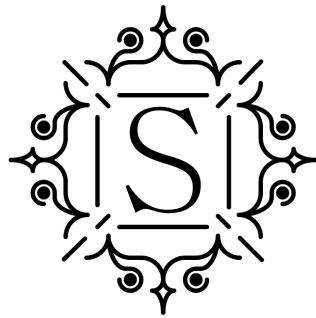




VIPSTUDY SCRIPTING



SCRIPTING - DAY ONE

Welcome to the Scripting Vip Study Course. I realise, Scripting is a part of the magical process that a lot of magicians find complicated and confusing. Many years ago, before I went to University to study Drama and Performance, I took a two year course called English Communication Studies. It was essentially the study of language, how language is used, semiotics, advertising and a bunch of other topics. During this course, I learnt an awful lot about how we, as humans and as individuals look at language and how we respond to it. I also know, English, writing and reading isn't everyone's strong point and with that in mind, parts of this course have been catered to all strengths and all educational abilities. As with all of these courses, these are just my approaches and the way I do things and do not necessarily represent the magic community at large. So, to begin, let us look at the dictionary

definition of scripting to see if it uncovered any interesting ideas.

"To arrange, direct or control (an event or a person) as if supplying a script.

Handwriting, a style or writing with cursive characters, a particular system of writing"

I think, this is what most of us would have said. But I think the really interesting ideas in these definitions are the thought of controlling an event or a person and also using a particular system of writing. The issue with scripting magic is, we are not writing a literal story most of the time. We are simply narrating what is happening in order to help our audience easily understand what is we are doing. That isn't to say we can't give our magic a story even if it is only intended for us. We will discuss a few different systems for creating scripts. This may be a system designed for full

sized shows or just your close up gig. Over the past couple of years, a lot of my close up effects are now carefully scripted because, as my character has evolved, my scripting has to match the persona I encompass. Your scripting is apart of your brand and apart of the experience you provide. It would be very strange, for example if Apple, who's presentations are slick, concise, to the point and highly practiced to one day have Tim Cook come on stage are start stuttering and confusing his words. Or putting down his clicker and forgetting where he put it, walking off the stage to find, it was in his hand the whole time. Their presentations are so slick because they're well practiced and smooth. They know every line and every movement. But equally, the language they use aids each presentation. For example, they will use emotive words to describe their products like beautiful or stunning. They will use key phrases like *'The first ever in a smartphone'* to make their product seem superior to the rest. And every year, something feels fresh and new even though, it has only been marginally updated or improved. The phrases they use are somehow obviously Apple's. So here is a little test for you. I will write down two phrases. One will belong to Apple and one will be made up. Choose which one you think is Apple's and which isn't. Write down your answers and check on the next page if you had it right.

PHRASE ONE

- A) It just got a whole lot harder to take a bad photo.
- B) Find photography hard? Try our new phone!

PHRASE TWO

- A) More power, more performance, more pro.
- B) Plug in, power up, play.

PHRASE THREE

- A) Incredible power at an incredible value.
- B) You won't find better, today.

PHRASE FOUR

- A) Deep tones, crisp colours.
- B) See clearer, see colour.

PHRASE FIVE

- A) Rediscover sound.
- B) The new sound of home.

Hopefully, you got most of them correct. But the question is, what is it about those phrases that made you think Apple? What is the language they are using that make it sound like something Apple would say?

Go to the forum and let everyone know what it is that makes their language so unique!

APPLE RESULTS!

PHRASE ONE

- A) It just got a whole lot harder to take a bad photo.
 - B) Find photography hard? Try our new phone!
- CORRECT ANSWER - A

PHRASE TWO

- A) More power, more performance, more pro.
 - B) Plug in, power up, play.
- CORRECT ANSWER - A

PHRASE THREE

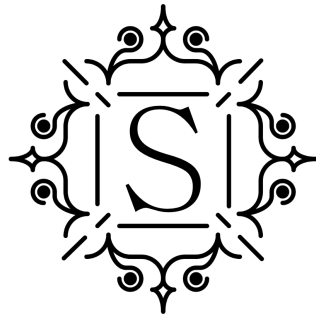
- A) An incredible power at an incredible value.
 - B) You won't find better, today.
- CORRECT ANSWER - A

PHRASE FOUR

- A) Deep tones, crisp colours.
 - B) See clearer, see colour.
- CORRECT ANSWER - A

