

Ron Bauer Private Studies DON ALAN'S STANLEY

(COMPLETE VERSION)
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TIME LINE...

Working as a bartender at Schulien's, doing close-up magic between drink orders and cleaning glasses, Don Alan had it hard trying to charm neighborhood habitués accustomed to Matt's style... "I tried for almost two years to overcome the Schulien Card on Ceiling, and it took Stanley, I mean STAWSH, to do it!" [Stanley appears on an episode of Don Alan's "Magic Ranch" TV series.]

"A Monkey Changed His Life"

In the late fifties, Don Alan was hired as one of the bartenders at Schulien's. He eagerly took the job hoping it would be both a vehicle for establishing himself as a Chicago close-up magician, and an opportunity to be allied with one of the legends in the business, Matt Schulien. Instead, he endured months of frustration and disappointment.

For over a year, his plans were mired by the stifling spirit of old Matt Schulien. Retired, and rarely dropping by, Matt had entrusted the operation of the restaurant to his sons, who were strong on tradition. Though they hired Don to be a bartender, they were pretty much unimpressed with his "kid show" approach to magic. Add to that the customers who invariably asked, "Hey, kid. Can you do the card on the ceiling? How about them knives that change color?" Everyone seemed to want only the Schulien approach.

To break out, Don tried a variety of "sneaky" strategies. He dressed up his props, designing a variety of diminutive "celebrity" skulls for presenting Skullo-cation, and introducing coin tricks from little purses. He also began favoring the production of oversized and heavy loads. Despite these and other efforts, though, it was



becoming clear that he would never win over the Schulien loyalists. Then an indirect purchase changed everything.

Ken Allen, the magic dealer, had dominated an IBM convention with his presentation of Abbott's "Monkey in Basket" (derived from Star Magic's award winning monkey puppet, Jo Jo). Don was intrigued, and bought one, but mostly for the basket. He used it to carry his props to the tables. And, being open at the top, it provided easy access to the ever-larger loads he intended to ring in while working seated. Occasionally, just for fun, he'd do a card trick with the monkey puppet, which he called Stanley. He'd picked up puppetry working in children's television, and it seemed a natural for amusing family diners. As a bonus, women instantly fell in love with the little rascal. Then, one night, his long-awaited and well-earned reward for perseverance arrived in the form of a group asking, "Where's Stawsh?" Stawsh?

The neighborhood in which Schulien's German family restaurant was located had, after the Second World War, gradually become mostly Polish working class. Stawsh was the familiar way of addressing anyone named "Stanley."

Finally, thanks to a monkey, Don Alan was in demand!

Though the elements of a Don Alan presentation appear to remain the same for every performance, he always varied his remarks and asides, and sometimes the handling and props, to adjust to his audience. For example, as you go through the Stanley script, you'll see references to "union" and other "working man" experiences. On a Halloween television appearance, Don performed "Stanley" using a pocket handkerchief disguised as a ghost. (Frances Ireland Marshall, Don's most important supporter, marketed this trick as "Happy Hank, a Slightly Impromptu Ghost.")

PREMISE: A monkey puppet, who "lives" in a basket, can perform magic, such as card tricks. [NOTE: Don didn't pretend the monkey was real, which he believes helped him with his attitude of "paternal patronizing" toward it.]

PRIMARY PLOT POINTS:

- Performer shows a basket.
- He coaxes a monkey puppet to come up from it to meet the audience.
- Monkey puppet shuffles cards, and inspects them.
- Spectator selects and replaces card.
- Monkey puppet searches for and, after a bit of confusion and difficulty, locates the selected card.
- Monkey puppet takes bow, and goes back into basket.

PROPS & PREP:

- Abbott's Monkey in Basket Trick
- Monkey puppet is in basket.
- Deck of cards in basket.

Inside front edge of basket is a "union button" hanging on a string so puppet can flip it into view during presentation.

[NOTE: Eventually, Don used a folding top hat mechanism covered with a leopard pattern fabric instead of the basket. Refer to the publicity still.]

PROCEDURE:

BRING OUT BASKET.

I have a friend I'd like you to meet...

