Out of the many skills that Houdini possessed the one I have never quite been able to reconcile was the one where he would intentionally go to disrupt the act of another performer. Whilst I accept that those were different times, and on occasion his name was being used by that performer to generate business, the reality is that this was not, to my mind at least, worthy of the man.

After all, how often do not hear of a Shakespeare production of Hamlet stopping midway through to lynch the lead actors in a rival production of King Lear? Or if you prefer to view Escapology as a sport rather than a theatrical performance then, to paraphrase Motor racing legend Jackie Stewart about three times World Champion Ayrton Senna after the latter crashed into a rival, “He’s too good to need to do that.”
The issue of these dirty tricks has simmered with me from my first introduction to the art but I thought such acts were through, that was until a few years ago, when I put on a two and a half hour show of escapes.

I was reminded of it on Facebook, which prompted me to post the following.

“I do not often post the pictures that Facebook brings up as memories but one has prompted me to write this post.

Facebook reminded me of a show I put on a few years ago. It went well and it was very educational for me, both in terms of how to present but also the mechanics of setting everything up.

I did not post this at the time as things were a little raw but this is not re-opening an old wound. In fact, it is rather funny.

One thing that sticks in my mind was that a few days before the show itself someone, possibly with an axe to grind, maybe local, maybe elsewhere in the Country, decided to be a bit of an arse and phoned the venue pretending to be from ‘The Health and Safety Executive’.

He was not but this caused anxiety and stress and I was not the only person that was impacted. Oh and he committed an offence in pretending to be an Enforcement Officer (local HSE are still keen to meet him and have a quiet word).

The problem was that this came at a time when there were a lot of, what in my day were called, Chinese Whispers, about the HSE and one of my hobbies (Escapology). The problem is that when someone asks a question of 5 people over the phone or by email, and they all know the other 4, chances are that you will get a lot of follow ups as they check with each other, possibly even before the first person gets around to asking the original question of the last one or two (it is a form of research bias).

Now, this problem could have run and run, snowballing as it went, with lots of anonymous voicemails and letters, random emails and general ill will and bad blood to all, but, thankfully it was resolved when the group I am part of, The UKEA (United Kingdom Escape Artists), actually thought raw data would be better than conjecture or personal opinions and, for free (you’re welcome British EA community),
Aussie escape artist Sam Powers pulls off world TV exclusive stunt on “TODAY.”

By Thomas Kaye April 22, 2018

Australian escape artist Sam Powers executes life-threatening stunts that have escalated the illusions Harry Houdini would pull off to a whole new level of death-defying.

Powers brought his incredible bag of tricks to the TODAY Show by putting his life on line with a world TV exclusive escape, high above the ground, upside down without any crash mats or a safety net.

Meet the Jaws of Death: a stunt that incorporates a level of danger where if the machine doesn't kill him, the fall very well could.

Suspended high above the building at Channel Nine's Sydney studio, Powers escaped the Jaws of Death and looked to have fallen before a bungie cord kept him dangling from the crane.

The nature of this deadly stunt requires Sam to have razor sharp mental focus and to be in peak physical condition at all times. To do this he credits the use of the same ketone technology used by NASA astronauts and US Navy Seals to achieve an optimal state.
The Comedy Kickback
with the host that does the most
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May 6th

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Comedain Bigg Weezy

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@ 7PM PT/10PM ET
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wrote to every local authority and County Council and actually researched what was their policy on Health and Safety and Escapology (something some more ‘professional’ groups were not bothering to do, their members seemed to feel that simply posting online, moaning and blaming other Artists, was a better option) and once all the information was obtained and looked at (from over 200 sources) it turned out that Escapology is not only welcome by the Local Authorities and County Councils but that it seemed to be all of this was because one or two person(s) targeting other performers, possibly for their own amusement or even sour grapes.

The thing is I have met amateur and hobby performers that are more professional in their actions than some performers that claim to be members of some performers unions somewhere in the world or various trade bodies, but, I have also met far more professionals in all walks of life, some members of professional bodies, some not, that act as such, and, I am indebted to them for the assistance I have had from them in the art I enjoy and in my life.

As for the various groups I have been honored to be part of, or work with, from the Magic Circle in London, to Guinness World Records, through to the UKEA, and all the others I have been a part of but are too numerous to mention, thank you for guiding me onwards.

Oh and thanks to Facebook for reminding me that I really do hope I can find that person that called the venue all those years ago. I too would love to have a quiet word.

"Riddikulus" perhaps (for those Harry Potter fans out there)?

Normally this would have been the end of it, except for a recap for the Chain letter, but then a friend in another Country encountered his own issues with ‘Keyboard Warriors’ and again, this seemed linked to him trying to make his ‘own way’ in the art form.

His detractors have nothing to gain except a rather perverse joy of seeing another person not succeed.

Without climbing on a high horse, I have to ask, why?
I accept that there have always been groups and networks, clubs and organisations that do not see eye to eye but going beyond a rivalry stoked by a personal animosity into actually trying to disrupt another performer in his or her line of work is not good for the art, it is not good for business and it is not professional, in any sense of the word.

As for the 'Health and Safety' officer, I have a few nominations (fans of Ice Station Zebra may recognise the choice of language) however it would be wrong of me to add my personal issues to a fire that should be left to cool and die out.

There is a quote, attributed to Cho Ling Soo, in a note to Houdini regarding the treatment by the latter of other performers “I respect you but I am not afraid of you.”
Current HoudiniOpoly news!

From manufacturer; "estimated arrival date will be around April 23rd.” It might take a few days for the games to be released from customs and unloaded from the container. Once this has been completed, They will then deliver your games to you. (At warehouse in Pennsylvania.)

This is a limited edition game.

Don't wait! It is all currently being put together with the printer..

Below, the first yellow button is THE paypal link to add additional shipping costs, program or T-Shirt addons, post cards, or buy additional HoudiniOpoly Games, etc, as per notification to you from the Houdini Museum. KickStarter backers who are rounding out their orders use the donate button below.

There is a box when you pay via that button that comes up and says "note to seller" where you can add what it is for, or T-shirt sizes, etc. If we are not sure we will contact you.

You can call us anytime at 570 342-5555 with a credit card, or for other information.

magicus@comcast.net

How does everyone maintain their handcuffs? And how do you dry your cuffs/locks after an under water escape?

Type of oil used, type of grease used? I've heard of some using ketchup to clean their cuffs.

Want to learn more about S. Rob the world’s most prolific occult writer?

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