PHRASE FIVE

- A) Rediscover sound.
 - B) The new sound of home.
- CORRECT ANSWER - A



CREATIVITY – DAY TWO

This lesson is dedicated to starting out the process of writing. But most importantly, I will introduce you to a friend of mine, Kate Brazier. But I will introduce her properly in a moment. So where do we begin the process? Do we start with an effect or idea or do we write something and find an effect that goes with it? Typically, we have an idea or effect first which needs to be scripted and if this is the case, there are actually a ton of different ways to start. Minds maps or spider diagrams are a simple and effective way to present your ideas in a visual fashion. Lets take one of the scripts I use for Magic Smiths Double Cross. I would start with a blank piece of paper and put the words Double Cross in the middle of it with a circle outside. Now I would draw a line coming off from it with the word, Issues, also with a circle around it. From that, I would draw lines with potential issues with that effect. Time misdirection, them feeling the stamp, surrounding

audience members, stopping them opening their hands prematurely, tension, etc.

Then, I would go back and draw another line from the larger circle with Double Cross inside and this one would say. Strengths. From this circle I would put, virtually angle sensitive, it is in their hand, can be easily adapted to my character, easy to misdirect, uses no props, etc.

Finally, I might draw another circle coming from the main one that says, Themes. I might put branches from this saying, voodoo, pins, two people combined, heart, etc.

Now I can begin thinking about how a script could achieve those things. So I know I want to introduce the idea of voodoo and pins but I also know that might cause tension. So I need a piece of script that will build the tension and then release it. I know comedy easily releases tension so that is probably a good way to go. But also, maybe because the notion of voodoo is so

powerful, perhaps this is the perfect line to help cover up the dirty work so they neither notice nor remember it.

"Please can you place both of your hands out like this. (demonstrates action) Have you ever heard of voodoo? (stamps her hand whilst moving them slightly apart but drawing no attention to it) Have you ever done any voodoo? No? (with a smirk on my face) Great! Let's try some. Which hand do you write with? Great, please close this hand and place it on your heart"

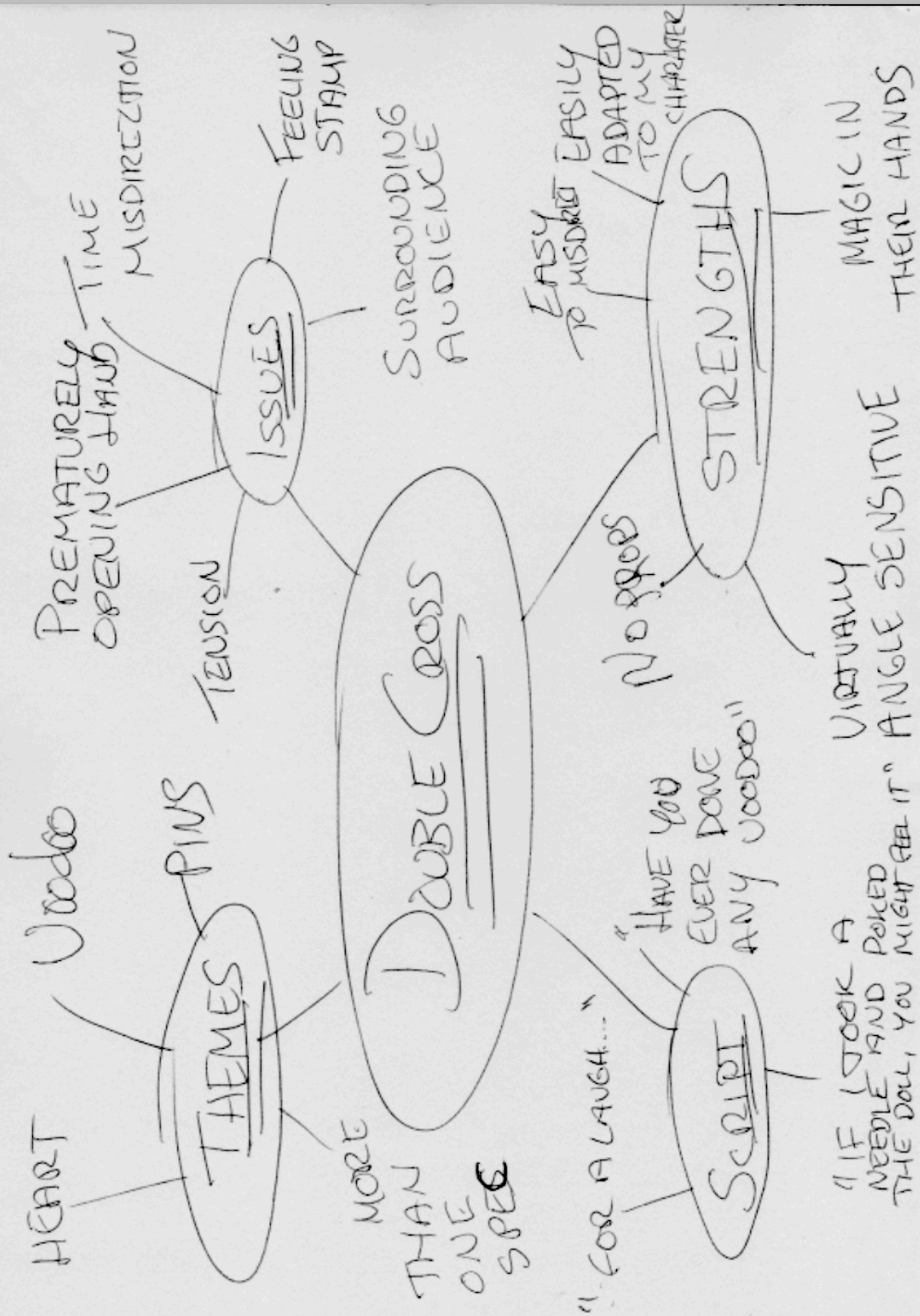
So here, I have achieved everything i've set out to do so far. I have introduced the idea of voodoo, stamped her hand secretly whilst asking an unsettling questions which leads her never to remember touching her hand. Now she has the stamped hand closed into a fist and placed on her heart. But I need to release that tension after I build it with some comedy.