(SPEAKING INTO THE BASKET.) Come up here, and say hello to everyone.
(TO AUDIENCE.) He's a little bashful. (INTO BASKET.) Come out! It's okay, they're friendly...

STANLEY PEEKS OVER THE EDGE, THEN DUCKS BACK INSIDE.

(SPEAKING INTO THE BASKET.) They're nice. They came to see you...

STANLEY TENTATIVELY CRAWLS INTO VIEW.

(TO STANLEY.) C'mon... all the way up...

STANLEY CLIMBS UP AND LOOKS AROUND.

There he is. (TO STANLEY.) Say "hello" to everyone...

HE WAVES.

This is Stanley. (Sometimes called "Stawsh.") (TO STANLEY.) Stanley, would you like to do a trick for them?

STANLEY WHISPERS IN YOUR EAR.

He says, "*Like to?! I have to; it's your hand!*"

STANLEY DUCKS INTO BASKET, THEN BRINGS UP THE DECK OF CARDS.

(TO STANLEY.) So, you're going to do a little card trick! Are you a member of the Union? In good standing? Show 'em the button...

STANLEY NODS, AND OTHERWISE REACTS TO THE VARIOUS REMARKS, AND FLIPS A "LOCAL 719" BUTTON OUT OF THE BASKET. IT HANGS OVER THE FRONT EDGE. [NOTE: YOU CAN LEAVE IT THERE, OR FLIP IT BACK INSIDE THE BASKET.]

They come around to check, you know. You have to have that, otherwise you're in trouble. (TO STANLEY.) Stanley, first make sure all the cards are in the pack...

STANLEY TAKES THE CARDS FROM THE BOX, AND FANS THEM IN YOUR LEFT HAND IN LITTLE GROUPS, BACKS TO AUDIENCE.

(TO STANLEY.) Give them a quick check.

WITH HIS FACE PRACTICALLY AGAINST THE FAN OF CARDS, STANLEY SCANS THEM, FRENETICALLY MOVING HIS HEAD BACK AND FORTH ACROSS THE FAN.

(TO STANLEY.) All right! ALL RIGHT. Now, give them a little shuffle.

STANLEY OVERHAND SHUFFLES THE DECK, FACES OUTWARD, INTO YOUR LEFT HAND. (NOTE: REMEMBER THE FIRST CARD SHUFFLED INTO YOUR HAND. IT WILL BE THE FORCE CARD.)

He does a good job shuffling, having been a shuffler for many years...

AS YOU SAY THIS, STANLEY CONTINUES SHUFFLING EVEN THOUGH HE'S RUN OUT OF CARDS.

(ASIDE) Works like it's overtime... Now we'll have a card selected. As I run my thumb down the pack, would you say stop wherever you like?

WITH THE DECK IN DEALING POSITION, RIFFLE THE CARDS WITH YOUR LEFT THUMB UNTIL SPECTATOR SAYS STOP. (FOR AN ADDED LAUGH, TIME THE RIFFLE SO THE CARDS RUN OUT BEFORE THE SPECTATOR CAN SAY STOP. LOOK AT HIM, AND SLOWLY SAY, "You're supposed to stop me on one of the cards in the deck so Stanley can do his trick." THEN BEGIN THE RIFFLE AGAIN.)

Right there? Would you take out the card?

STOP ON COMMAND, THEN HAVE STANLEY TAKE AWAY THE UPPER SECTION OF DECK (APPLY PRESSURE TO THE TOP CARD OF THE DECK WITH YOUR LEFT FINGERS SO IT FALLS ONTO THE LOWER HALF. THIS IS THE STANDARD "SLIP CUT FORCE," BUT HAVING A PUPPET ON YOUR RIGHT HAND HELPS HIDE THE SECRET ACTION.) OFFER THE TOP CARD OF THE LOWER SECTION TO THE SPECTATOR.

Look at it, and remember it. Let everyone see it... but not Stanley.

MAKE SURE SEVERAL PEOPLE SEE THE CARD.

(TO STANLEY.) You cover your eyes.

STANLEY COVERS HIS EYES, BUT PEEKS.

Sometimes he peeks... That's because he's a PEKINESE monkey... (TO STANLEY.) Cover `em up there, will ya!?

