number on them. The tent then serves a dual purpose, acting as a business card as well. If you want to use table tents, clear it with the management first; then print the tents at your expense. That assures you that the job will be done. Sometimes the management will not want to use tents, because they already have enough on the tables. If you establish a long-term relationship, it is possible they will consider printing your name and schedule on their tents. Table tents are an inexpensive and effective form of advertisement, and I recommend their use.

The third arrangement is one in which a flat guaranteed rate is set, but any tips made by the performer are deducted from this fee. For example, let's assume that the performer's fee is fifty dollars a night. If he were to make ten dollars in tips, the restaurant would pay him forty dollars. This way the performer always has at least a certain amount assured — sometimes more — and the house usually gets a break.

This method is recommended by Brodahl in his book, Coffee, Tea, or Magic? To assure all is honest, he suggests that the magician never collect his own tips, but rather that a tip jar, salted with a few bills, is placed next to the cashier. Customers wanting to tip the magician are told they may do so at the cashier's desk.

This sounds like a fair arrangement, but I have never tried it and I feel it would be difficult to monitor. Also, tipping is an immediate response to a situation. The longer the time between the offer and the collection, the more likely it is there will be no tip.

Posgate, in *Table Hopping*, offers yet another possibility. He suggests working for a guaranteed fee and accepting no tips, or at least very few. Charles Greene suggests working only for a fee and never accepting tips. My own policy is much like Eugene Burger's: I do not openly solicit tips, but I will accept them, when offered, along with a guaranteed salary. In the last

few years, I have adopted the policy of never hustling a tip. If the offer comes it comes because the person is offering you a compliment in the form of cash. Sometimes, because I have had a really great time with the people, or they are old friends, or for some other reason, I will refuse to take an offered tip initially; but if they insist, I will take it. Otherwise, I would risk insulting them.

If you don't want to be tipped, there is one way to turn down the offer without offending anyone. Just say, "The management does not allow me to take tips, but I certainly appreciate your offer." Recently I was employed by a restaurant that did not want me to accept tips. This statement about the management seemed to work well and no one seemed upset that I didn't take the money.

There is another fee alternative, one that I have never seen a close-up magician use. It is a fairly standard system of pay for musicians. This is to work for a certain percentage of the cover charge and/or a certain percentage of the liquor sales. Probably this arrangement is not used by magicians because there is no cover charge, or the cover charge is used to pay other entertainers appearing at the club.

These, then, are the basic types of financial arrangement. I am sure there are other possibilities, but essentially what is involved is the existence of a guaranteed fee. It is up to the individual to decide in which manner he wishes to work.

If you decide on a flat fee, what is a reasonable amount to ask? Remember, this could be an hourly fee, a weekly fee or a daily fee. You must decide what type of rate you want. I feel it would be absurd to quote a figure here; I hope this book is around for a long time, and, due to inflation, what might seem a hefty amount today might very well be a paltry sum in five years. Your fee should be determined by several factors: your experience, reputation, popularity, and media exposure. The

more you can offer, the higher the fee. Basically, I recommend going for what the market will bear.

SCHEDULES

Before I can determine the amount of money I want, I have to know what kind of schedule I will be working. This brings us to a discussion of scheduling.

You must decide for yourself how many days a week you would like to work and how many hours per day. I think that between three to four hours a day is the maximum one should perform. Frankly, I get very tired after about four hours of table work. Also, a restaurant will rarely want you longer than this.

In terms of the number of days, I will work no more than ive. Granted, they may be any five days, but that is my personal naximum. If you are doing restaurant magic as a part-time job, t is probably wise to work no more than three days, and not nore than three hours per day. Again, this is a personal lecision. By the way, anything less than two hours is generally not enough time to cover a restaurant thoroughly, unless business is slow or the place is small.

As a rule, the fewer hours one works a week, the higher the lost per hour and vice versa. In an interview situation what I generally do is quote my one-shot-one-hour-private-party rate irst. This usually seems like a lot of money; then I say, "But of lourse I wouldn't charge you that amount if I were working hree hours a night, four days a week." I then quote them a ligure for the week that is about double my one-shot-one-hour-private-party rate. This sounds like a bargain in comparison.

Currently, I work for an hourly fee and a minimum number of hours. The more days I am given during a week, the better the price the restaurant is given. For example, I might want a twohour minimum and \$50 per hour for one day. But if they hire me for two days a week, the fee is \$45 per hour with the same minimum; and if they hire me for three days, the fee is \$40 per hour with the same minimum. I want a guarantee of six weeks, with the option for extending the time, to be negotiated in the fourth week. This approach has worked well for me, because I am giving them a break and they are giving me more days.

WORK TIME

I doubt I would ever work more than three days a week at a restaurant, because I want to be available for private parties and other kinds of work. One major reason for working in a restaurant is to make contacts with people who might need entertainment for their company or their organization, etc. I suggest you give this consideration when planning your schedule. Once you have established a long-running relationship with the restaurant, you might reach an agreement in which, if you give them enough notice, you can take off a normally scheduled night to work an important date.

TABLE TIME

The subject of scheduling brings us to another topic; the length of running time per table. First, the number of tables and customers will affect the running time. So will the expected rate of turnover and the amount of time you are booked for the evening. Probably, the average time you should work per table is from five to ten minutes. For me this allows time for about three routines. I believe, however, that you should be able to cut or stretch, so the show can last as little as two minutes or as long as twenty.

SETUP

One question the potential buyer is likely to ask is, "Do you need any special setup?" More than likely your answer will be no. If the magician is roving, there is little that is needed, with the possible exception of a lobby board. The only time you would need a setup is if you intend to work in a fixed position. In such a case you will need to arrange chairs and tables, and possibly a small spotlight.

DRESS

The last question, "What do you wear?" is another one that you will need to answer. This is yet another area in which the final decision is entirely a personal one. Bruce Posgate wrote, 'There's no set rule about dressing. Much depends upon the establishment, the class of the clientele, and yourself. A heavy slown costume may be ideal in one place while a demure black uxedo could fit well in another. In many cases, a fancy dinner acket is ideal."