"The idea with voodoo is, whatever happens to one person also happens to another. So, if I were to take a lock of your hair and place it into a voodoo doll, because it has your DNA, it becomes you. So whatever I do to the doll happens to you. Famously, if I were to take a long needle and poke that doll, you would feel that. So, for a little laugh... (I reach into my inside pocket as if to get something and they start to freak out. Really building tension here) Only joking, but notice how no one here tried to stop me. (Everyone on the table starts laughing and the tension is released)

So straight away, this script is doing everything I need it to do and want it to do. It also ties my character and the style of magic I perform into the effect. I end my close up set with my version of PK Touches which is very 'voodoo' esq. All of this suggests what is going to happen later but they don't realise it yet. It also allows me to see how they cope with the idea of voodoo so that I may gauge how they will react to my closer.

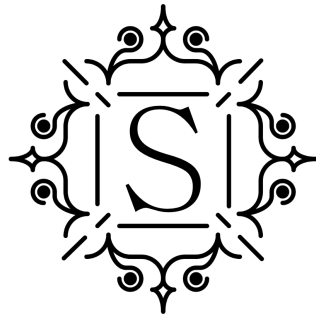
So, let me introduce Kate! Kate is an old friend of mine and is a teacher and an author. She is one of the smartest ladies I know and her knowledge for writing, scripting and literature is amazing. I caught up with her at a local school she is working at and during her lunch, she answered a few of my questions in-regards to writing and characters. Please Igor the bells in the background, as I said, it is in a school and it was lunch time!

I think, as magicians, in order to grow in our art, it is always a great idea to talk to people from other professions and digest their theories and ideas on things. Only then can we diversify our own thoughts and practices to make something truly amazing. Please enjoy the little interview and post your thoughts to what Kate has to say in the forum!



"THE FIRST DRAFT IS JUST YOU
TELLING YOURSELF THE STORY"

- TERRY PRATCHETT



CREATIVITY - DAY THREE

In this lesson, we expand on something Kate spoke about in the little interview I gave her. She spoke about character writing and how she approaches building a character into her stories. But one of the interesting things I took away from the interview was the idea that we can write scripts for tricks relative to our character. When we create a brand, we like there to be similarities and continuity in design. So, our website is an extension of our business cards which reflect our character. I have a slightly dark character. I play on the notion that some of the magic I perform is on the darker, spookier side. So, with that in mind, the effects I perform are usually a bit stranger or the subject behind them is strange. In the last lesson, I spoke about my script for Double Cross by Magic Smith. This is the perfect example of what I mean. The presentation is dark and spooky and I plant the seed that I may be using dark powers or forces in order to achieve

these effects. I do 'pepper-in' some slightly lighter effects as well but they're still normally of the mental / psychological presentation.