RIFFLE THROUGH THE CARDS WITH YOUR LEFT THUMB.

Now, put the card back wherever you wish, sir... Do you shuffle cards? Good.

HAVE SPECTATOR RETURN CARD, THEN GIVE HIM THE DECK.

Would you take the cards in your hands? Now, you mix them up, but try to keep them in the same order. It's easier for me to find it that way! Just mix them up any way you like... (TO STANLEY.) And, you watch him like a hawk!

STANLEY LEANS WAY OUT OF BASKET, INTENTLY WATCHING THE SPECTATOR MIX THE CARDS.

Now, give me the pack.

RETRIEVE THE CARDS.

(TO STANLEY.) Stanley, make a fast check, and see if you can find the card... Spread them out so you can get a good look...

STANLEY FANS THE CARDS IN LITTLE BATCHES, BACKS TOWARD AUDIENCE, IN YOUR LEFT HAND. HE WORKS FAST WITH APPARENT LACK OF DEXTERITY OR CLEAR PLAN.

Sometimes it takes him three or four days... (TO STANLEY.) C'mon, find the card...

STANLEY PULLS UP TWO CARDS FROM THE ROUGH FAN, ONE OF WHICH IS THE SELECTION, LEAVING BOTH JOGGED.

(TO STANLEY.) Which one is the card?

STANLEY ALTERNATES LOOKING AT THE TWO OUT-JOGGED CARDS, OCCASIONALLY STOPPING TO STICK HIS HEAD BETWEEN THEM TO PEER AT THE AUDIENCE.

(TO STANLEY.) This isn't MULTIPLE CHOICE. Just *one* card...

HE PUSHES ONE DOWN INTO THE FAN, AND STUDIES THE OTHER.

(TO STANLEY.) Is *this* the card?

HE PUSHES THAT ONE DOWN, THEN PULLS THE FIRST ONE BACK UP.

(TO STANLEY.) *That* must be the card...

STANLEY WHISPERS IN PERFORMER'S EAR.

He says, "It *better* be. You're not going to make a PEOPLE out of me!" Your card was a red card... (CALLING THE OPPOSITE COLOR.) No?

AS YOU HOLD THE FAN WITH THE UP-JOGGED CHOSEN CARD, STANLEY STARTS SCRATCHING HIMSELF.

It wasn't a red card? (TO STANLEY.) I'd rather you wouldn't start doing that right now, if you don't mind, Stanley. (TO ONE OF THE SPECTATORS.) Don't laugh, you may have them tomorrow. (TO STANLEY.) That isn't your way of saying you LOUSED up the trick, is it?

STANLEY LOOKS ASHAMED.

What was your card, sir? (SPECTATOR NAMES CARD.)

STANLEY EXCITEDLY PLAYS "HIDE AND SEEK" AROUND FAN WITH AUDIENCE, PEEKING AROUND END, ETC. THEN HE GRABS THE UP-JOGGED CARD, AND TURNS IT AROUND. TAKE THE CARD FROM HIM, AND HOLD IT UP.

He found it! (APPLAUSE CUE)

AS STANLEY TAKES HIS BOWS, AND, LEANING OVER THE EDGE OF BASKET, NOTICES HIS TAIL. HE PEERS AT IT UNTIL YOU NOTICE WHAT HE'S DOING.

(TO STANLEY.) Oh, you found that, too.

PLACE THE CARDS ASIDE, TAKE THE TIP OF STANLEY'S TAIL WITH YOUR LEFT FINGERTIPS, AND HOLD IT IN FRONT OF HIM.

(TO STANLEY.) Do you know what this is?

STANLEY WHISPERS IN YOUR EAR.

He says he hates to admit it, but THIS is THE END! (APPLAUSE CUE.)

STANLEY CLAPS, BOWS TO APPLAUSE, AND DUCKS INTO BASKET.

MISC HANDLING NOTES FROM DON: "...a monkey never stops moving..." "I used to stuff a little pillow under his front... He's with child..." "I once had a UNION BUTTON printed: Local 106 Monkey Business." Sometimes Don would follow the finish with the Clarke "Senator" Crandall "Gwendolyn business" of openly pulling Stanley off his hand saying, "And he did it all without any help from me!"