I think it a wise idea to have a variety of outfits to choose rom, so you can fit the dress to the establishment you are vorking. Not only do you want to dress well, but also distincively. To quote Posgate again, "You are different, so why not lress accordingly?" You should try to set yourself apart from he restaurant staff and clientele.

I usually wear a dark tux, except in places where some of the staff are attired similarly. I do not want the customers to confuse ne with the waiters. To dress differently does not mean to dress lown. You should dress as well as most of the customers, if not a little better. The management will always appreciate this, for your image ultimately reflects upon the restaurant. Also, the nore expensively you are dressed, the better the tips are likely to be, unless you are outrageously over-dressed. In such a case,

a highly intimidating appearance is created that might inhibit tipping.

Assuming you have a couple of outfits reserved primarily for restaurant work, it might be advisable to have them gaffed in some manner. You might want to add a few additional pockets. Some tux jackets, for example, have only one inside breast-pocket — it might be helpful to have at least one more. Geoffrey Buckingham has said he likes to have a large lower pocket sewn inside his jacket, which functions like a topit. Or you can follow Michael Ammar's instructions from *The Topit Book*, to get the real thing. Even if you must hire a tailor, the cost is usually so little it is well worth it.

A cummerbund is another item that can be easily modified to do more than its original function. Karrell Fox uses a cummerbund to carry props. Other magicians use it as a servante. I suppose it is possible to combine these ideas, but I wouldn't recommend it. If you are using the servante principle, you wouldn't want to draw attention to the cummerbund by extracting props from it.

For those who wish to construct Fox's "Close-Up Cummerbund," here is the method in brief: Take a piece of fabric that matches your cummerbund and place the cummerbund on it. Cut the fabric, using the cummerbund as a template. Then fashion a little pocket for each prop you wish to use by sewing the piece of material onto the back of the cummerbund, stitching the separate compartments along the sides and bottom. For fuller details, see *Clever...Like a Fox*.

To construct the servante cummerbund you do nearly the same thing, but exclude the little pockets. Of course, you could use the cummerbund as a servante without the additional fabric being attached, but occasionally the ditched items will fall down into the pants. This can be embarrassing and potentially painful.

Anything you can add to the outfit to facilitate your work is valid. One word of caution: anything you do add should look natural and unobtrusive, except perhaps Fox's Close-up Cummerbund; and even that, while somewhat unnatural, is conspicuously functional.

Whatever you wear, it should be cleaned regularly. I think t is best to have several different outfits, so that you can vary your attire.

While on the subject of grooming, be sure to pay special ittention to your hands. They should be as attractive as possible. I would recommend getting a manicure occasionally.

These suggestions should help you prepare for the probable luestions your interviewer will ask. Besides explaining who you are, what you do, how you work, when you work, and what you charge, it is probably advisable to be prepared to demonstrate your skills.

THE AUDITION

At times you might provide a demonstration just for the nterviewer. You probably will not need to do more than two hings, but they should be your strongest. I advise doing effects hat culminate in their hands. If one trick seems to satisfy them, stop there. Do not perform more than required. I would never lo more than three things in a one-on-one audition. Usually, one is enough.

Sometimes the interviewer will want an immediate demonstration for those customers presently in the restaurant. Again, do your best material, but keep it short. I would not do more than two or three tables in this situation. If you get good response — gasps, laughs, applause, or all three — suggest to the people that they tell the management they enjoyed your

performance. Only do this, however, if the management is not present. Otherwise, it could appear that you are pushing the situation.

In other circumstances the interviewer might ask you to return later and work an evening for free. If you feel there is a good chance that this will be the determining factor, by all means do it. But realize that there are some people who will take advantage of you to get free entertainment for an evening, and who have no intention of booking you.

Of course, you might yourself suggest the free evening. But, again, offer this only if you think it will significantly better your chances of being hired.

When giving a free demonstration, don't do more than two hours — I would suggest one is probably enough. Conduct yourself as professionally as possible and give them a great show. Whenever you finish a table at which the response has been good, suggest to the people that they let the management know how much they enjoyed the show.

After all this, you still may get a rejection from the potential buyer. Try to discover the objections and see if you can negotiate. Generally, if you have gotten this far, they are interested and the objection will be money. If you do not reach an acceptable agreement, thank them for their time and ask them to keep your name on file for banquets and private parties. Try them again later.

On the other hand, you might score a success. If you do, I suggest drawing up a contract. Gentlemen's agreements are fine things in theory, but not often practical in the cold, cruel world.

THE CONTRACT

For those lacking experience in the area of contracts it might be worthwhile to consult a lawyer, or at least consult some books on the subject of contracts. One good simple source, slanted for magicians, is Marshall's *The Success Book*. You will also find an example of a contract at the end of this book.

In the contract you should specify when you expect to be paid: every night, at the end of the week, etc. Usually the restaurant will want some kind of receipt of payment. You can purchase these at any office-supply store. Please use a printed form. It looks more professional than a hand-written note on a blank piece of typing paper. On the invoice you must have your name, phone number, address, and *social-security number*. This last item is important for their bookkeeping.

WORKING

THE STAFF

After you have been hired, your first consideration will be your relationship with the staff. Once you are working you will ind that the most important people there, for the sake of the estaurant, are the bartenders and wait staff. Without them the restaurant will sell no food and drink. You have to understand hat they are an important facet to your existence.

It is a big benefit to have these people on the best terms with rou. Not only can they better your relationship with the nanagement, but they will often tell customers about you and ecommend certain tables for you to work. If you eat or drink it the establishment that employs you, it is a very good idea to ip the people who serve you. Not only will this help to establish good working relationship, but it will induce them to help you get tips, sometimes from them and their friends, often from their customers. (By the way, what is considered a proper tip these lays is twenty percent of the total bill. Please tip, especially if rou are getting the meal for free or discounted, and tip on the ictual cost, not what you are being charged.)

While on the subject of money, a word of caution: It is not idvisable to discuss your fee or the tips you are getting. You want to avoid stimulating envy or jealousy.

While performing, stay out of the way of the wait and bus people. If an order arrives during your performance, cut the outine as short as you gracefully can. Do not keep the wait person standing with a full tray of drinks or steaming hot food. They won't appreciate it. Be aware of them and when they are ikely to arrive. I once knocked a full tray of drinks over myself, the cocktail waitress, and the customers, because I moved quickly in the middle of a routine to emphasize my surprise at

the trick. Boy, was I surprised! I bought the replacement drinks, because, after all, they were truly on me anyway; and the next day, when I arrived for work, I brought the waitress a rose, as a way of expressing an apology. It was a little courtesy, with a terrific result. I became a hero to the staff.