Now, we have to be slightly careful here because some of the groups that I perform to, are religious and whilst it doesn't happen regularly, I do have people who really buy into the idea of voodoo and get worried for religious reasons. So I also include those lighter moments.

For example, one of the effects I do is 'Omni Deck' but more precisely, 'Ambitious Card into Omni Deck'. My presentation for this is light hearted and I guess, classical in its approach. Although, there are some comedy lines to break down the barrier between performer and audience. One such line is...

*"Do you have a favourite magic word.
Magic word, not safe word. Very different
things!"*

This normally achieves several things. At this moment, I am performing a 'Double Lift' showing their card, turning it face down and placing an indifferent card in their hand. This line distracts them slightly from what is going on so they mis-remember what actually happened. The audience will either understand the joke and laugh (normally more effective on the female spectators) or, they won't understand and they just give me a magic word. Those that laugh, I might say something like,

"I can always tell who has read the books when they laugh!"

Most of the time, this gets an acknowledgement and another laugh. It is also not in my character to put people down or make them the subject of the joke. So notice, this joke does not make fun of anyone and is non offensive. The end script I use also suits my character.

I close my walk around set with PK Touches. My routine has 5-6 stages in it and goes on for a good amount of time but I really want people to focus on the effect and take it seriously. When someone in a crowd (normally men) closes their eyes, there is the possibility that one other person will interfere with them for a laugh. I don't want that. Also, having someone close their eyes would make them uncomfortable, so I need them to trust me and to know that nothing bad will happen to them. So my script begins like so,

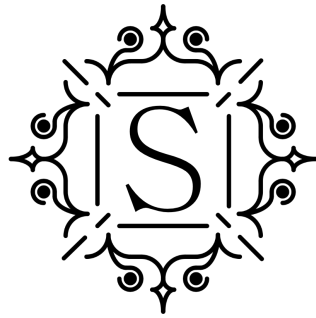
"In a moment, I am going to ask you to close your eyes. When your eyes are closed, you cannot laugh or speak. Give nothing away. However, if I ask you a question, you can answer out loud. But only when I ask you. Remember exactly what you hear or feel. Other people will be reacting. That is a very good thing but it does not mean you can open your eyes. If you open your eyes, the connection will be lost. I promise you, nothing bad will happen and this will be something you remember forever. Does that make sense? Have you ever been hypnotised before? Great! Can you see the back of my thumb. When I click my fingers, please close your eyes."

This achieves so much and I have adapted it to not only suit my character but also to aid in the routine. It builds tension and makes everything seem very serious. It builds so much intrigue not just from the person about to close their eyes, but from the whole group. It conditions the spectator perfectly and makes sure they adhere to the strict conditions I have set out for them. It also allows them to get any nervous energy out before the effect begins. Finally, it reassures them nothing bad will happen. So the script here prepares the spectator, is carefully crafted and changed over years of performances, but it also works well with my darker style of magic and suggests hypnotism which is a nice pseudo method for them to latch onto.

Here is a challenge to you all. Head to the forum and see if you can write a script for an 'Ambitious Card' routine that matches your character.

"YOU CAN ALWAYS EDIT A BAD
PAGE. YOU CAN'T EDIT A BLANK
PAGE"

- JODI PICOULT



CREATIVITY – DAY FOUR

I this lesson, we expand more on how we can script for close up and why we might script for close up. Coming from an acting background, scripts are great for a ton of different reasons. But mainly, it gives a uniform performance, allows for cues, aids in method and as we have already mentioned, provides continuity with your character. It also aids in the prevention of unexpected things happening and helping with conditioning your audience.

Lets think about this from a theatrical point of view and lets presume we are scripting for a bizarre effect. I can use the skills I learnt in University, putting together a theatre show but in my close up performances. One of the first things I would do is create a backstory for the characters. With my effect 'Scream' for example, the story centres around a lady called Susannah Cartwright.

"She is the first registered female serial killer in history. From Illinois, she found out her husband to be was cheating on her with a mistress and instead of confronting him, she plotted his murder meticulously.

She married him and on their wedding night, she took his shotgun which hung on the wall, pushed it into his forehead as he slept and the second he opened his eyes, she blew him a kiss and pulled the trigger. She killed him instantly, one bullet to the head. Then she hacked off his wedding finger with his ring still attached and placed it inside a black envelope with a note which read, 'my husband has played so many games with me, I am going to play a game with him. Find me before I find his mistress' And then she hid his body"

Quite an elaborate story but hopefully, there is so much detail in there, you have begun to form an image in your mind of what their house looked like and perhaps what she looked like.

