaller it is, so always enlarge by inches, not feet.



Paul Osborne personally supervises construction of the world's most unusual illusions. Constructed totally of plastic, the Thin Model Sawing, Sub Trunk and Princess of Thebes are all performed twenty feet underwater in San Marcos' beautiful Submarine Theater.



THE WITCH DOCTOR ILLUSION

INTRODUCTION

For a sequence in one of our park shows we had to quickly switch a beautiful, young, female dancer for a large, savagely costumed witch doctor who, of course, came out singing, "That Old Black Magic". I thought this might be an interesting way of doing it...maybe it'll work for you.

EFFECT

A scream is heard off stage as a young, leopard-skin clad girl runs on stage, chased by three restless natives. She is caught, hoisted high over head and carried to the witch doctor's cage. She is deposited inside the tiny inner cage and the curtain is pulled up around her. The curtain is dropped and out steps the witch doctor! It's just that fast.

METHOD

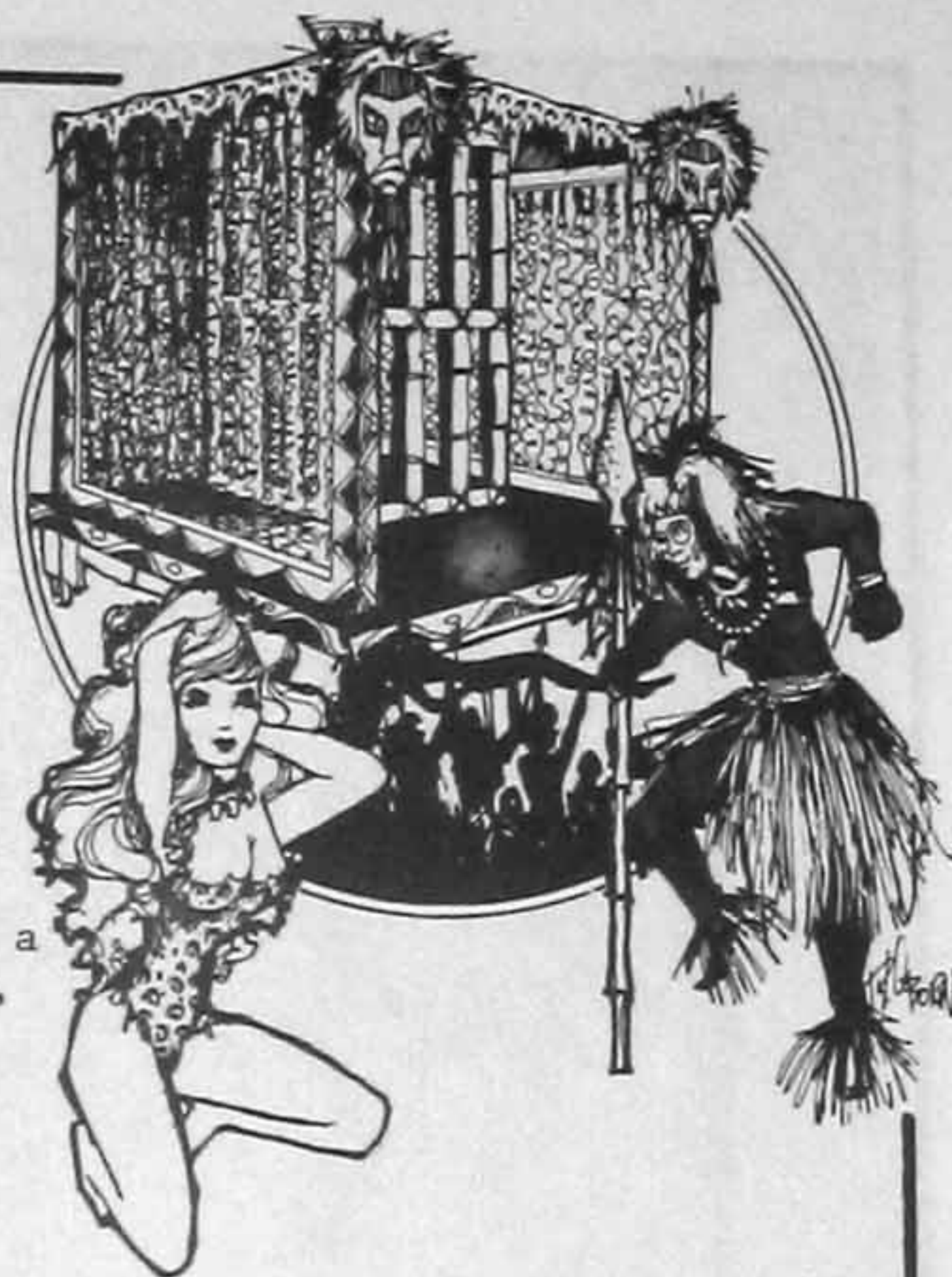
Of course, this is the old Morritt cage illusion, jungle themed. This a very effective illusion and easily built. The cabinet itself is constructed of 2" x 2"s, carriage bolted together to form two sides and a back. A runner 2" x 2" bolts across the front top edge. From the top of the sides and back is hung strands (approximately 1" apart) of plastic vine foliage. This forms the "walls" and is virtually impossible to see through. The inner cage is constructed from 3/8" birch ply cut-out with a sabre saw to form the bamboo slats. The sides run from top to bottom and pin hinge in place. The front and back (more about the back Dutch door later) open as indicated in our bottom left top view drawing. Within this cage is the three sided (front, side, side) curtain. This drape hangs from a 1" x 1/4" bent aluminum frame with four screw eyes bolted in each corner. From these eyes runs the rope through the pulleys to the exterior pull bar. The action of pulling on this bar raises the curtain.