Do not perform any duties that are the responsibilities of the staff. You are there as an entertainer, not as a waiter. There will be times when the customers will ask you to get them an ash tray or a book of matches. Use your judgment when deciding to do this. If it is not an imposition, and if the wait person is really busy, I would probably do it. But I would not take an order or bus the table. Realize that some wait people will let you do more of their work, and may even begin to expect it if you let the situation get out of hand. So, I would suggest that normally you let them do their work and you do yours. Sometimes, you may need to tell the staff that their help is needed by the customers; but if you do, do it in a manner that suggests that you are being helpful, and not demanding their immediate response. Under no circumstances ever tell a wait person they are wanted at another table while they are with customers. Remember, you are not in a position to boss anyone.

Many times the staff will want you to do a trick for them. Should you entertain them? Remember, you are not being paid by the management to entertain the employees. This does not mean you should entirely refuse, but you should perform for them only when it is appropriate. When both myself and the staff members are off duty, I will often do something for them. There is one exception to this: on the first night of the engagement, I will make a point of showing the manager something or doing something for the manager's friends. This is mainly to prove to the management that you are a capable entertainer.

If you really want to impress the staff and the management, memorize the table numbers. Learn the layout of the restaurant so that when the host says, "They would like to see you at Table 33," you know where to go. Also learn the names of every employee you come into contact with, from dishwasher to head waiter. Make a point of letting them know how much you appreciate them.

SECRET ASSISTANCE FROM THE STAFF

Before leaving the subject of your working relationship with the staff and management, I want to discuss a concept I call team magic. This involves employing at least one wait person as a secret assistant. The only mentions I have seen of this are in the Goshman book, Magic by Gosh, and in John Hotowka's Everything You Wanted to Know about Table Hopping, but were Afraid to Ask. What these men did and what I have done, while similar in concept, is vastly different in style.

At one place I worked, I discovered, after I had been performing there for a while, that one waiter, Bob, had a keen interest in magic; enough so that he had kept his copy of *Greater Magic* that he bought when he was a child. He volunteered to assist me secretly. We worked out a nice bit that we used whenever the moment was right. There were two versions, one easy and one difficult.

In effect, someone chose a card. Then it was lost in the deck. It vanished and was found in the ticket folder, a booklike object in which the dinner check was presented. Sometimes Bob would present the folder just as I began the trick; sometimes he would arrive just as the card was discovered missing. The timing was often determined by the circumstances of the evening.

In the easy version, I would force a card on the spectator and palm it out of the deck. Bob would place a duplicate of the forced card in the folder, close it up, and then bring it to the table.

Manual of Restaurant Magic

In the more demanding version, we would use a signed card. What made this difficult was the timing. If there was a serving tray with used dishes on it behind me, I would back up and drop the card on the tray, just before Bob came to remove it. I would stall by having the deck shuffled by the spectator. The only thing that made this risky was if something unforeseen happened, something that would delay Bob's arrival.

Because of this timing factor, most often we would do the easy version. However, if it was a slow night and it seemed appropriate for the group, we would do the hard version. Even the easy version was reserved for special situations. Sometimes we would only do it once in several days, and rarely more than twice in an evening. If the guests tipped me, I would split that tip with Bob.

The factor that made this strong was that no one ever realized Bob was involved. Therefore, I got credit for doing an amazing illusion, as did John Hotowka for his "Card on Saucer." Goshman found a signed card on the person of the waitress. So, even though the audience didn't know that the waitress had secretly assisted Goshman, it was obvious that she was involved.

I would suggest that you do not attempt "team magic" until you have had a long run with the restaurant, and unless the wait person has a real interest in magic. But if all the factors are right, by all means do it.

Never abuse your relationship with the work staff; don't ask them to do things that will benefit you alone. In the final analysis, the most important element in dealing with the staff is respect. Treat them with respect and they will do the same for you.

APPROACHING THE TABLE

To the beginning restaurant-magician, probably the most crucial questions are, "When do I approach a table?" and "How to I approach a table?"

The best times for the approach are after the order is made and before the meal arrives, or after the meal has been finished. You can also approach a table between courses — after salads, before the main course, after the main course, or before dessert. This applies, of course, to a restaurant setting. In a bar, the best ime to work is after the order of drinks has been served. In fact, he sooner you can approach the table, after the drinks have arrived, the better; for it takes much less time to order, prepare, and serve drinks than it does food.

Aside from the times when orders are being taken or served, or customers are eating, there are other moments when one should avoid approaching a table. Do not approach a table after the check has been served. The restaurant wants to use that table and your performance would only delay the process. Also, when people seem involved in intimate conversation, unpleasant arguments, or lively talk, it is best to leave them alone. To a degree you are an intrusion at any time, but you should pick what seem the best moments and intrude as politely as possible. You must learn to sense the mood at the table.

Besides being obviously beckoned by the customers, there are other signs that signal a good time to approach. Lulls in conversation are good times. When the people at the table are staring off into space or looking bored, it is probably a good time to approach them.

There are certain situations that make your entertainment welcome. Couples with children are usually delighted to have somebody entertain them. People dining by themselves are also

happy to get attention from someone. Older adults with younger adults will often be looking for some kind of pleasant diversion. Also, first dates and blind dates will sometimes be very happy to have you entertain them. Sometimes you can tell that people are interested in you just by eye contact. In general, if you sense it is the right moment, approach the table, and if you sense it is the wrong moment, do not.

How do you approach a table that you are not invited to? There are several different techniques, but the essence of them all is assertiveness. Never ask people whether they want to see magic. It is my contention that, if one were to approach a table and ask, "Would you like to see some magic?" there is a good chance the people will say, "No." So, the approach should be aggressive enough that the patrons are not allowed an opportunity to consider whether they want to see magic or not. This does not mean the performer should be arrogant or rude, just bold. Rest assured, if the table does not want to see magic, they will say so without being asked.