The script is designed to draw you into the story but doesn't provide so much, that I do all of the work for you. Your brain has to fill in those gaps which causes you to invest even more. Equally, it sounds real and plausible because there is so much detail in there.

So I began with a series of photos which I will put on the next page for you. From those pictures, I made my own assumptions about the people and places involved. I created a 'Spider Diagram' for the photos in which I chose a particular part of the image and made an assumption about it. For example, the picture of Susannah, notice on her lap she has a mask. I presumed this would have been a clue for the police. Something she was planning. I also thought she might work in some kind of theatrical setting. A costume maker, perhaps that is where she got the mask from? The fact she is pictured on her own, maybe to make a statement about how strong she is. Her expression gives nothing away, she is neither smiling nor frowning. Again, a sign of her plotting, making sure she gives just enough away. Then the picture of the house, certainly doesn't look like many houses in England. Probably suburban America? Lots of land around the house, easy to hide a body in some woodland. Looks slightly run down and very secluded. It's also quite a large house and probably cost quite a bit of money so perhaps her husband is quite wealthy and perhaps he had a good job. A banker or manager of

some sort. I have already decided she kills him via a gun because of the climax of the effect, but where would a lady in the middle of nowhere get a gun? Perhaps the gun is actually her husband's but is a form of decoration. Perhaps it is hung on the wall in the living room next to a taxidermy deer head.

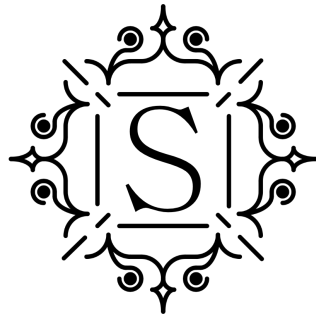
There is so much context inside these images which help me to create a story. I can start piecing all of these little nuggets of information together to create a complete back story of the couple of how it came to be. It also makes the story real for me which is so incredibly important. If you believe what you are saying, others will also believe it more. Think about those who are passionate about their work or beliefs and have spoken to you about them. They are so enthused in the subject and their belief in it is so strong, it engages you and opens you up to their beliefs and ideas.

When scripting for your close up performances, make it as believable as possible. The reason I place things like voodoo and hypnotism into my scripts is, people aren't sure if it is real or not. There is ambiguity in the belief of such ideas. That means, once they have experienced the effect, they have something to latch onto. Is it some kind of voodoo? Is he messing with my mind? Did he hypnotise me? It creates a completely new context that the spectator continues long after you are gone.



"EVERYTHING IN LIFE IS WRITABLE
ABOUT IF YOU HAVE THE OUTGOING
GUTS TO DO IT, AND THE
IMAGINATION TO IMPROVISE. THE
WORST ENEMY TO CREATIVITY IS
SELF-DOUBT."

- SYLVIA PLATH



CREATIVITY - DAY FIVE

When scripting for a show, my process is slightly different. I start with a theme. In my stand up show, the theme is 'Games'. The idea is that, I am going to play some games with the audience and they will play some with me. But I am going to tip the odds in my favour using psychological techniques and win. With that theme, I start planning what effects I would like to put in. So I need effects I can adapt and turn into something that would fit my theme.

Hopefully by now, you will have downloaded the 'Sign Up Bonus'. In there are three effects written for my show and whilst you might not have noticed right away, they all fall under the theme of games. Three cube monte effect is obviously three card monte. The note in envelope effect is the game 'Would you rather'. The final effect which uses 'Digital Force Bag' is my version of 'Clue' (Cluedo in Europe!) All of them literally created for the

show. Now whilst I have not scripted each effect yet, I have already given myself a huge head start. In fact, the opening video of the show is scripted to introduce the first effect.

"Your brain. Arguably the most important organ in the human body. It controls and coordinates actions and reactions, allows us to think and feel, and enables us to have memories and feelings—all the things that make us human. There is a misconception that we only use 10% of our brain when in actuality, we use all of it. We are even using more than 10% when we sleep.

Scientists believe the average brain generates up to 50,000 thoughts per day. This means, you are often processing more than one thing at any one time.

Advertisers, politicians, criminals and sales people have perfected the ability to influence our decisions and control our emotions for years. Knowing how our minds work means that whilst we focus on one thing, they can subtly influence another.