As you can see from our top view, running from the back right corner is a 6' x 22" section of 1/4" mirror plexi, backed with 3/8" ply. This mirror reflects the foliage on the back and forms the perfect hiding place.

The top is made from 1" x 2" frame with center supports and covered with black fabric. The top sits within the 2" x 2" frame. Resting on the top is a 2" x 2" x 6" pole holding up the decorative plastic pot. From this is run various fake furs to form the slanted roof.

The base is made from 3/4" ply, braced below, with 5/8" side trim panels. The base could break in half for transport, ours did not.

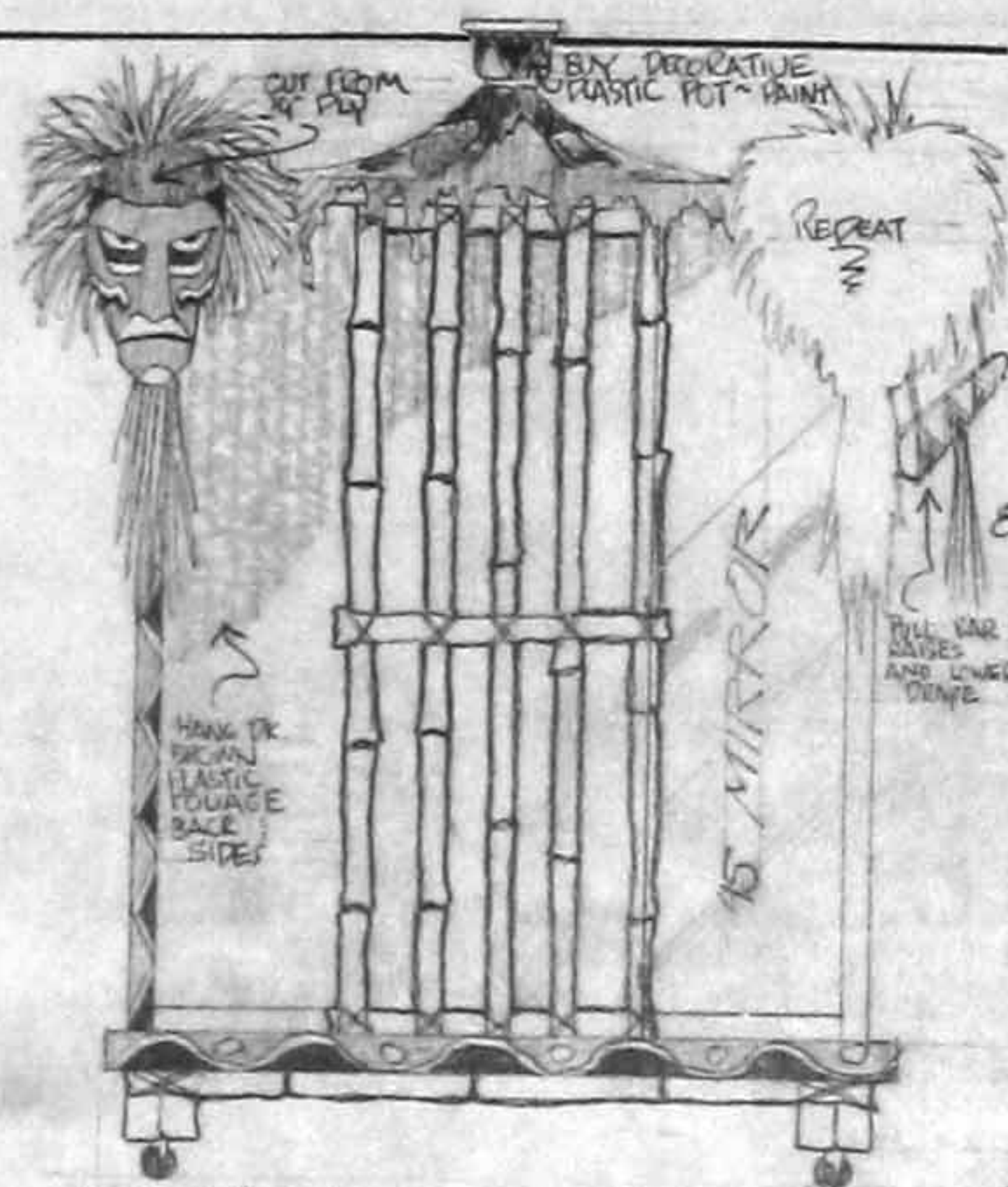
Notice the back door is made Dutch style to split in half. This is so the girl can stand in the cage with the curtain half way up. The witch doctor sneaks in, using the