For example, assume that I have spotted a table I think is ready. I walk over to the table, trying to establish eye contact with at least one person there. I stop about two feet away from the table, smile at the person I have made eye contact with and say, "Good evening. How are you all? My name is Kirk Charles, and I'm the house magician." By this time, I have moved closer to the table. "I perform magic here, and I use this." At which point, I produce a sponge ball.

If I cannot establish eye contact by the time I am two feet from the table, I will usually not perform for them at that time.

Some magicians walk to a table and ask, "Did anyone at this table lose this?" And then produce something out of the air. If you choose to use this approach, do not produce money — it could lead to an awkward situation. Ron Wilson uses a variation on this opening, employing a color-changing knife: "Did

anyone lose a black knife?" When the response is negative, the color is changed and the question modified to: "Well, then did anyone lose a white knife?"

Another opening line that I like and have used is: "Hello, were you all aware there is a magician performing here? Would you like to see him? You would! Just a minute and I'll get him." I walk about ten feet away and then return. "Oh, by the way, I'm the magician and I understand that you people would like to see some magic." I know this sounds a bit silly, but it is amusing because it is silly.

Jeff Semel has an approach that involves his acting as if he were part of the management. He begins with, "Good evening, did you enjoy your meal? Is everything all right? Oh, allow me to introduce myself..." He then proceeds to the magic.

Whatever the introduction, it is important that you identify yourself and let the customers know that you are working for the restaurant. You do not want them to think you are some weirdo who enjoys bothering people. It is also important that you keep the introduction fairly short and get to the magic as quickly as possible. Recently, I have started wearing a name tag. Many print-shops can supply you with an engraved tag for under five dollars. The tag tells people your name and it looks official. I would suggest printing your full name, not just your first name. Your name is on view the entire time you are there, and if they forget who you are, they can look at the tag. I think this is a fine idea. I also use the tag at private parties.

The first trick should be one that does not require audience participation. The people do not know you and do not know what you are going to do. They will be hesitant. Once they see that you are entertaining and pleasant, you can get them involved.

A good opening effect is anything flashy and visual or unique. It should be quick. This gives them enough time to assess you and decide whether they would like to see more. And it gives you enough time to assess them and decide whether you want to do more.

Productions, vanishes, transferences and transformations are good opening effects, because they are simple to follow and often very visual. Mental effects and penetrations are bad openers, because they are too subtle. Restorations tend to be a little too violent as introductory effects. The whole idea is to get their attention and prove your abilities.

Whatever it is that you choose to open with, make sure you have everyone's attention before you do the trick. If, for example, you intend to produce something, focus on the spot you will produce it from, perhaps even point to it, and then produce the item.

ONCE YOU ARE THERE

Once you have a good introductory line and good opening effect, you are ready to approach the table and begin entertaining. The key word in the last sentence is "entertaining." Brodahl wrote in *Coffee, Tea, or Magic?*, "Have as a goal entertainment. This is more important than trying to fool them." I agree heartily. Of course, if you are a good magician, you will mystify them; but it should be done in an enjoyable and amusing manner.

Most of the middle-of-the-act effects should involve a lot of audience participation. Try to use tricks that occur in the hands of the spectators. The magic should be good and strong — but save the strongest for the closer. Remember, you have only five to ten minutes, so waste no time in building to a strong finish. In stage magic there can be high and low points that eventually

lead to a big finish; but in table magic each effect should be more powerful.

I usually do three routines at each table. The opening is almost always the same, unless I am working for returning customers. But the middle and closer vary. I usually carry six non-card routines on me. I have others in the case, if I need them. I also generally carry two decks of cards.

One deck is reserved for tricks in which the cards are lestroyed in some way; the other deck is a full pack. I carry one or two trick-packs in the case, but the majority of card work I do s with an unprepared pack. Believe it or not, most lay people are suspicious of the cards magicians use. They know about strippers, Svengalis, and the Deland pack. Of course, they do not call them by those names, but thanks to various pitches at country fairs they are aware of the existence of gimmicked packs. Therefore, I prefer to use cards that can be handed out, if a shuffle is requested. Normally, most of the routines I perform do not use cards. But I use card tricks to fill time and to entertain people who have seen me before, or to satisfy those who actually request card tricks.

The best closing tricks have a big surprise as the finish. An example of this would be the big-ball load at the end of the Chop-cup routine. Sometimes I finish a coin routine with the production of a giant coin, and then quip, "Biggest tip I've gotten tonight."

On the subject of money, many magicians like to end with effects that involve borrowed bills. The thinking here is that, by getting cash out of the spectator's pocket and onto the table, it becomes more accessible and therefore more likely to be left as a tip. There are some magicians who, after they have finished the effect, pocket the money that was lent them. This is bad form. The money should be returned to the lender with a thank

you. Some performers pocket the money and then say something like, "Oh, that's right. This is your money and not mine." At which point they return it. This suggests the idea of tipping.

GETTING THE TIP

This brings us to the subject of tipping. Some performers feel it unnecessary to take tips if they are receiving a secure salary from the establishment. Many magicians are willing to take tips, but do not hustle them. And there are those who hustle aggressively.

My attitude about tipping has changed over the years. When I wrote the first version of this treatise, I approached tipping as a game I liked to win. Getting tipped was an important part of my performance. It was not the sole aim, but it was a definite consideration.

I no longer feel this way. Now, I would rather establish a good contact with someone who in the future might want to employ me. If my focus were strongly fixed on getting a tip, I might lose a potential party-fee in exchange for the immediate gratuity. Since the former is more substantial, obviously I would rather have the engagement.

This does not mean I refuse to accept tips. I do accept them. However, they are not a major concern now. When people offer a tip, without prompting, they are giving you a compliment, a gift. Sometimes, I refuse to take it, unless they insist. At other times, I will take it, but I always thank them, and usually offer to show them one more thing. And I make sure they get my card, because obviously they liked me or they would not have offered to tip me; and if they liked me that much they might want to use my services in the future.

Even though I am no longer concerned about techniques for enticing tips, I know that some performers are. For that reason, I will include some methods that have worked for me in the past.