For example, an aftershave or perfume advert. The company shows you images of an attractive person releasing dopamine, serotonin and oxytocin into our bodies, making us feel amazing. And then, when we are pumped with all of these chemicals, they show us their product which makes our brains associate the product with those positive feelings. This, in the study of Neo Linguistics is known as anchoring.

But, these facts can be used to influence, control ad manipulate your thoughts and your actions. One of the earliest examples of this dates back to the early 15th century.

Three card monte is a game used by conmen around the world and uses subtle psychological behavioural manipulation to con you out of your money. In essence, three cards would be placed face down, two black cards and one red queen. Your job is to follow the queen during a mixing process. The first time, someone would place a bet and win, which makes the game seem fair. In actuality, this bet is placed by another conman who is in on the con. But, it convinces us everything is fair. Then when we place our bet, sleight of hand is used to con people and of course they loose their money. If you ever see this game being played, never, ever place a bet..."

Notice, this script has some actual relative facts. Something to make it more believable. Also, it introduces the idea that Three Card Monte is a con and they should never play it. The first thing I saw when I walk onto the stage is,

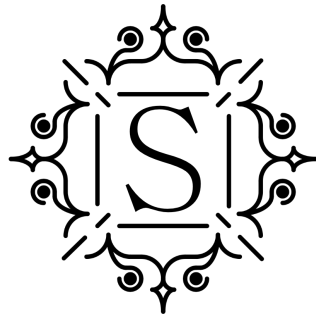
"So, I thought we should have a game of Three Card Monte but a version in which the odds truly are in your favour!"

The video that plays also has a few things in it that might catch the audience off guard. From this point on, the rest of the routine is scripted to explain what is going on. If you refer back to the effect in the 'Sign Up Bonus', you'll see how the script continues.

So whilst both approaches begin slightly different, we still end up with the same outcome.

"DON'T TELL ME THE MOON IS
SHINING; SHOW ME THE GLINT OF
LIGHT ON BROKEN GLASS."

- ANTON CHEKHOV



CREATIVITY – DAY SIX

Sometimes, scripts write themselves. Some of the effects I perform, have lines put in that were written either accidentally or by someone else. For example, I perform 'Inject bye Greg Rostami' in my close up gigs. I ask two spectators for their phones and quite often, (usually men) would say something like,

"Wait a minute, I better clear my internet history!"

It always seemed to get a laugh. So now, I make sure I make the joke before anyone else does. It always gets a laugh and came for free! Another line, when performing 'Omni Deck', I placed the cards in a man's hand and his girlfriend said his hands looked massive. So, a throw away line I now put in is:

"Cover the deck with your tiny (or massive) hand"

It is a little line that doesn't always get a laugh but most of the time does. Once again, it came free from a spectator. Listen to what people say and do, what others laugh at, use.

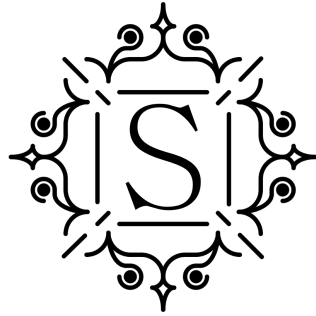
I think it is really important to put little lines in your scripts that either hit or don't. I don't mean they either make someone laugh or make them angry. I mean, they either get it or don't. If they get it, you get a laugh and if they don't, then you are no worse off than before.

Sometimes, just performing an effect over and over creates a script. Lots of effects adapt and change according to circumstances and things going wrong. Then I can change the script to accommodate those issues.

Just listen, digest, adapt and take that piece of script for free.

"EVERYBODY WALKS PAST A
THOUSAND STORY IDEAS EVERY DAY.
THE GOOD WRITERS ARE THE ONES
WHO SEE FIVE OR SIX OF THEM.
MOST PEOPLE DON'T SEE ANY"

- ORSON SCOTT



CREATIVITY - DAY SEVEN

I hope you have taken a lot out of this course and it has got your writing mind reeling. If you ever need help with scripts, editing scripts or coming up with ideas for scripts, remember you have the Vip Forum to help each other out. I am also happy to help where I can!

If you have any other questions or ideas, also post in the forum and let me know how I can help!

I will see you in the live stream tonight and we can continue the conversation!

CREATING
MAGIC

PROP
BUILDING

Stage

MARKETING

www.vipstudy.co.uk

PROP
BUILDING

IES
HEM - KEEP THEM

MARKETING

Writing
Scripts