

The Chainletter

An e-newsletter by and for the escape community

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Chris Campbell



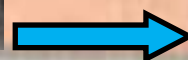
Ready For Online Action

This month's Chains...

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Wolflock: Prison Breaker!

In my Younger days, I did an escape from the same prison cell that Nelson Mandela was in on Robben Island. I decided to try do an escape from there after visiting and coming up with an idea. On my second visit I took a few photos of lock, Hinges, windows and other while posing like a tourist. I eventually did an escape from the cell but was not allowed to do it as a public stunt as it was (apparently) against rules and regulations. I was also not allowed to see the keys which were used for prison door locks. Why? I still have no idea as it is a tourist destination now and not a prison anymore.



I eventually did a successful escape from old style regulation cuffs and the prison cell. I was going to do an escape from the island back to the mainland too, but, decided against it due to cold temperatures of the water, distance to swim and amount of great white sharks I might have to contend with along the way.



Seal island is not too far from Robben island and thus the number of sharks are very high. Have been asked by quite

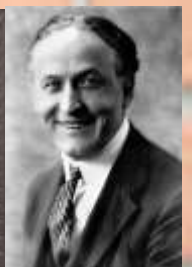
a few people over the years as to how I escaped, how I picked the locks, etc. Truth is, the only locks I picked were the cuffs. I never picked anything else. How did I escape? I am still a small man, but in those days, I was even smaller in build. I found that if my head could fit through an opening, my whole body could. I had noticed on my first visit that the window bars were a little wider than the door bars and I was able to stick my head through (barely). That was where and how I did my escape, through the window.



Of course, things would have been different in the days of old when it actually was a prison. Escape might not have been as easy as one would expect. Even without the thought of swimming through shark infested waters. But I got to do my escape and was highly chuffed to be able to add that to my life stories as an Escape artist.



"Wild about Harry"
John Cox' Houdini web site
www.wildabouthoudini.com



So, what would you do?

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The question “So, what would you do?” is one I hear a lot at this time of year. This is the time of year that the Talent shows are being broadcast and suddenly all my neighbors and non-magic friends are experts and remember that I have Escapology as a hobby.

From the performances of Matt Johnson, Alexandria the Great, Dayle Krall the Houdini Girl, Christian Wedoyas, Li Lau, Jonathan Goodwin to Chris Cross and more, too numerous to mention, and no offence intended if I have not, the audience and judges have been stunned, scared and, quite frankly traumatized, by just how skilled these performers are.

So, once again, the neighbors and “friends that want to see me die in one form or another” ask, what I would I do? So I fib. I give them an idea or two, something small, something simple, something fitting the ‘Non-Death defying’ Escapologist, the kind of escape that requires you to sit down in the back garden with a cup of tea and a form of cookie or biscuit depending on your shows.



Now, the reason I fib, is because I really do not know if I could ever get away with what I am about to type. I can visualize it in my head, I can guess the reactions but in order to really get this to work, I really need something I cannot afford and which I have no right to ask for.

You see, the one thing that has not been on Britain’s got Talent, and as far as I can tell has not been on other shows, is a ‘Houdini’ style challenge. By that, I mean that someone out there turns up with something to challenge the Escape Artist with. It was a staple of Houdini’s act, it was something that Val Walker made his own, and it is, kind of a part and parcel of the art.

So, we would open with an introduction from me and a sealed box on the stage. I would explain that I have no idea of what is in the box and then the large screen behind me would be filled with a familiar face, an Escape Artist that has been on the show previously. They would say hello and there would be a quick montage of



their work to remind everyone how amazing they are. They would then turn their attention back onto me and issue the challenge. I would unseal the box and pull out a long sleeved chainmail jacket and three padlocks. →

The Magic Nook
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<http://www.davidde-val.com/>



With the help of one of the judges, I will be placed into the jacket with the sleeves padlocked to the collar in a

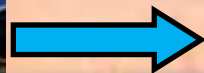
Freddie Mercury (Bohemian Rhapsody style) pose and the final padlock will take the place of the crotch strap and seal me into the jacket. The person on the screen will then point out that the reason he/she/they had done this was to see if I was just a 'keyboard warrior' or if I could actually do an escape but also because they know about my arthritic shoulder so I cannot simply pop it out of its socket and escape like most could (true story).

A polite farewell (and plug for their tour, book, TV special) will be followed by a very sarcastic choice of music which will start as they fade to black.



I will then escape in the only way I know how.

That is it. I think it would impress the crowd, I think it would be new and slightly edgy but equally there are drawbacks.



This site is well worth the time to study if you want to learn about lock picking
www.lockpickguide.com

Begging Box!

Your input is our output!

This is the part of The Chainletter where the editor begs for you to give him some material to publish. No idea what to write?



Well, How about...

- ♦ Your first escape.
- ♦ How did you learn to escape?
- ♦ Your creative process.
- ♦ Your last escape.
- ♦ Who is your hero? Why?
- ♦ What makes a good escape.
- ♦ Your escape bio.
- ♦ An escape you saw on TV.
- ♦ An escape you saw live.
- ♦ Anything escape related.



If you are interested in occult escapology, you want S. Rob!
<https://www.srob.co.uk/>

"Without a key"
 For all your lockpicking needs
www.withoutakey.co.uk

. It could only really be used once, otherwise it would become 'the' thing, with more interest from the crowd as to who will be on the screen than the act, and as such, the act would be an anticlimactic event.