You should know that many people do not know if it is proper to tip table performers. They know they are expected to tip the wait people, and usually they know what percentage of the bill that should be. Table entertainers are not a familiar experience to a large segment of the population. They do not know what to do in the situation, so the question, "Is it all right to tip?" is a common one. Another common question is, "How much?"

In answering the latter question it is best to give the customer a ball-park figure. There was a time when I would reply, "Whatever you feel is appropriate." The only problem with this was that it didn't really answer the question. You will probably make more money if you give them a price range — but be realistic. Before you suggest a price range, evaluate the clientele and the restaurant. There are some places where a standard tip will be a dollar, and there are other places where five or ten dollars will be the norm.

Many times in the past, when I started to perform, someone would blurt out, "Is this gonna cost anythin'?" My response was, "No, but if you want to tip me after I am through, I will be glad to take your money."

If there are no questions or implications of possible tips, how does one encourage the customer to respond in this manner? When I first started, I favored subtle hints; but I soon realized that the more subtle the hint, the less likely there was to be a tip. Still, I suggest that it is better to imply, rather than demand. (In fact, I think a demand for a tip is very likely to get one nothing.) But the implications need to be strong.

The most fundamental approach is simply to mention the concept of tipping, while performing. Do this in a light, amusing way. You might use lines like, "Here's my ten dollar miracle," or "Don't applaud, just throw money." Or "You know if this works, I expect heavy tips." These kinds of statements are spoken as asides or throw-away lines.

When it comes to money, an important part of the American consumer psychology is the concept of "competing with the Joneses." So another effective technique is to suggest that you have been tipped by other customers. There are different ways of doing this.

Some magicians carry a jar or a hat or some other receptacle that is plainly marked "Tips," which contains money. This is set on the table some time during the performance. Personally, I would not recommend this. It is a bit crude.

Other magicians carry nothing, but have bills sticking out of their breast pocket. Still others clip the money outside their breast pocket. The idea is that the money be conspicuous. If one is going to use this technique, it is suggested that the larger denomination bills be the most visible.

Tricks with money also can be used to stimulate tipping. Probably one of the best tricks for this is Grant's "Slow Motion Bill Transposition" from the *Tarbell Course in Magic, Vol. 3*. Eugene Burger, in *The Craft of Magic*, details the same trick, with his personal handling; and there is a version in *Apocalypse, Vol. 2, No. 12* by A. Berkeley Davis. The effect is the transposition of your one-dollar bill and a spectator's borrowed five-dollar bill.

It is an impressive piece that requires an easily made gaffed bill. I have no intention of going into the details of the various routines, but I would like to point out that the only time to do this is when you see a five-dollar bill on the table. There is a good reason for this: If you ask to borrow a five-dollar bill, and no one

has one, they will probably offer a bill of another denomination. If you can do a trick with that one, great. But if the only effect you are prepared for involves your bill and a five, you will be in an awkward situation. As a rule, I would not borrow anything that is not on the table. It is just safer that way.

At times I used the following ploy to imply that tipping was in order. While approaching a table, I openly counted the money I held in my hand and then stuffed it into my pants pocket. The implication was clear: I just received that money from my most recent customers.

Related to this is another technique I liked a great deal. At the beginning of the evening I would give a certain wait person a fair amount of money. I asked them to approach me while I was performing, hand me a few dollars and say, "This tip is from that table over there." This worked very well. It let the customers know that I accepted tips and that someone else thought I was good enough to tip well. At the end of the evening I would give the wait person ten to twenty percent of the tips I had made as a result of their help.

If you use this idea, do not ask the staff to do this when they are very busy. Also, wait until you have been working at the restaurant at least several weeks before implementing this strategy.

Another method that encourages tipping is to involve the spectators in magical or trick bets. Bar betchas were created for this purpose. The concept is to make a wager that seems impossible for the performer to win. Basically, it is a sucker gag with a financial payoff. Here is a classic example:

A card is chosen and — thanks to forcing, glimpsing, or a key card — the identity of the selection is known to the magician. After the identity of the card has been learned, the cards are offered to a spectator for shuffling. The performer then

states that he will discover the card. He begins to deal the cards face up on the table. Before each card is turned over he seems to feel the face. Eventually, the audience sees the chosen card dealt face up on the table. The magician continues dealing, as if he did not recognize this as the selected card. Finally, he stops on a card that is still face down and says something like, "The next card I turn over will be the chosen card." This usually solicits a negative reaction from the audience. The magician now offers a bet of some kind. Since it looks like a certain win to the spectator the bet is usually taken. At which point, the magician turns the selected card face down.

If this sort of thing is approached in the right manner — not heavy handed or smug, but rather amusing and light — the audience will enjoy being conned. I think it is important for the restaurant magician that there is a magical element about the bet — it should not be just a straight bar-betcha. In other words, I would not recommend puzzles that involve a bet; rather, use a trick that involves a mock bet.

Another way of soliciting tips is to set a price on a specialty item. An example of this would be J. C. Wagner's version of Card on Ceiling. The magician offers to do this special trick for a set price, say, five dollars. The card is selected and replaced in the pack. The pack is then wrapped in a five-dollar bill. The deck is tossed to the ceiling and the chosen card and the bill stay there. (For details on this trick, see *The Commercial Magic* Wagner.)

One performer I know used this effect all the time. It a number of bills and cards stuck to the ceiling, so new customers would see them and ask what it was all about. He would then offer to show them for five dollars.

The final tactic I will mention is one I used successfully in a singles bar, although it could be worked anywhere. I do not use

this now, because I feel it is too pushy, but it does work. I believe this is original with me, but I could be wrong.

First you must get at least one tip tray. I used two, for a reason I will explain later. On the face of the tray is pasted your business card. On the back of the tray is pasted a playing card, with the face visible. If you plan to use this often, I would suggest getting the surfaces laminated so that the business card and the playing card can be cleaned. This tray is carried in the hip pocket.

Toward the end of your act, bring out a pack of cards and ask if the group would like to see a few card tricks. If they have enjoyed themselves so far, they will probably say yes. If the answer is no, it is time for you to leave.

If they say yes, bring out the tray and place it on the table. Apparently the tray is to hold the cards, once they are out of the box. You might explain that the table is wet and you don't want the cards to get soiled. Then do two or three quick card tricks — ideally ones in which no cards are selected.