the bottom door only. Up comes the curtain, the witch doctor stands and the girl ducks and exits using the bottom door. This door style makes everything move much like a Sub-Trunk exchange.

Finally, one thing to watch with this or any mirror box illusion is spotlights. Make sure your lighting is all from above. Any front-on or side lighting will cause your mirror to glare or flash.





FRONT ELEVATION

NOTE: UNIT SHOULD
BREAK DOWN
FLAT FOR
TRANSPORT

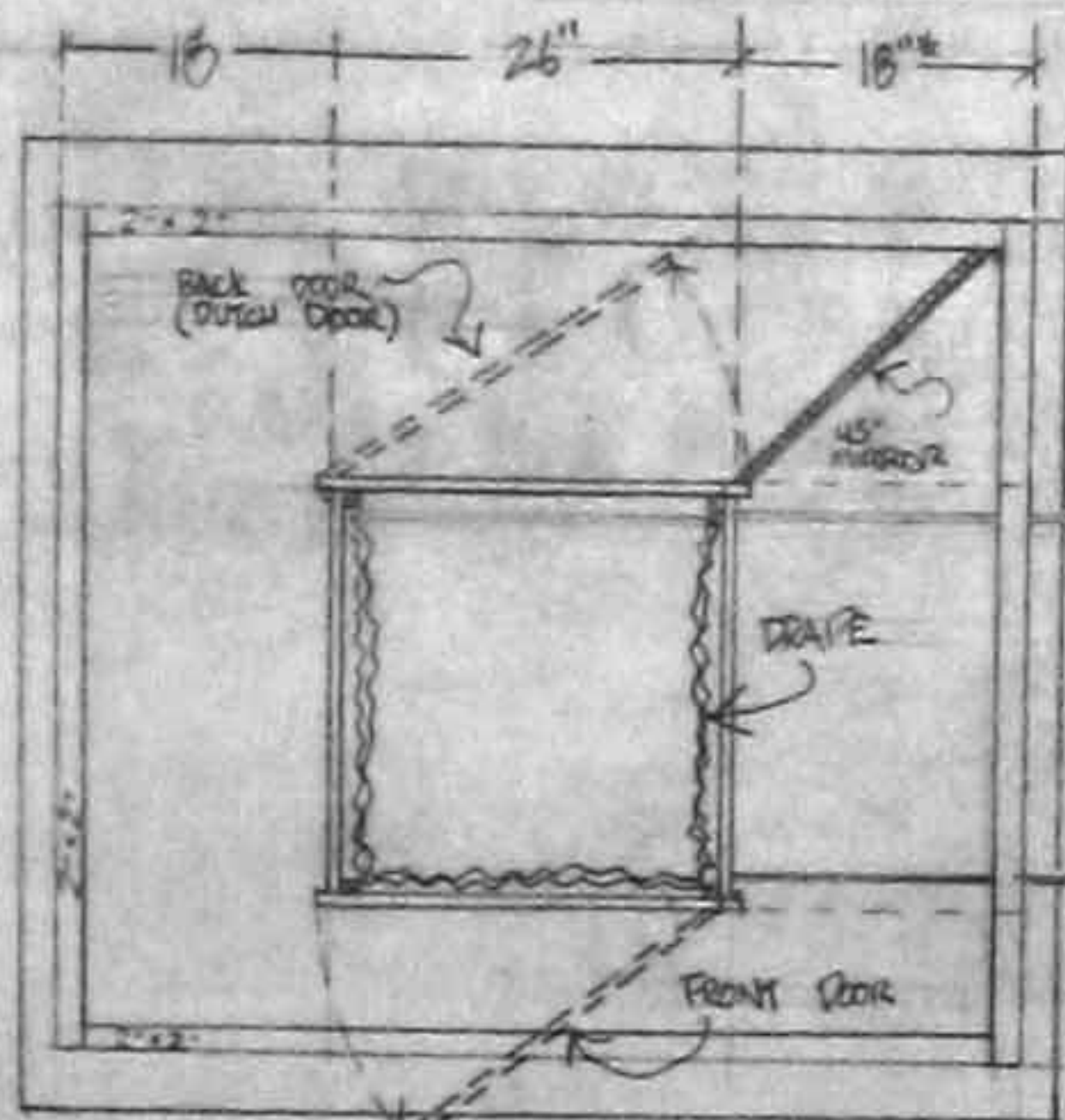
WITCH DOCTORS MYSTERY

THE MURKIN CAGE

REDESIGNED BY

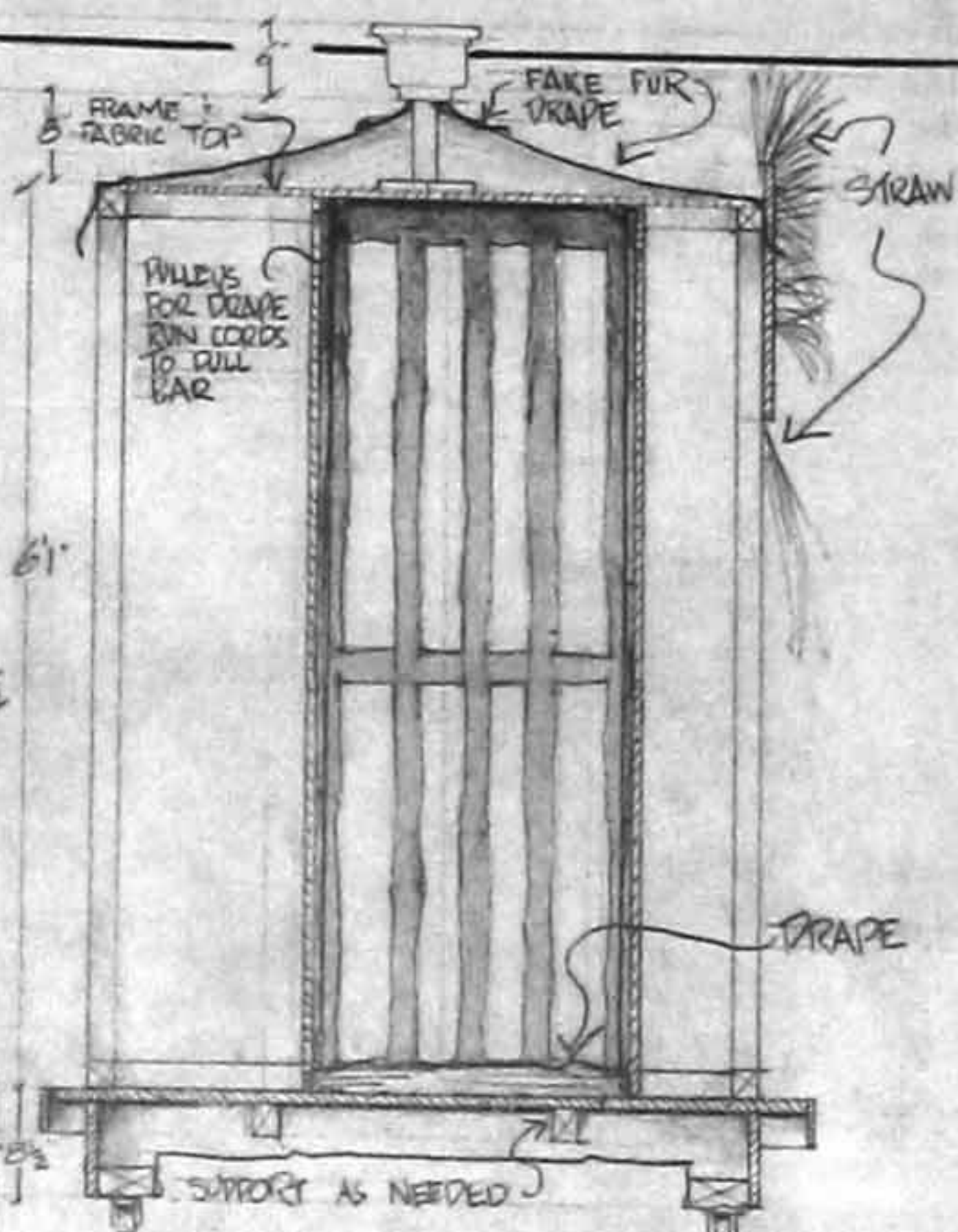
PAUL OSBORNE '82

SCALE 1/2" = 1'0" 1" = 1'0"



