

Mofu Knows
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Change of Address Requested

That's the first sign of a successful show: have your guests be better than you. —Penn.



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MOFO GOES HOME

THE GRASSHOPPER SHOW

One night during the Juggling bit at Bally's in Las Vegas, a grasshopper flew onto the stage. It sat on my shoulder for a long time. I departed from my prepared text and did 5 to 10 minutes of grasshopper material. It's nice to go off book once in a while. I had to skip a lot of the regular parts of the Juggling to make room for the grasshopper. The audience was right with me and I was having a blast. Teller came on stage to help me chase the grasshopper.



After the show, a man in a beard came up, and I realized it was Hovey Burgess. He's the man who, in the late '60s, turned juggling from an arcane circus skill to a college/hippy hobby. I felt like he would have liked to see the real Juggling, but, tough, he saw the grasshopper show. —Penn.

Mrs. O'Leary's Legacy

The fire marshal in Chicago must hate Teller and me. He wouldn't let us have fire on stage during our performances at the Shubert Theater this past June. For the first time in my career, I wasn't allowed to use the torches in the Broken Bottle Juggling bit.

At the top of the bit in Chicago, the stage lights barely came up, I was in the dark with a tiny bit of light, and I said, "Welcome to the Chicago fire marshal's Theater of Imagination." I started juggling the unlit torches, and there was a long pause and then a big laugh. I described the sound of the fire and the look of the fire playing across my face and around the room. I then did the rest of the bit with a few little references here and there. It worked. It played. It was funny. Fire juggling with no fire. Now, if I could just get rid of the juggling, I'd be getting somewhere. —Penn.

Rattle the Bars Rodney

We were shooting our Teller-to-Gorillabit for an episode of *Penn & Teller's Sin City Spectacular*. The bit as we envisioned it: Penn does the Girl-to-Gorilla rap about me. He hypnotizes me. Two of our Showfolk decked out as carny toughs drag me to an upright cage about the size of a large phone booth, and then chain my neck and wrists. Then they cover the cage. As Penn utters the incantation, "Gorillagorillagorilla...", the bars of the cage rattle. With the rattling as his cue, Penn throws back the cover, and you see inside the cage a gorilla. The beast bursts open the doors, and a person steps out wearing what are obviously a mask and gorilla gloves. It's just a cheap costume change. Penn shrugs it off, saying, "Hey, it's not working. Nobody's scared." Then Penn pulls off the gorilla's mask and inside is Rodney Dangerfield. I walk on from the wings.

Rodney didn't have time to rehearse. He said he'd show up, learn what he had to learn in twenty minutes, then do it and leave. Rodney is a beloved icon still imbued with that old-time "I'm a

funny guy" quality that makes him seem like a comedian even if what he's saying isn't a joke.

Wiley and I explained the bit to Rodney, but he really didn't get it. Then we walked him through the moves (he had to don the gorilla mask and hands and hide in a secret compartment, then switch places with me, rattle the cage bars to cue Penn to reveal him, and make his entrance). Rodney kept asking me what he should say, and I kept tossing the question back to him. He'd propose something like, "Maybe I should say, 'Hey, you got any bananas? How about a spare tire?'—ya know, gorillas swing around on those spare tires." Then he'd say, "That's good.... Then maybe I should say, 'Hey, gotta go. I have another job playing a kangaroo.' How's that?"

Well, this went on for a while, and he made his way through the moves without the gorilla mask. Then Penn and I said, "Let's do it."

The beginning went perfectly; spooky jungle music and creepy lighting. Penn intoned the story in perfectly ironic carny fashion; the Showfolk brought out the cage; I went limp from "hypnosis"; and

then they dragged me into the cage and closed the doors. They pulled into place the canvas cover.

Hidden, I escaped from my bonds, guided Rodney out of the secret compartment, hid in it myself, closed the door, and waited for Rodney to rattle the bars to cue Penn.

Nothing.

Penn was chanting, "Gorillagorillagorilla...."

The bars were not rattling.

I pushed the secret door open and I whispered, "Rattle the bars, Rodney, rattle the bars!"

Nothing.

Had he suffocated under the gorilla mask?

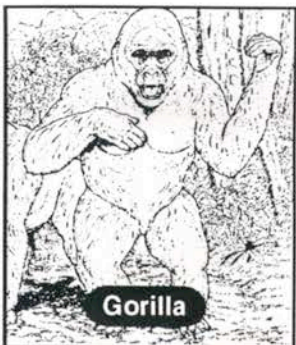
I now pushed the secret door open again and said loudly, "Rattle the bars, Rodney!"

Nothing.

I opened the door, poked him hard, and screamed as loud as I could, "Rattle the bars, Rodney, rattle the bars!!!"

He started to rattle the bars, made his entrance without uttering a word, and brought down the house.

I love the show business. —
Teller.



Like the above article? Well, you'll find more snappy articles as good or even better than that one in every issue of *Mofa Knows*!

That's because every article in every issue of *Mofa Knows* is pure Penn & Teller!

So, the next time you're entertained by an issue of *Mofa Knows*, you can be sure that Penn & Teller, T. Gene Hatcher, Glenn Alai, and Dan Maizner and his team at alphagraphics have been laboring like canines once again to make you exclaim, "My, that was a snappy article!"

*Exceptions include every article written by someone other than Penn & Teller.