The last trick involves the forcing of a card that matches the one pasted on the bottom of the tray. Force this card on the person sitting opposite from the person you judge the most likely to tip. Turn to the potential tipper and ask if they have ever read anyone's mind. Tell the person who selected the card to make sure no one else sees it. Box the remaining cards and pocket them. Pick up the tray and flash the card to the potential tipper. Then request that the two people concentrate. Ask the person who has received the cue to identify the card. After he names it, have the selected card displayed by the chooser.

Almost always the person who is cast in the role of mind reader is delighted at fooling his or her friend. On the rare occasion when the person does not play along, bring the tray back out and say, "You just blew the chance of performing a miracle," and turn over the tray to reveal that it matches the chosen card.

Regardless of the outcome, bring back the tray and set it on the table. The tip should come at this point. If it does not, walk away and leave the tray. Usually, the tip is there when you return ten minutes later. If it is not, collect the tray and wish the clientele a good evening.

The reason for having more than one gaffed tray should now be clear. If it becomes necessary to leave it on the table, you have another to use.

Before I leave the topic of tips, I will mention a situation that often occurs. Instead of offering money, some people will want to buy you a drink — and, more rarely, a meal. Since I believe you should not drink while working, this means you are going to say no. But it is still possible to get the tip disguised as a drink. Inform the customer that you do not drink while on duty, but that you will be glad to get it later. This means that either you are obligated to join them after you are finished, or they will pay for the drink and you will get it later. Or so it seems. In actual fact, if they have gone, simply collect the money that was left for the drink. This usually involves working out an arrangement with the bar and the wait staff. Again, tip the people who help you.

THE GIVE-AWAY

At times, customers will ask to learn a trick. This request can be used to your advantage either to solicit a tip or to leave information about yourself that might lead to giving formal lessons or an outside engagement.

You really do not have the time to teach someone a trick. Therefore, it is a good idea to have something to give them that

has instructions. In the past I have used little pitch booklets I have bought from magic dealers. These had a space where I could stamp my name and phone number, and they were inexpensive enough that, if I got a dollar tip, I made a profit. The only problem was that I had to store them somewhere, since they were too large to carry comfortably.

About a year ago, I started carrying Deland's Two-Card Monte with printed instructions. The cost was around twenty cents apiece, and I could easily put two dozen in my hip pocket.

I put a label on them with my name and number, so that they double as an advertisement. I do not sell them to the customer — I give them away. But usually people will feel an obligation to tip because they have been given something. They could be sold if you wanted to do so.

I have on occasion sold these give-aways to the restaurants I am working for, in which case their name was placed on the item. I do not make a large profit — just a little over the actual cost. I benefit nonetheless. Since I am the one who is giving the item away, the customer is inclined to tip me.

If you do not want to buy ready-made pitch items, you can make up instructions for a simple trick — one that does not reveal an important conjuring principle, and one that is not another's property. A bar betcha would be ideal. Print it on your own stationery or on the restaurant's. When someone asks to learn a trick, you can show them the effect and then give them the instructions. If you do this, make sure the instructions are clear and attractive. I would recommend typesetting them. And, for heaven's sake, the instructions should not be more than one page in length. The customer wants to learn a *simple* trick.

I have handed out give-aways, on occasion, when no one asked for them. Sometimes this was done because the customer was celebrating a birthday. Give-aways also become helpful

when something unpleasant has happened; for example, if a waiter has spilled a drink on someone. Sometimes I felt that someone earned a little gift; perhaps a child was exceptionally well behaved and responsive. There have been many reasons I have done this, but always it was something I enjoyed doing, something extra for the customer. It has always made them happy, and that, ultimately, is my goal.

Balloon animals are another good give-away. Most people assume that balloon workers must be consigned forever to family restaurants. This is not so. I know several performers who, along with their magic, do balloons; and they work mostly in singles bars and establishments that cater to an adult crowd. If you are interested in pursuing the subject of balloon sculpture there are many fine books, particularly Posgate's Table Hopping, which features mostly balloon work.

I think that give aways are an excellent idea, not just for soliciting tips, but as a good will advertisement for you or the restaurant.

LEAVING THE TABLE

Earlier, I mentioned the concept of having a series of short and complete routines. One of the best reasons for this will be found at those times when you want it to appear as though you have completed your act, so that you can leave. One example of such a time is when the meal arrives much earlier than expected. But there are also moments when you will prefer to cut the act. If I am getting no response whatever, I cut the act short. I may do only an opening trick and, perceiving no interest, thank them for their attention and leave. Or perhaps the people are obnoxious and rude. Again I will end the act quickly, thank them and leave. I feel there is no reason to work for uninterested or hostile persons. If you do leave, be polite, no matter how unpleasant the people are. Remember always, you are not only

representing yourself, but the restaurant as well. You must conduct yourself in a professional manner.

SOLICITING OUTSIDE WORK

I find the psychology of tipping nearly as fascinating as the psychology of magic. It is a game that I have enjoyed playing. Currently, I am more interested in picking up additional work rather than tips. The most important thing in soliciting outside work is assuring that the potential booker has some way to contact you. Usually, this means giving him a business card. As already discussed, you can also use some kind of give-away that has your name and number on it. Here is another idea I think is clever.

This idea comes from Alfred Ulman, Jr.'s *The Business of Restaurant Magic*. It involves the use of labels. Have your name and number printed on small labels, ones that are easy to carry. Some print shops even supply a little wallet to hold the labels. When you do a card trick — ideally one which requires their signature — instead of keeping the card, give it out as a souvenir. But place a label on the card. Ulman has a specific card trick that he uses for this purpose, but there are many that would work. Most people are fascinated by restoration effects — the torn-and-restored card is a good example. Since the card is often minus a corner after it has been restored, and obviously cannot be used again, why not label it and give it away? Of course, to most people a card with a signature is also "ruined;" so such a card fills the need as well.

In soliciting additional work, you need to give the potential employer a way of contacting you. But that is only half the game. You also have to be able to contact them. If you cannot, it is far less likely that you will get the job. You need to be the one that follows up the initial contact.

