

MOFO GOES HOME

"A bad idea does no harm until someone acts upon it."

—Teller

MOFO KNOWS
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CHANGE OF ADDRESS REQUESTED



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 AND MARK ALAN STAMATY • GRAPHICS AND DESIGN BY SEALBOY



MOFO KNOWS

ISSUE 10

Joel Fischman and Penn & Teller go way back. Back to 1987, in fact, when Joel first seduced Penn & Teller into performing in Atlantic City.

For the past nine months, Joel has been entertainment director at Bally's Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas. In August of last year, the guy who brought the Bolshoi Ballet to Bally's for Christmas and sold out their shows got the crazy idea that Penn & Teller could also be winners in Vegas.

What? Penn & Teller invade Signmond and LeRoy's veldt?

The lighted sign overlooking the Strip advertised PENN & TELLER in letters taller than Penn. They were given Frank Sinatra's dressing room and Dean Martin's head: that is, the showerhead in Penn's dressing room was defunct, so he was given the expensive German head that had been bought for Dean Martin. "They tell me that from now on they will always screw it on just for me," says Penn. "And I'm thrilled. I'm really thrilled."

This was the Big Leagues.

But Joel warned the boys not to expect too

much their first time at bat. They might be "too hip" for Vegas. The Celebrity Room at Bally's has 1,200 seats, and the newcomers were told they should be happy if they sold 500 tickets a night.

The first night they sold 700. The next night they sold 900. On Saturday, January 17, they filled the theater and turned money-flingers away at the door.

But, then, how could these stars of stage, screen, and champagne glass not have found their slot in Las Vegas?

"Y'all come back now, you hear," said Joel.

"Sure," said Penn & Teller. "How about Thursday, September 30, through Wednesday, October 6?"

"Great," said Joel. "And, maybe it's much too early in the game, but what are you doing New Year's Eve?"

Mark your calendars, and start calling (702) 739-4567 now for reservations if you want to drive the Bally's people crazy and convince Joel's bosses he's a genius.



Mark Alan Stamaty's WASHINGTONOON is here reprinted from The Village Voice. (Note last panel)

BACK IN STORES!

**PENN AND TELLER'S
HOW TO PLAY
WITH YOUR FOOD.**

Ask for it if you don't see it! Some Bookstore proprietors, wary of package destroyers and gimmick thieves, are keeping **HOW TO PLAY WITH YOUR FOOD** behind the counter with *SEX*.

THIS IS SHOW BIZ AND I'M IN IT*

Penn describes Las Vegas as "just a big prom for middle-aged people that are bad at math." But the city that gawks at the Girls of Glitter Gulch also turned their heads for Penn & Teller.

Every time Penn walked through any casino, he heard, "Hey, Penn, I guess they won't let you gamble here, huh?" But he never heard the comment he dreams of: "Hey, Penn, I guess you know too much about probability to gamble, huh?" Penn asks, "If you ever see the big guy in Vegas, make his dream come true."

In the airport terminal, where arriviers and departers are supplied with rows of slot machines, one businessman thumped the other on the sleeve and gestured toward Teller focusing his camera. The thumper whispered to his companion, "Look. That's Teller. What's he taking a picture of?" The companion pointed with his head. "What else? Himself."

High overhead was an enormous color photo of Penn & Teller, paid for by Bally's.

The camera shutter clicked.

"For the folks," explained Teller, and he lowered his camera and strode away.

**Taken from the lyrics of the someday to be released Captain Howdy tune, "Dino's Head", by Penn Jillette and Kramer*

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THE PAY-OFF

For years Penn & Teller have dreamed of being paid in cash for one of their gigs: they wanted to be handed bundles of bucks in an attache case. While performing at Bally's in Las Vegas, they mentioned their dream to Joel Fischman.

Three nights later, following their January 18 performance, Joel made his usual visit backstage. Handcuffed to his wrist was an attache case. It was filled with cash from their sold-out Saturday night show.

P&T tipped Joel \$40 and kept the rest.

But they immediately began to fret about having that much cash lying around. Joel's joke had been a dream come true, but what were they to do with the money now?

They had photos taken of themselves with the case filled with cash, and then they dumped it on Krasher. Or, rather, they entrusted it to him, and he put it in a laundry bag and carried it in his carry-on luggage back to the Penn & Teller bank account in New York.

Or so he says.

A REVUE OF PHENOMENAL SCOPE*

Don Arden's *Jubilee* stage show at Bally's in Vegas has everything, including the sinking of the *Titanic*. On January 19, it also had Penn & Teller.

For years the boys have had a dream of staging in a theater a mammoth show that would star themselves and feature the eighteen-wheeler-truck-over-Teller bit seen in their 1990 NBC television special. Joel Fischman invited them to come backstage during a performance of *Jubilee* to see what Bally's Ziegfeld Theatre has to offer.