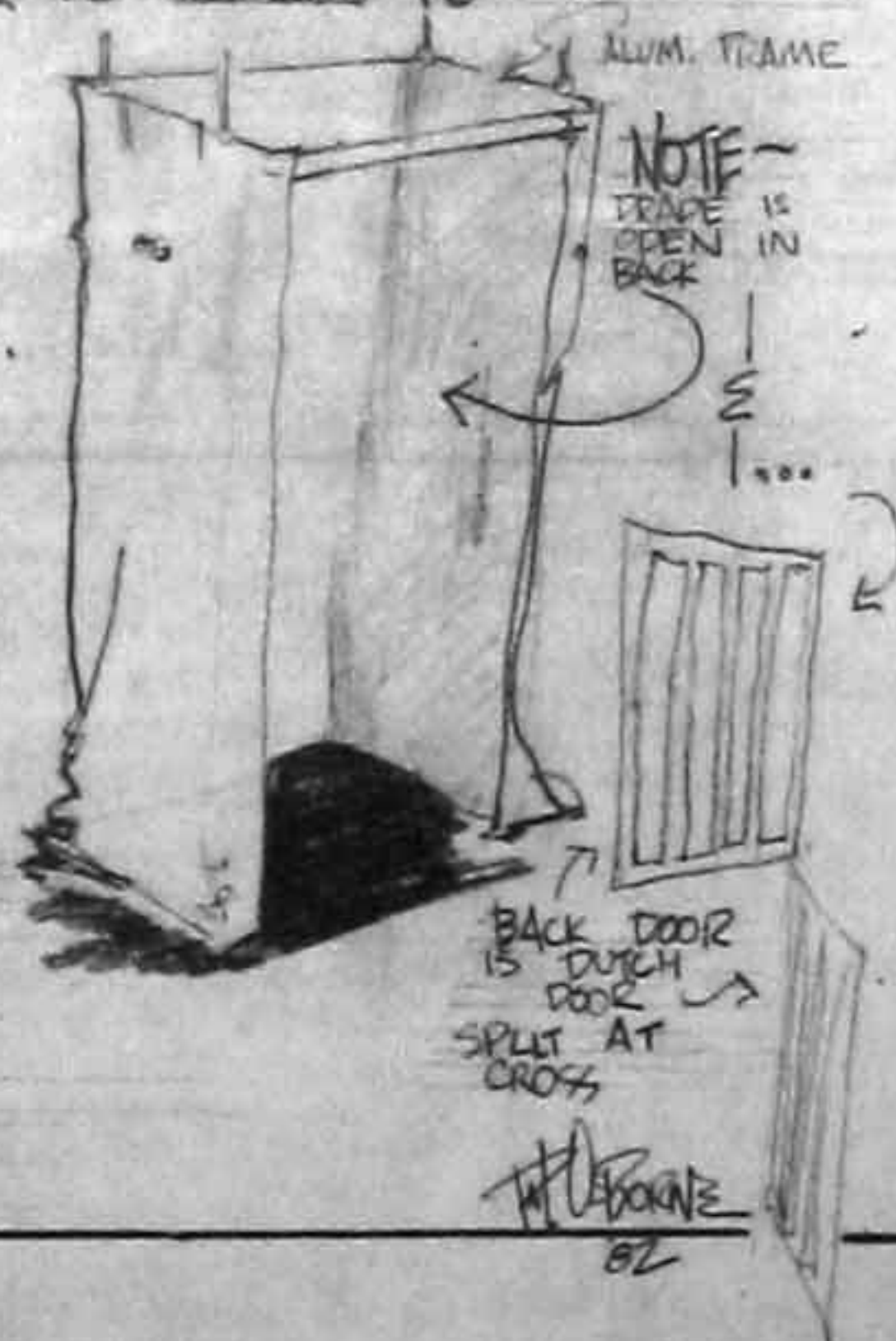
BASIC PLAN VIEW
* 18\"/>

USE PRESSURE CATCHES
TO KEEP ALL DOORS
SHUT



SIDE ELEVATION

NOTE: TO BE PAINTED
IN GLOSS ENAMELS
SEMI-REAL!



THE BIO-TRON

INTRODUCTION

I had always wanted to build the fabled Princess of Bakhten. You see its plans in all the Burling Hull books. But you've never seen one performed. I found out there was a reason for that...but for our purposes this updated illusion turned out just fine. In a trade show setting you can, to a certain extent, control sight lines and exactly where your audience is positioned. This illusion must be viewed straight on. Standing to either side will cause you to see too much or too little.



EFFECT

In a trade show setting the small audience was ushered into the Bio-Tron area. A pre-taped announcer welcomes the audience as the Bio-Tron operator enters and begins to activate the Bio-Tron's separate control panel. Clearly, there is nothing within the chamber yet, slowly there materializes a form which becomes recognizable as almost human. With some regularity, tiny lights begin to illuminate within the form; wires materialize; the bionics magically happen and, slowly but surely, a real live girl appears within the once empty chamber. She steps out the front door and begins her interesting and informative spiel on "Frapman Gaskets", or whatever.

I've never found trade shows to be an adequate form of "theatre", but the illusion worked quite nicely.