Therefore, when someone asks for your card, ask them for theirs. If they do not have one, lend them a business card to write the information on — unless they are hesitant. In such a case, don't push it. By the way, I do not advise giving a business card to just anyone. This appears too aggressive. Give a business card only to people who ask for one and to people who seem genuinely interested in what you do. If you want to cover more people, use the give-away idea, or the labels, or find some way of involving your business card in a trick. However, in such cases you will not get information in exchange. You are simply giving information about yourself.

Let's assume you have been given a few business cards. Send these people a thank-you note for expressing their interest in what you do. Enclose a brochure with the note, telling them about your services. I would also suggest compiling a mailing list; but that is solely up to you. The important thing is to establish contact and then follow up on it.

Before I leave this topic, a word of caution: remember that the management did not hire you to look for work on their time. So use discretion. This suggestion also applies to soliciting tips. Conduct yourself professionally. Make tips and additional work a side benefit of restaurant work, not a priority.

SPECIAL PERFORMANCE PROBLEMS

There are certain situations that require special attention. The most important thing is to be flexible and sensitive to the particular event or person.

A large table with six persons or more can be difficult to work, because not everyone can easily see. First, try to position yourself centrally and do the first trick or two there. Then move to one end and do one or two more effects. Then move to the other end and do one or two tricks there.

Of course, the number of positions at the table increases with the size of the group. For a table of six to eight, you would probably work just the two ends. For a table of twelve you might work the middle and both ends. For a table of twenty, and yes it does happen, you might work as many as five different positions.

Extremely slow nights are another special situation that will arise. The solution here is pacing and knowing in advance that it will be a relaxed evening. This can be anticipated by checking the reservation book, if there is one. Most restaurants that do not use a reservation book are usually busy enough that slow nights are not a big concern.

If there is a slow period, spend more time with the guests than usual. This is a good time to work out new material. Instead of doing three routines, I usually do six or more.

Try to avoid standing around and looking bored. If there is nothing for you to do, either go someplace in the restaurant where you cannot be seen easily, or leave early. If you leave early, clear it with the management and, of course, charge only for the time you work. If you find you are frequently going home before your shift is up, it is time to think about working a busier restaurant.

SPECIAL AUDIENCES

Besides special situations there are special audiences. There are four categories to be aware of and prepared for: 1) children, 2) drunks, 3) singles, and 4) repeat customers. Each group requires special attention. They all have certain needs that you should be cognizant of.

CHILDREN: If you work in family restaurants, children are not so much the exception as they are the rule. Because I usually



work in bars and restaurants that cater to adults, children are nfrequently seen. When they are present I treat them as if they are very special guests. Parents, certainly, and most adults like to watch kids being entertained. So I focus my attention entirely on the child and do the magic for him or her, with asides to the parents. (A word of caution: In this day and age, with the rate of divorce as high as it is, it is not wise to assume that both adults with the child are the parents. More than once, the child has told me that the adult I referred to as Mother was Dad's girl friend and vice versa. I no longer refer to either adult by parental role.)

The kind of things I do for children are easily understood effects. They are visual and simple in plot structure. For this reason, I rarely do card tricks, except the Nudist or Mental Photography pack. (For those of you unfamiliar with this gimmicked deck, it is one in which the faces and backs vanish, leaving the performer with a deck of blank cards. Because it is so visual and unexpected, it plays well for children and adults.)

The old chestnut of producing coins from the child's ears, as trite as it may seem, is still a very popular effect. Kids love to have things happen to them. The more involved they are, the more they enjoy themselves.

Children do not like to be fooled. By this I mean they do not want to be the brunt of the joke. They do not want to feel that everybody but them knows what is going on. Pre-teens and teenagers are particularly sensitive to this. Many of them will adopt an attitude of boredom when they hear that magic is going to be performed. They often feel magic is strictly for young children and they are too sophisticated for this sort of thing.

Never talk down to the child. Never act as if they are too young to understand what you are doing. Usually, the best attitude to take is one in which you are sharing something special with them: something you know how to do, that is interesting, and that they have never seen before.

Do not forget that kids like to laugh, and they love to see adults made to look foolish. So if you can make fun of yourself, or gently poke fun at an adult in the party, without being offensive, do so. Another way of invoking laughter in a child is to do silly visual bits and say silly things; for example, nonsensical magic words. Just do not overdo this to the point that you appear to be only a children's entertainer. Remember, you are entertaining the adults as well.

It is essential that you approach each child as an individual and try to assess his or her needs and likes. You should be aware of the child's age. What works for a six-year-old, may not work as well for a ten-year-old and certainly will not work for a twelve-year-old. As a general rule, the older the child, the less silly the material should be. It is a good idea to talk to the child and ask what kinds of things they like. It is also helpful to incorporate current popular movies or TV shows into your patter.

Some children, particularly very young ones, are shy around strangers. If they do not respond to you, do not try to bully them into reacting. Some children may actually be afraid of magic. Be aware of how the child is reacting. If they do not seem to be enjoying you or are reacting in a negative way, it is best to leave gracefully.

If there is more than one child present, make sure you get them all involved. Usually, it is a good idea to work to the oldest child first, for the older the child, the more difficult it will be for you to appeal to him or her. If you work to the youngest first, it might very well convince the older ones that magic is only for younger kids. By working for the big kids first, and adapting your magic and style to what you sense they will like, the younger kids will automatically respond to you when you turn your attention to them. This is because they have seen that the big kids liked it.

Sometimes, the oldest child will try to be a know-it-all and blurt out what he or she thinks is the solution to the trick. This can be irritating and can spoil it for the other children. A rechnique I use to alleviate this problem is to explain, before I begin performing, that magic involves secrets; so if anyone thinks they know how the magic is done, keep it to themselves and it will be our shared secret. This disarms the know-it-all and makes them feel like a confidant.

Do not do things that are dangerous or rude. For example, swallowing coins may give the five-year-old the idea that she or he would like to try this same thing later at home. Be aware of this sort of thing. Ask yourself, "If someone tried to imitate this effect, could they possibly hurt themselves?" If the answer is yes, don't do it.

Understand that most parents believe their child is exceptionally bright. I have been requested to perform for babies, because their parents have insisted that the infant likes magic. What this really means is that the parents want to see it. In such cases it is wise to play along. Perform for the parents, but seem to play to the baby.

In reality, children younger than about five will not enjoy magic. But do not be surprised if you are requested to perform for very young children.