Equally it would rely on the person issuing the challenge and a great deal of teamwork. So, again, a true Houdini challenge.

I have written this to put it out there. To see what people think.

If you like it, then do let me know. If you want to use it, then please let me know otherwise I will be miffed.

So, that is what I would do. If I had the will to.



Fenyx Fyre on Fire!

Our friend Chris Campbell may have taken his name from being a fire eater, but he is not one to shy away from an escape either.

Chris decided to use the quarantine to his advantage and ran a fundraising show to help get arts and craft kits into the hands of children who are seriously ill and in the hospital for it.

The show was great and featured a lot of side show acts such as blockhead, and eating light bulb shards.

The lady whose charity was being touted, kept covering her eyes, much to my amusement.

The highlight of the show concerned a propane powered chalice and a pair of handcuffs.



Chris handcuffed himself with his hands in front. He reached into the chalice and pulled his hands out; they



were on fire. The fire did not last long, but it was a nice effect. The ending was a match that was lit and thrown into the chalice. A

large fire ball lit up the room, momentarily blinding the camera and distracting any spectators that might have been there. Chris was now free.

I am not going to tell you how that was done. It isn't mine to tell. Besides, most of you already know. The important part was that it was entertaining. I think that was the arts and crafts lady's favourite part. At least she didn't cringe or try to cover her eyes.

One of the great things that your editor discovered in 1979 was how boring it is to see someone in handcuffs and they are free the next moment. You need something for buy in, or for entertainment, or even a good story to keep the spectators interested.

Chris has done a great job!



**Have the lads at
Guinness turned down
your world record?
Online World Records
can help...
Contact Fenyx Fyre
info@fenyxfyre.ca**

New Video from Wolflock!



Hi all fellow Escapists

Have you ever wondered where the next generation of escape artists is coming from? I think of that all the time, and I decided to do something about it. I have had many people in the past asking when I am going to release an escape

teaching Video and so I have decided to do this. On this video you will learn how to use your body alone to get out of a bound-up situation without having to use gimmicked equipment, pick or shim locks. Using these techniques, just about anyone can learn to escape. Size, age and gender do not matter. It is directed at total beginners wanting to learn simple ways to do escapes and is also geared at those on a limited budget. If you know anyone who is interested, please do not hesitate to forward my personal contacts on to them. The Video will be released via a direct download which will be emailed to the person after payment via paypal. It will be released on the 30 June 2020 at a reasonable price of only \$10. I look forward to hearing from everyone. Thank you.

Regards

Wolflock

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/WolflockEntertainment/>

Email: Wolflock.com@gmail.com

The New Normal

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This is a unique time for all forms of live entertainment. From the small local bar seeking to reopen and offer live music to its guests, to seasoned performers looking to ply their trade in public.



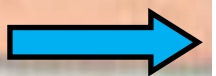
We have seen venues close for good due to the lack of funds to adapt to social distancing, we see gyms counting the cost

of screens and detergent wipes. We see confusion.

Whilst the media is full of 'Oracles' seeking to explain how we will simply go back to work and maybe just 'wear a mask' or 'not sit so close' there are a few, more rational and seasoned voices, saying that things will not be so 'normal'.



As I write this, regulations are still being published or have only just about to be published, seeking to offer guidelines as what to do next. The public have yet to interact with them and, as such, there is no way of knowing if they will flock back in droves or stay away.





We do not know how a venue will respond, how our insurance providers will react, nor how we will rise above. Yet I know we will. We will simply have to adapt.

If this adaptation means we have fewer spots in public, or that the local theatre closes due to lack of paying attendees then that is what we must overcome. If it means we can no longer call for a volunteer or that people do not want to be a committee then so be it. We will overcome.

The whole world has been affected, so, wherever you are in the world, and however you read my words, then please do keep safe. Take this time to read the regulations, learn what would be wrong, but also, be aware of your rights, do not let others exploit you in the new world.



Let the 'new normal' be yours.

Thumbcuffs: A Compilation. by Seth Howard

I read Seth Howard's book with the specific intention to write a review here for The Chainletter. Seth's book is exactly what he says it is, a compilation.

While this book may be better suited to the beginner and rank amateur, I think the well seasoned professional may enjoy it too.

What is in the book? Well, everything thumb cuffs. In this book you will learn about the origin of thumb cuffs, and see some of the

H HISTORY

early patents. For any escape artist history fan, this section will be both interesting and educational.

Obviously, you will see how to do the basic thumb cuff escape. Beyond that are a fine set of instructions on how to make and use your own gimmicked thumb cuffs. This is a skill that requires both the proper tools as well as patience and practice.

Now Seth gets into the meat of the book. He offers up five different routines that can be done using thumb cuffs. None are all that difficult and depending on the skill and charisma of the performer, all are very workable.



Included are two more routines, one from Stuart Burrell and one from Tony Parisi. All are excellent.

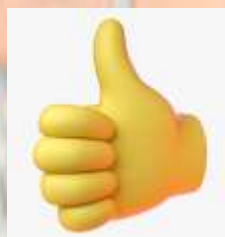
The book ends with two appendices. First is pictures and verbiage from the thumb cuff patents, and second is a compilation of 18 photos of different types and brands of thumb cuffs from the Joe Lauher collection.

The book is a little bit pricey, but like all magic, expensive is cheap if you use it.

I recommend this book for beginners, and professionals looking for some more information.

You can reach him at...

<http://sethhowardmagic.com>



Good job Seth.