METHOD

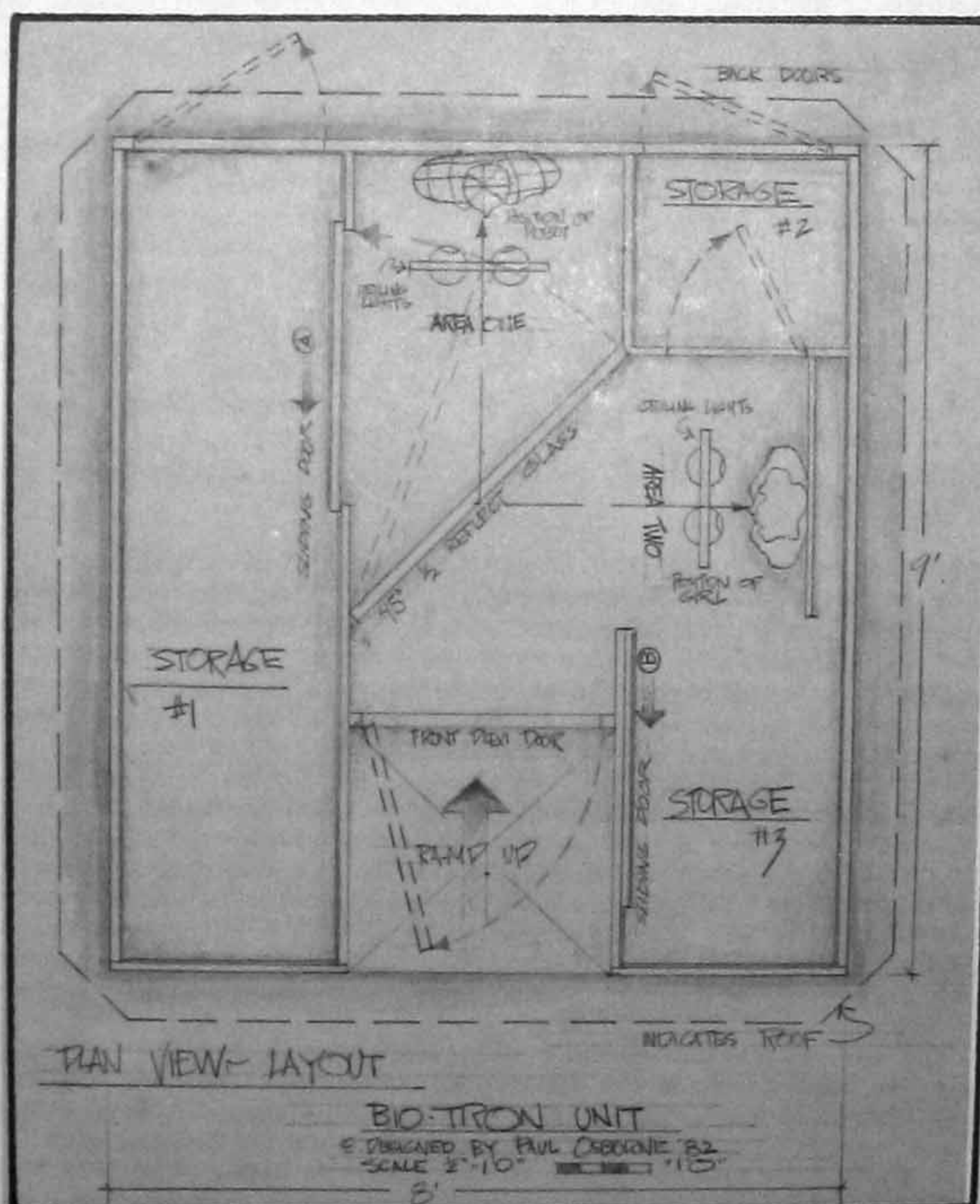
Our first illustration shows the plan view of this unit. The overall box is 8' x 9' with a ramp leading up to the clear plexi front door, behind which is located the 45°, 50% reflection glass (ours was housed in a thin, steel frame, hinged to swing against the side wall). The unit is basically divided into two areas as shown, each area being revealed by the lighting which either is reflected in the glass, or seen through the glass. The basic control within the Bio-Tron activator is the lighting rheostat which cross fades between these two areas.

Our Bio-Tron was made up of 3" tall floor risers with the side walls of 1" x 3" framing with 1/2" ply and white formica applied. The frame and black cloth roof basically set on the unit with the decorative 9" border attaching to the top rim. The entire inside of the unit was finished in flat black with storage and dressing areas. Budget dictates the nice little details you can add which really make this space-age unit convincing. On the front of ours we had small twinkle lights, tape reels spinning, heart rate simulators, etc., all for show, of course, and all powered by small display motors.

Directly above the two show areas within the Bio-Tron is the form illumination, or ceiling lights. Two back doors on the unit enable performers to come and go. Two sliding doors on either side of the glass aid in the performance. As I mentioned, most of the exterior of the Bio-Tron and Activator was finished in Formica with wording silk-screened in place. We had no detail on the sides or back, primarily because the audience viewed it straight on.