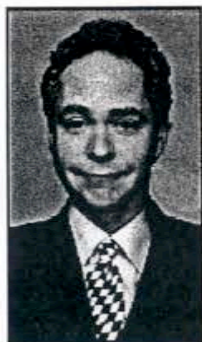
THE THIRTEENTH LABOR OF HERCULES



One of our guests on *Penn & Teller's Sin City Spectacular* is Kevin Sorbo, the Minnesotan who plays "Hercules" on TV.

The bit Penn and I devised was three little tricks wrapped together: After some introductory banter about the difference between Sorbo and his role as demigod, Penn and I would ask him to use his real-world strength to tear a pack of cards in half. He'd pick a card from one half of the pack, stick the card in his pocket, then look for its mate in the other half. He'd find it gone. "If it's not there," Penn would say, "it must

be in the mayonnaise jar." Then we'd hand him a plastic mayonnaise jar, which he'd struggle to (and fail to)



open. Penn would do some little jabs about his mother being able to open mayonnaise jars, then I'd take the jar, tap it twice with a knife, and open it easily. The other half of the card would be in the jar. Sorbo would get his fingers all mayonnaisy, and we'd have a finale.

Wiley came up with a gimmick for holding the mayonnaise jar lid on as long as it was turned counterclockwise and not jerked around too much. We realized that in the unlikely event that Sorbo turned the lid BOTH ways and happened to be holding it in a certain position, it might click open. But Wiley and I tested it on a bunch of people in our shop, and only two of us could open it—and we both knew it was gimmicked. So we decided to gamble.

We got everything set up on the casino floor at Bally's. Quite a nice scene with our Showfolk in spangles and boas behind us. Penn

and I rehearsed, and then got in wardrobe and makeup. Sorbo arrived. He's big—not as tall as Penn, but powerful in a Minnesota-Nordic sort of way.

Everything went perfectly until Sorbo started to take off the lid of the mayonnaise jar. My goodness, he was determined. I knew that something was unusual when I heard "psst" from the jar as he squeezed it so hard that mayonnaise-scented air squirted out. Then he twisted it; not just the lid, the whole jar. The sides buckled. Then he began to work the top back and forth and shake it. Click! I heard the gimmick slide aside. Voilà, he opened the jar! He reached inside and took out the card. He was amazed to find it matched the card he had picked.

Everybody applauded and the trick was over. I took Kevin aside and said, "Well, Kevin, that jar was gimmicked in our shop so that NOBODY could open it. You did!

Congratulations—the bit was great."

He was proud and a little embarrassed that he had screwed up our trick, and we reassured him that it was just great the way he did it.

On the tape, it's interesting to see the expressions on Penn's and my faces. As Kevin begins to twist the jar into a spiral, all pretense of performance vanishes from our expressions, and we're just staring, perplexed and a little horrified. Then he finishes up and we suddenly change gears and smile a lot and congratulate him, as though that's just the way it's supposed to go. Always good to have a several tricks combined, you know. If you try out your trick on mortals and happen to get a son of Zeus for a sucker, well, that leaves you with at least one gag undefeated by Olympus. —
Teller.

**Penn & Teller's First-Ever American TV Series,
Penn & Teller's Sin City Spectacular,
 Premieres on FX at 9:00 PM ET/PT on Monday, August 10!**

Read FX's official press release at www.sincity.com/tvshow/pressrelease.html

DOGS

We did some promos for *Penn & Teller's Sin City Spectacular*. We brought in Steven Banks to be a mime that we kill and we brought in Johnny Thompson to be a ventriloquist that we kill. But then Teller and I had to fight for the right to not show a dog okay at the end of a promo. We could kill Steven and we could kill Johnny, but the censors wouldn't let us pretend to kill a dog. Amazing. Teller and I hung tough, but, how silly is it to have to hang tough on that? It's fiction. And how many dogs does tax money kill each day?

Real dogs. Real death. What's wrong with these people? But, we won. —Penn.



MOFO SEES

Tuesday, October 6
 TOPEKA, KS
 Topeka Performing Arts Center
 8 p.m.

Thursday, October 8
 ROCHESTER, NY
 Eastman Theater
 8 p.m.

Friday, October 9
 NEWARK, NJ
 New Jersey Performing Arts Center
 8 p.m.

Saturday, October 10
 NEWARK, NJ
 New Jersey Performing Arts Center
 2 p.m. / 8 p.m.

Sunday, October 11
 STONY BROOK, NY
 Staller Center
 7 p.m.

Wednesday, November 4
 TUCSON, AZ
 Centennial Hall
 8 p.m.

Thursday, November 5
 SCOTTSDALE, AZ
 Scottsdale Center for the Arts
 8 p.m.

Friday, November 6
 SCOTTSDALE, AZ
 Scottsdale Center for the Arts
 8 p.m.

Saturday, November 7
 SCOTTSDALE, AZ
 Scottsdale Center for the Arts
 5 p.m. / 9 p.m.

**Thursday, November 12-
 Wednesday, November 18**
 LAS VEGAS, NV
 Bally's Las Vegas



CATS

We got Gregory Popovich and his trained housecats on an episode of *Penn & Teller's Sin City Spectacular*. Those cats got the best introduction they'll ever get and a standing ovation. It was wonderful to see how thrilled Gregory was. He said to *Entertainment Tonight's* reporter back stage, "Seven years ago I come to this country from Russia and I see Penn & Teller on the big, big sign, and now, in America, I am on their show. I am from Russia, my cats are from the pound, and now we are with Penn & Teller."

Did that make me cry?
 —Penn.