Working for children, particularly in an adult environment, can be a lot of fun, and can provide a change of pace for you. The only time it becomes unpleasant is when the child is misbehaving. If this happens it is best for the parents to do the reprimanding. On rare occasions, the parents may do nothing, in which

case it is up to you to say something. Be gentle and polite and very firm. Let the children know that you mean business, and that if they do not straighten up, you will leave.

If the child has been outstanding, I like to reward him or her, usually with a give-away item. There is also something else that I have done that I would highly recommend. I call it Leonard's Cork Trick. To do this there must be a wine bottle and its cork at the table.

You will need to buy a bottle of chocolate corks. These are available at many candy and dessert shops. The chocolate corks are wrapped in foil and look very much like wine-bottle corks—so much so that people must be told what they are. The only difference is that the candy corks are a little shorter than real ones.

Assume that you have performed at least a couple of tricks and you are about to finish. I would do this trick last or as an encore. You ask if you may borrow their cork. You should have the candy cork finger palmed. Simply switch the real cork for the candy one in the process of picking it up. Visibly transfer the candy cork to the other hand. Now go to your pocket with the apparently empty hand, looking for a small wand or something similar. Bring out the wand as you ditch the real cork. To the audience, you have only picked up a cork and gotten a wand from your pocket. Keep most of the candy cork in sight, covering only a bit of it with your fingers. This disguises its shortness, though I doubt it would be noticed. Make some magical passes with the wand and then peel a little of the foil so that they can see the transformation. Give this to the child, but only with the parent's permission.

This may not sound like much, but it plays incredibly well. Think about the illusion: you have changed something from an inedible state into an elegantly edible one. These candies are fairly expensive, but I believe them well worth the cost.

You should only perform this at a table with one child, as there is usually only one cork available. You would not want to create a situation where you give candy to one child, but not to another. Of course, this trick can be done for adults, but then you must decide to whom to give the candy, and that can be awkward. Of course, you could reach into your pocket and give everyone a piece of candy, but this would destroy the magic of the transformation.

The reason I call this Leonard's Cork Trick is because Leonard, a manager at a restaurant where I worked, came up with the idea. He had no background in magic, but thought that it would be charming if this could be done. It is.

DRUNKS: Most of the magic I do is created with a drinking audience in mind. That is why it is easy for me to work for children. Actually, drinking audiences and children are very similar. The only real difference is the patter.

It is best to avoid complex or cerebral magic for people who have been drinking. Keep everything simple. Effects that involve audience participation should be carefully thought out. Instructions to the spectators should be crystal clear and easy to follow. Tricks that require that the spectator hold something in his hands should be approached with care. To keep the spectator's hand shut, it is a wise idea to tell him to turn his fist palm down and place it on the table. In this position it is not easy for him to open his hand unexpectedly.

If you sense that some of the people are drunk at the table you are entertaining, it is best to perform for the more sober in the group. If you sense that the entire party is blotto, it is usually best to avoid them. If you feel that no one at the table is going to enjoy or understand what you are doing, why waste their time and yours? Fortunately, most people who drink don't get totally wasted. In fact, people who are just a little tipsy are more relaxed and a lot of fun to work for.

The key here, as in everything else involved with this kind of work, is to be aware of and sensitive to what is going on around you. Some drunks are very unpleasant people. If they start to give you a bad time, you must have a way of dealing with them. Generally, I simply finish the effect I am doing and go.

One reason for dressing one step above the crowd is to give yourself a mildly intimidating air. This becomes helpful when dealing with obnoxious drunks. The implication is that you are refined and do not have to deal with them. It is all in the attitude — nothing rude is said.

There are performers who react harshly in these situations. They unleash all their Orben heckler insults and try to level the poor lush verbally. Personally, I agree with Eugene Burger: hecklers are not born, they are made. And it is the interpretation of the performer that makes them. In close-up magic, hecklers don't really exist. There are people who become actively involved in the performance, and was must be prepared to deal with this. If you label interaction as a form of heckling, then this type of performance is not for you. Granted, some of the interaction can be unpleasant, but maily this rarely occurs.

When dealing with hostile drunks — and these days this seems to be less of a problem — avoidance is the best technique. Unlike the wait staff, you can choose whether you will perform for someone. You always have the right to say no. If you find that you are continually performing for chronic alcoholics, you might want to re-evaluate the restaurant you are working.

Probably, the most irritating problem for a magician is the drunk challenger. They usually say something like, "Hey, that was pretty good, but I know a little magic, hic, belch, and you didn't fool me, buddy. My uncle gave me one of those fake thumbs when I was a kid. Hic, belch. Do something I don't know." It doesn't matter if you aren't using a thumb tip, or

doing it the way they believe you are. If they think they know what you are doing, you are in a losing position. I will perform one really unique, strong trick. If they still react as if they know what is going on, say good night and leave. If they start gibbering and howling at the moon in utter terror of your occult skill say good night and leave just the same. What is important here is not to get involved in a war of egos. If you do not feel that there is any point in doing another trick, and many times there is not, don't do one. If you feel your ego starting to react, it is best to leave as quickly and gracefully as possible.

SINGLES: Some men, even when totally sober, may react strongly, if you focus your attention on the woman they are with. (For the women performers reading this, I apologize for the male slant; but this is a problem that men are more likely to face than women, even when the sexes are reversed.) This sort of thing is particularly true in singles bars. It is surprising what can happen. I have been cursed; I have had cards pulled out of my hands, so that Mr. Wonderful could do his tricks for the lady; and in one case, I had my hands pinned to the table, while Mr. Macho grunted, "I bet you can't do no magic now." I informed him that his observation was penetratingly brilliant.

I have learned it is wise to play to the man first. Once he thinks you are okay, then turn your attention to the woman. Keep the whole thing fun and impersonal. Flirtations, no matter how superficial, will often do more to hurt your performance than help it.

If I am doing tricks that involve people's hands, I make sure that I touch the men's hands first, then the women's hands. I do this in an impersonal way. I don't want anybody to think I am flirting with them. I do the touching in a firm confident manner that has no implication behind it.

If I am working for a couple, I usually try to make Mr. Goodbar look as good as possible. I let him be the mind reader