The two human shapes were actually made like Asrah forms, sprayed flat black with wires and lights and details applied. One form was more detailed than the other. The Activator was wired into the main unit with its principal function being a rheostat to cross fade from area one to area two. Our Activator was also wired to control the front display lights and motors as well as the twinkle lights mounted within the forms.

In performance the girl assistant would wait in storage #1. Area #1 would be the first form and area #2 would be the second form. All interior lights would be off. As the operator stepped on stage and began working with the Bio-Tron Activator, slowly the lights would come up on area #1. Once established, the cross fade would begin and slowly the lights would go down on area #1 and come up on area #2's more detailed form. The 45° mirror puts both these images in the same image location. Once the lights were down on area #1, the girl assistant would open sliding door A, step into area #1 and, moving the form into the storage area, take its place. Slowly the lights would fade back from area #2 to area #1, exposing the newly positioned assistant. Once all the ceiling lights are positioned on the assistant, they are momentarily shut off. Under the cover of this darkness your assistant swings back the glass and steps forward, opening the glass door and begins her spiel on "Frapman Gaskets". Another great moment in magic destroyed by crass commercialism but, it's a living.



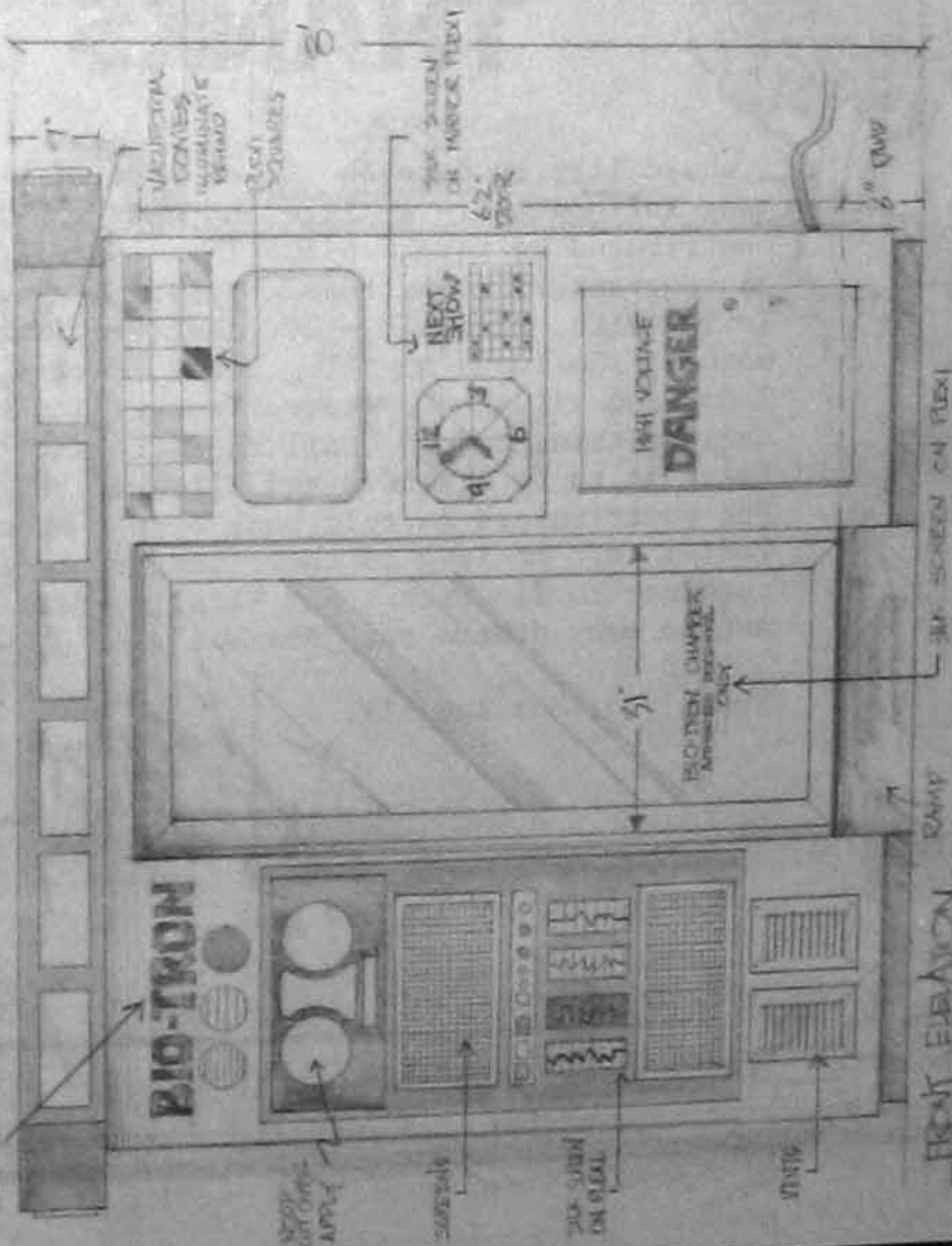
BIO-TRON SEQUENCE: AT FIRST, UNIT APPEARS TO BE EMPTY. BIO-TRON ACTIVATOR IS UTILIZED TO MAKE 1ST FORM TO MATERIALIZE, THEN SECOND FORM AND FINALLY GIRL COMES INTO VIEW. ALL LIGHTS OFF - OUT STEPS GIRL