They crowded backstage, trying to stay out of the way of the colossal scenery, props, and showgirls that go into the staging of, among other things, Samson bringing the house down. Turntables turned, drops dropped, showgirls and showboys showed almost everything they've got, and Penn & Teller dodged.

An attractive showgirl who refused to believe that P&T strip naked in their own show questioned the fairness of the boys being fully clad while the cast of *Jubilee* ran around almost naked.

"You're right," said the boys.

The next gaggle of showgirls who hurried offstage were greeted in the wings by Penn & Teller wearing only their underwear (briefs for Teller, boxers for Penn) and feathered and bespangled showgirls' hats.

"Hello," said Penn & Teller.

The showgirls shrieked and laughed, and, of course, requested autographs.

**Source: Today in Las Vegas*

MOFO SEES:

**FRI. MARCH 19: UNITED STATES
NAVAL ACADEMY
ALUMNI HALL,
ANNAPOLIS MD
7:00PM & 10:00PM**

**THU. SEPT. 30-WED. OCT. 6:
BALLY'S CELEBRITY
SHOWROOM
LAS VEGAS, NV
9:00P.M.**

MOFO KNOWS BEST

In the "Ask TV Guide" column for January 23, 1993, N. D. of Cocoa Beach, Florida, asked if "those weird magician-con men, Penn & Teller," were too weird to have their own series. *TV Guide* reported that Penn & Teller "are developing a pilot for an ABC detective series." But by the time this information was published, ABC had already decided against going any further with the pilot and the series. So the boys turned their attention to another of their irons-in-the-fire and flew to London, where they started work on a "all-hell-may-break-loose" television series for England's Channel 4, to be filmed in May and June and broadcast in the United Kingdom beginning next fall.



THAT'S OUR SON

by Teller

Two electric company men came to restore the power in my parents' home.

The house was cold from a lack of heat. Down the stairs came my mother bundled up in slacks and several flannel shirts. She looked, as she said, like a rag-picker.

One of the workmen, the less friendly and more reserved of the two, was staring at all the Penn & Tellerana in the living room, the unofficial but undeni-

able Penn & Teller archives.

My mother asked: "Do you like Penn & Teller?"

"Oh, yes," said the workman. "They're so funny. They're *so* funny."

"That one," she said, pointing, "is our son."

The workman looked at my mother. "No." He shook his head. There was no doubt in his mind.

"Yes," said my mother. "That's our son."

"No."

"No, it's true," my mother replied, with quiet, maternal certainty.

"Really?"
"Yes."

The workman looked at the picture, and back at the old lady layered in flannel. "It's a small world, isn't it?" he said.

Two or three times before the workman left, my mother noticed him looking at the Penn & Teller posters, and repeating to himself, "It's a small world, isn't it?"

TO: Chuck Jones, animator
FR: Vinnie

Dear Mr. Jones,

On January 19, 1992, Penn & Teller finished up their "Rot in Hell" run off-Broadway. For me this was good news and bad news.

Good, in that I really felt I had learned all I was going to learn from the boys. I mean I'm grateful and all. If not for them, I'd be a l'orange. But they're not very helpful role models for a young comedian. Their style is too gimmicky. One yells. The other smirks. They bleed a little. (Well, okay, they now bleed a lot.)

The bad news is that I'm out of work — still. But that's good news for any really on-the-ball comedy director looking for new star-material. Face it, those acting school kids are all alike. Internalize, internalize, internalize! Fine for drama, but if you're going to do comedy, you've got to have the right physical instincts — and I don't mean flying south in October.

Now, Chuck, you've seen me reduce an audience to tears of mirth with just a brief paddle of the old webbed feet. You know I'm naturally funny. But what you may not realize is that I'm not content to ride on my gift — I'm eager to learn. And, Mr. Jones, you're the one I want to learn from.

I'm willing to pay my dues. I'd be happy to start as a go-fer or coffee-dog. I just want to work with you, the man who changed the image of my people from bumbling buffoons to sassy spitfires. Your films are a watershed for waterfowl. Salary? Don't sweat it. I'll be happy to start at scale. And even when I work my way up to the big bucks, you'll still be saving money with me: as you know, I do my own stunts.

Please contact me c/o my former employers and change the life of a fledgling star.

Your Soon-To-Be Protégé,

Vinnie

a.k.a., "The Legendary Invulnerable Peking Duck"

(This letter was actually sent to Mr. Jones in response to his gracious letter to Penn & Teller.)

