

THE PROFESSIONAL ILLUSIONIST MASTER COURSE



LESSON 6 – DOWNLOAD

As a bonus with this lesson, here is an original audience participation “filler” routine that you can use in your show.

This routine was first described in my Mar 1998 “One Man Parade” published in the IBM Linking Ring magazine for which I won two Linking Ring awards. Subsequently, it reappeared in my 2012 illusion/ mentalism book, “Illusionism”.

WEDLOCK

A Light-hearted Comedy Interactive Mentalism Routine

EFFECT

A spectator is shackled, at the wrists, to the mentalist with a length of chain and a combination lock. The mentalist shows four placards, each with a four-digit number on it. The mentalist explains that only one placard contains the correct combination to the lock. The spectator is allowed to choose any three placards but must leave one for the mentalist. If the spectator fails to open the lock, he will have to be attached to the mentalist for life!

Strangely enough, none of the spectator’s numbers open the lock. Being the nice guy that he is, the mentalist ‘volunteers’ his number that does open the lock and sets both parties free.

INTRODUCTION

This is another version of Annemann’s “Seven Keys of Baldpate” but not as involved as the “Paycheck” routine described earlier. It also does not use any gimmicked locks. The routine plays big as it involves a spectator on stage and has great comedy potential due to the premise.

While you can use keys and a lock, I chose to use the combination lock and “combination” placards, for greater visibility on stage.

METHOD & REQUIREMENTS

Lock & Chain

You will need a four-digit combination lock. Choose a press-button style lock, as it is easier to handle on stage instead of a dial or cylindrical lock.

A length of chain about 2.5ft long is needed. It should look strong, yet not be too heavy. Ideally, look for a split ring from a hardware or marine supplies shop that you can attach to the last link of one end of the chain. This will make it easier during performance to loop the chain around the spectator's hand and then around yours before threading the lock through the chain and locking it.

Wallet

You will also need a Himber wallet, the larger the better. This will be used as the switching device to switch out the correct "combination" placard.

"Combination Placards"

The "combination" placards can be made from white art card with numbers written on it with a thick marker. If you intend to perform this regularly, I suggest the following alternative. Cut out pieces of white 1mm PVC sheet, as large as possible, that can fit into your Himber wallet. PVC sheet is available at good craft stores or signage companies. You will need five placards in all.

The numbers are vinyl stickers available from a signage company. Stick these onto the PVC sheet cards. The result is a long-lasting set of placards that is also waterproof. Be sure to keep it out of the sun so that the white PVC does not turn yellow.

One of the placards has the correct four-digit combination, which opens the lock. The others have any random four-digit numbers, which are different from each other. If you have one of the four-digit numbers be 8619, you can have an additional comedy situation during the show. If you choose a non sans serif font (i.e. no "ends" at the tips of the letters of the font", 8619 is an ambigram as it also reads 6198 upside down. If the spectator chooses this placard, you can have him try one number first and then point out that he made a mistake and that the number is upside down. Naturally, neither number opens the lock.

SET UP

- Place the placard with the correct combination number face down into one side of the Himber wallet. Put the other four placards into the other side of the wallet. Place the Himber in your inside jacket pocket.
- Place the lock, unlocked and the chain in your jacket pocket.

PERFORMANCE

"For my next effect, I require the aid of an able-bodied gentleman. You sir, could you please come up and help."

Look for a suitable man from the audience and invite him onto stage. Go through the usual formalities and find out his name. We will assume he is standing on your left.

“Bob, are you by any chance a professional escape artist or locksmith? No? Perfect. I have here a length of chain. Bob, could you please examine it and make sure it is strong.”

Display the chain and hand it to the spectator for examination.

“Bob, today is your chance to prove yourself. We are going to make you an escape artist today. You know, magicians and escape artists all over the world have risked their lives and limbs performing escapes. Often they hang upside down from a burning rope or are locked into a steel trunk that is submerged under water. But today, you will face the greatest challenge of all that even Houdini would not have attempted as the consequences are too drastic. You will be locked up in chains and if you do not escape...”

Proceed to take one end of the chain and wrap it around Bob’s right hand.

*“... you will have to spend the rest of your life with **me!**”*

Loop the chain around the spectator’s right wrist. If you had the split ring at the end as suggested, this will be fairly easy. Start to wrap the chain around your left wrist as well as the spectator’s right wrist. (Be sure he is not wearing an expensive watch or bracelet that can be scratched by the chain.) This will get a tremendous laugh. Continue wrapping the chain, not too tightly, until you almost reach the end of the chain. Take out the lock from your pocket but cover the number pad with your hand and say:

“Bob, I am going to lock us up with a solid steel combination lock. Please close your eyes so that you do not see the secret combination otherwise this escape will be easier than it is supposed to be.”

Thread the lock through the ends of the chain. Lock it and depress all the number buttons. Take out the Himber wallet, open the side that holds the four decoy placards and say:

“Okay, Bob you may now open your eyes. “Over here I have four cards and four cards only. One of these numbers open the lock, three of them don’t. Your job is to guess which one opens the lock. If you get it right, you go free. If not, you spend the rest of your life... with me.

But, I understand that you are not a professional so I’ll give you an advantage. You get to choose three out of the four cards. The card that you don’t want will be left with me. So, you have a 75% chance of escaping... very good odds! Bob, you are an escape artist for today. But I am a mentalist and my job is to psychologically influence you so you do not pick the right card. Are you ready? Great!”

Fan the four ‘decoy’ cards face down and allow the spectator to select three of the four cards. Take the card that he did not select and place it face down into the now empty side of the Himber wallet. Close it, but do not switch sides yet.

“Which number will you like to try first? This one? 2456. Try to open the lock.”

Allow the spectator to try the first number. After he fails to open the lock, allow him to try the next one.

Remember, if the ambigram number card is one of the three chosen cards, you can do the joke outlined earlier. Keep the cards into your pocket as they are “used”.

“Bob, tell you what, I am a nice guy. Would you like to switch your last number with me?”

Open the Himber wallet, showing the (decoy) face down card. Let him choose to exchange it for his if he wants. Whatever the case, close the Himber wallet and switch sides. Allow him to try the lock one last time to which he naturally fails.

“Well Bob, it looks like you have failed, you will have to spend the rest of your life with me now. Do you have a wife or anybody to say goodbye to? If so, do it quick, because I’m a busy man.”

Pause for a long while with an expectant look on your face. Wait till the spectator feels uneasy. Break the tension by saying:

“Well, actually Bob, I don’t want to spend the rest of my life with you. I’m a mentalist but I’m not mental. So, let’s do both of ourselves a favour and unshackle ourselves.”

Open the Himber wallet and take out the placard with the correct combination and give it to the spectator to open the lock. After you are both released, thank your spectator, making sure he gets a nice round of applause from the audience and take your bow.