BIO-TRON

DESIGNED BY PAUL DORNE '82

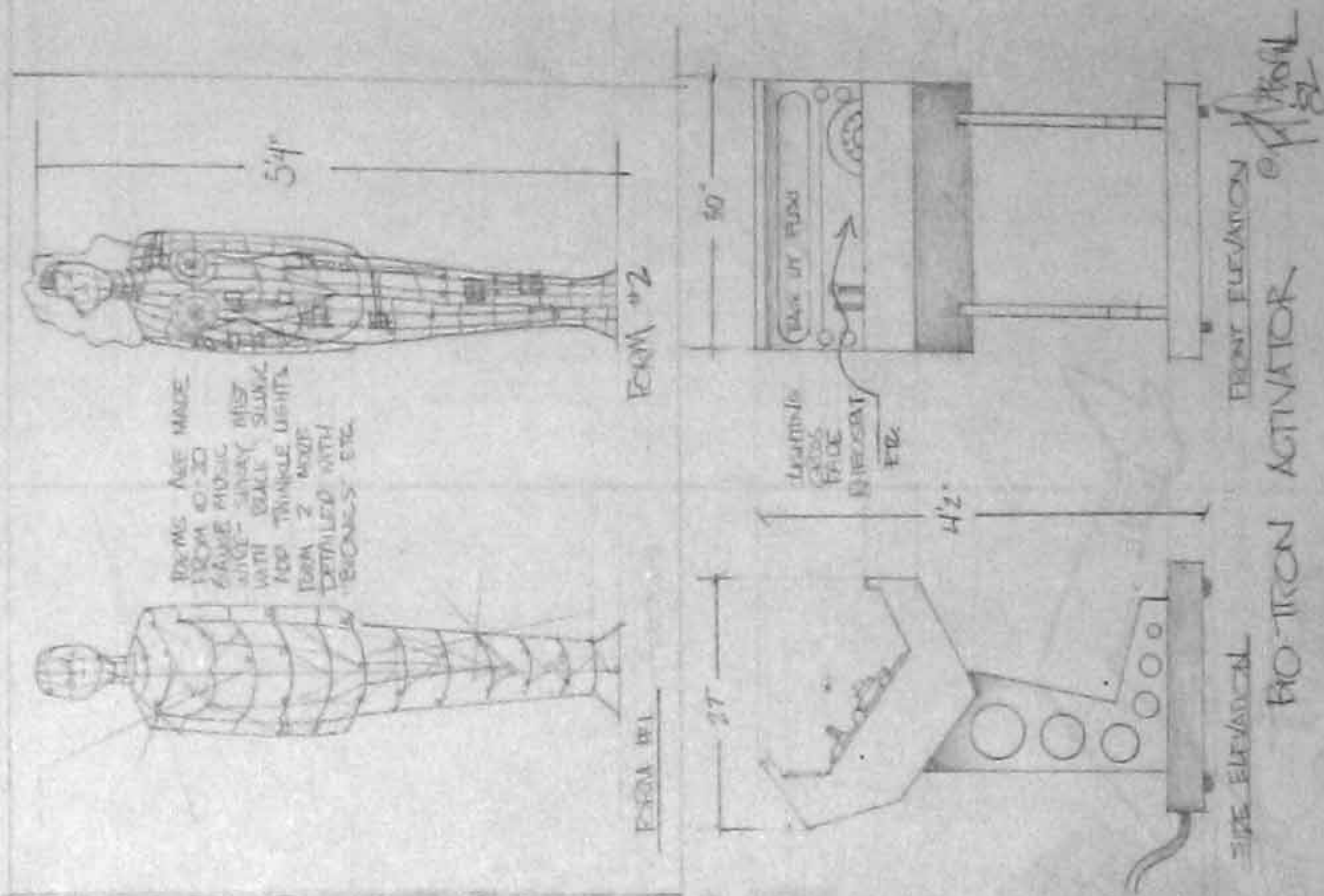
SCALE $\frac{1}{2}'' = 1'0''$

30" SCREEN ON WALL



FRONT ELEVATION RAMP

BOTTRON UNIT



FRONT ELEVATION

BIO-TRON ACTIVATOR

SIDE ELEVATION



THANKS

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ONLY THE BEST IN ILLUSION PLANS...