KRESKIN AS A KID

by Penn

In 1966, when I was 11, I saw Kreskin on a talk show pimping a game based on the "science" of extrasensory perception. He did some card-trick "experiments," and I was astounded (hey, I was 11). This appearance probably included a half-assed disclaimer, his usual letter-not-the-spirit "truth" that kinda says it's not really extrasensory, but I didn't know he was doing tricks. He deliberately misled me.

I cringe at the memory of begging my parents to buy me the overpriced "Advanced Fine Addition" of "Kreskin ESP." For their hard-earned money, I got a pendulum (with cards marked "Finance," "Travel," "Career," and "Love"—This is science?), a board, some ESP cards, and a pamphlet—all junk. The pendulum moved (this has been covered in SI) and the other stuff just didn't work. My parents sat with me many evenings and we tried to get some results. We were wasting our time.

After several weeks of disappointing "experiments," I stumbled across a book on "mentalism" (I think it was by Dunninger) and realized Kreskin had duped me. I felt humiliated and betrayed. It wasn't until I was 18 that Teller, James Randi, and Martin Gardner restored my love of science. Since then, a good part of my career has been dedicated to making sure others are not bilked by the likes of Kreskin.

Don't say that Kreskin brought me to skepticism. There are others who deserve that credit. Kreskin just stole money from my parents, and time and passion from me. I owe him no thanks.

I don't care if Kreskin was invited to speak at the CSICOP meetings as an "expert" on hypnotism or because of his "charisma." If Kreskin does not answer for his "mentalism," I will find another outlet



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A FAVORITE OF OURS FOR YEARS

Penn & Teller fan Bill Shoemaker reports from Charleston, South Carolina:

"All I did was Xerox your recipe, and send it in. The food editor evidently didn't bother to try it out."

Play with Your Food, was published Sunday, December 13, 1992, in a recipe column of the Charleston *Post and Courier*, alongside recipes for Marinated Shrimp, Turtle Cheesecake, and Butter Rolls.

If you haven't made your own Swedish Lemon Angels, you

YEAH, I ATE HALF A ROACH, YOU GOT A PROBLEM WITH THAT?

by Penn

Teller and I know a lot about cockroaches. To dump the 1,000 cockroaches on David Letterman's desk we had to become very familiar. We stuck our hands in them, we hid them in our clothing, we cleaned them up. We got used to many varieties from all over the world. We became The Kings of Cockroaches. We built a big part of our career on their hard, shiny, little backs.

I felt I had gotten over any disgust that I could feel towards the little buggers. I was wrong. I was in a cheesy Japanese restaurant downstairs from our office in Times Square. I had noodles and a fried chicken thang. I picked up the chicken with my fingers,

felt the movement I looked in Robbie's face and he changed expression. It wasn't much, but it was enough to realize something truly disgusting was going on. I reached up and pulled from my mouth a half deep fat-fried wiggling cockroach. Logic tells me it must have crawled into the chicken after it was cooked - but every fiber of my soul tells me that sucker had lived through the fry-o-later. I threw it down and with batter still attached to its body, and four of its legs crippled, it crawled off under a table.

To my credit, I was able to eat two more mouthfuls (Robbie, of course, didn't forfeit

Penn & Teller's recipe for *Swedish Lemon Angels*, as presented on page 100 of *How to*

should immediately. "These are a little time-consuming," Bill told the *Post and Courier*, "but have been a favorite of ours for years."

bit into it, and felt something moving on my lip. My lunch date was Robbie Libbon, the Director of Covert Activities for Penn & Teller, and perhaps the strongest-stomached-Mother-Hubbard-who-ever-ate-scrapple. As I

his membership to The Clean Plate Club).

To the restaurants credit, they only charged us for Robbie's meal. I still eat there.



for my skepticism.

I made a promise to an 11-year-old boy.

GUEST APPEARANCES

Penn & Teller fan Diane Martin reports that the mid-December, 1992, issue of *Asimov's Science Fiction* included a short story, "Render unto Caesar," by Maureen F. McHugh:

"What's your name?" she asks.

"Teller," I say.

"That's your first name?" she asks.

I don't usually like to give my name on the road. It's hard to explain, but I like to keep that separate. "Just Teller is fine," I say.



MY FAVORITE MEAL

Well, my first thought, really, is "human flesh". It's mostly out of curiosity, and not because I see any Brechtian justice in masticating my fellow man. I've always heard that human flesh is unappetizing, but I question the sourness—after all, if we DID taste good, it wouldn't be in the best interest of our species to advertise, now would it? Anyway, I'd like an antipasto sort of platter featuring marinated tidbits of all ages, races, and sexes (labeled, so I know whom I'm snacking on). Please include a salt-cured slice of Arnold Schwarzenegger's quadriceps (served on cold melon wedges), thinly-sliced tongue of Sam Nunn with capers and cream cheese, and a pate of day-old cerebral cortex of Shirley MacLaine (hey, I wouldn't want to overwhelm that Melba Toast)—TELLER

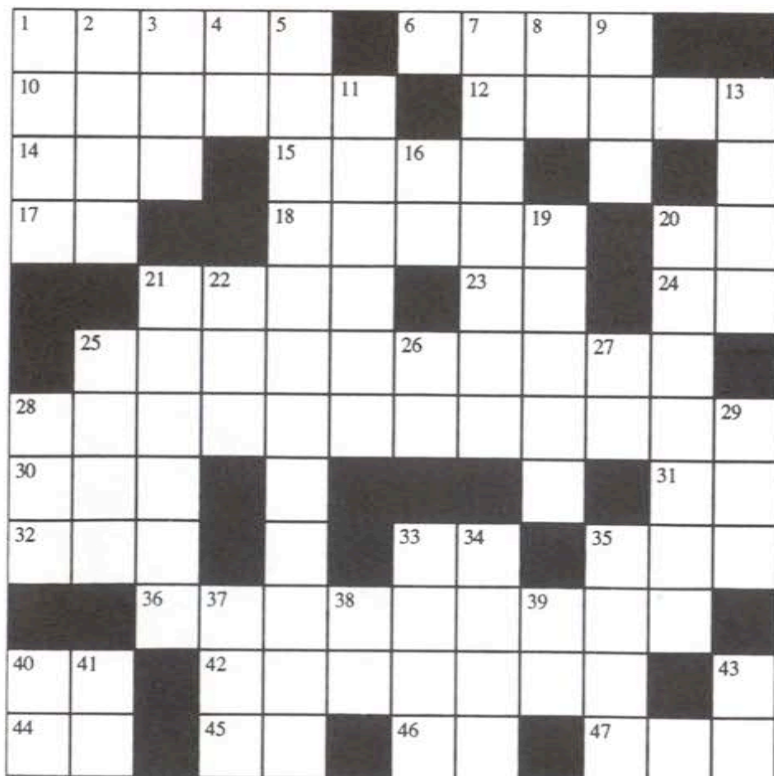


would like my Mom's orange Jell-o with grated carrots and crushed pineapple inside and Miracle Whip on top for starters.

For the main course, I would like Old El Paso Taco shells with just spicy beef and really strong cheddar cheese inside covered with onions and the hottest hot sauce in the world on top (no tomatoes, I hate tomatoes—they owe me money).

For desert I would like brownie batter, the kind with the Hershey's can inside, but just the uncooked batter and a quart of cold milk.

For an after dinner snack I would like lobster and mixed nuts all served in the shell. Lobster and nuts are served with weapons, the nut/shell cracker and the little pickers. I would eat slowly and then use the nutcracker and pickers to take as many people with me as possible... if I could move after the brownie batter.—Penn



PENN & TELLER'S CROSS WORDS

by James Randi

ACROSS

- 1 She was forever.
- 6 How Mofo imitates, and his friends.
- 10 Beard.
- 12 Suckers.
- 14 Frequently
- 15 Fracas.
- 17 Leave!
- 18 An unpopular bug on the Letterman show.
- 20 Fought by secret.
- 21 Ireland.
- 23 Half a laugh.
- 24 Where taxes go.
- 25 The backward yawn-inducing jokes.
- 28 P&T's favorite card.
- 30 The Front half of a vacuum cleaner.
- 31 That city of angels and angels.
- 32 A kind of turn made by a sheep.
- 33 Abbr. American Airline.
- 35 12 across are usually ___ to slaughter.

DOWN

- 36 So did you see P&T ___? (3+6)
- 40 Urine.
- 42 4th word of 2 down.
- 44 Nine.
- 45 Brief Mofo comment.
- 45 A moon of Jupiter.
- 47 Pop.
- 19 Almost a dead blonde movie vamp and also, almost a harlot.
- 20 When P lost track of the car, T ___ in the tank.
- 21 Backward king of England, 1776.
- 22 Your auditory sensor, reversed.
- 25 This is the business they're in.
- 26 Nathaniel Farkus, a homeless person in Boston. (init)
- 27 The last 2/3 of your very, very brief debt declaration.
- 28 2nd word of 2 down.
- 29 Unhappy.
- 33 Remark heard from the soldier going over a cliff in Gunga Din.
- 34 Maurice Chevalier greets you.
- 35 What you should get out, in a race.
- 37 A hen fruit.
- 38 The one substance that should weaken the Man of Steel. (abbr)
- 39 Last half of place where P&T rot.
- 40 3.141592...
- 41 Where soldiers buy groceries.
- 43 You take this out to announce a sale.