

# THE CHAINLETTER

AN E-NEWSLETTER BY AND FOR THE  
ESCAPE COMMUNITY

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## Handcuff Shim Escape Tool EDC, Police, Survival Kit, MILITARY Escape



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iScJzG7SJH4>

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## BREAKING HIS SILENCE:

By Amanda Devlin: May 4, 2022

BRITAIN'S Got Talent star Jonathan Goodwin has broken his silence after a dangerous stunt left him paralyzed.

The escapologist, 42, says his injuries are "likely" to be permanent as he opened up about his diagnosis.



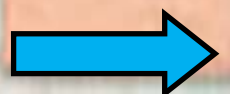
The escapologist was pictured in a wheelchair for the first time today

Posting a snap of himself in a wheelchair, stuntman Jonathan said: "Thanks for all the love and lovely messages.

"To answer some questions... I have a T11 spinal cord injury, which means I'm paralysed from the waist down.



"It's likely a permanent sitch. If any of you want to race though, I'm pretty sure I can beat you... #bringit."



Jonathan was performing a stunt on America's Got Talent: Extreme when he fell 30 feet while being hung upside down in between two suspended cars.

However, the timing was misjudged and the cars were released too early, causing the escape artist - who has appeared on both BGT and AGT - to be crushed between them as they caught on fire, leading to horrific injuries.



Speaking about the incident, his fiancée actress Amanda Abbington, 48, revealed: "He fell 30 feet and lost a kidney, broke both shoulder blades, shattered both legs.

"Third degree burns, broke his spine and severed his spinal cord and, nearly died. And then on the operating table, he nearly died again."

She added to "Out To Lunch" podcast with Jay Rayner: "He's paralyzed now he's in a wheelchair. Unless there's a kind of stem cell surgery or that thing that Elon Musk is designing with the little chip, he'll be like that forever."



Despite the life-altering injuries, Amanda explained he has remained "positive and upbeat and so strong".

"His courage and his strength is something that I just aspire to be like," she said.

"He's just incredible, honestly, like so happy, just like a very happy, positive human being, just liquid sunshine. He's amazing."



"Wild about Harry"  
John Cox' Houdini web site  
[www.wildabouthoudini.com](http://www.wildabouthoudini.com)



# UKEA Challenged

On Saturday March 12th, 2022, at 2pm at the Maple Tree Woodfield Plantation, Balby, Doncaster England DN4 8RZ three members from the UKEA (United Kingdom Escape Artists) were challenged to perform a world's first.



The Doncaster Restraint Museum challenged, Allan Taylor, Andrew Robertson and Tim Houlton to escape from a

locked prison van whilst wearing UK regulation handcuffs, all under test conditions and controlled by a serving police officer and master locksmith. They would be locked in brand new, unopened, and sealed regulation handcuffs, opened only by the Police officer, escorted into the van and locked into individual cells and then lastly locked into the van itself. All witnessed by the public and a volunteer who went inside the van to make sure all was secure.



All in a timeframe of 20 minutes to coincide with the club's 20th Anniversary.

The DRM were

quoted as saying the challenge was impossible and has never been performed anywhere in the world in full view of the public.

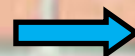
The UKEA is open to both professional and amateur escapologists, along with collectors and historians and is the only official escape group in the UK. Yes, we are just like the world-famous Harry Houdini.

The three escape artists who took on the challenge were Andy Robertson Scotland's award-winning Escape Artist and prison escape expert.

Andy has escaped previously live on STV (Scottish Television) from the High Security cell at Peterhead Prison and has won every UK top award for escapes including escaping from an electric chair!



Tim Houlton England's award-winning Escape Artist and prison van escape expert.



**The Magic Nook**  
[www.magicnook.com](http://www.magicnook.com)

"Do-It-Yourself" Magic for  
"Built-It-Myself" Magicians



A great tribute site to the amazing  
David De-Val



<http://www.davidde-val.com/>

Tim has previously escaped from a prison van on his own for one of his past performances and has also won top UK award for his escapes.

Allan Taylor England's award-winning Escape Artist, Houdini Historian, and chairman of the UKEA

Allan has previously escaped from a double straitjacket and has also won every UK top award for escapology.

On the day the three prisoners were found sitting at the pub and were escorted over to the van and made to stand with their hands above their head, in full public view the police opened and checked the handcuffs, and each prisoner was cuffed and scanned to make sure they were not concealing any tools, that cheeky Tim was found to have a mobile phone on him and that was quickly confiscated. They were then escorted into the Transport van and locked into the cells. A member of the public was chosen to come and check the doors were



secure and locked, the outside doors were also checked to make sure they were locked. Tick tock the timer started. ➡



**This site is well worth the time to study if you want to learn about lock picking**  
[www.lockpickguide.com](http://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](http://www.withoutakey.co.uk)

The van was rocking, loud noises coming from the outside along with a few screams of pain and requests for help – could they escape? 6 minutes, 7 minutes, 8 minutes BOOM, a large explosion came from top of the van and a few seconds later Andy came running from the back door towards the front door, Allan bust out of the front door, and this was closely followed by Tim who came out of the top of the vehicle – all in 8 minutes and 44 seconds. A world first, a world record, the DRM failed but the boys from the UKEA proved that this challenge wasn't a match for their skills

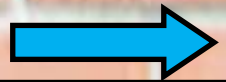


## New Equipment (from Chris Campbell)

Let's face it, when it comes to Christopher Campbell, the word prolific easily comes to mind. I mean here is a man who kept doing his sideshow/escape work all through the pandemic by clever use of the internet. Here is a man who created a diving mask that is a portable water torture cell. Some might call him "driven," while others might just say "brilliant." Whatever you call him, he has displayed his brilliance once again! Here is Chris Campbell's "EXTRACATE COMBO STRAP."

The ECS is a great piece of work at a reasonable price too!

How does it work? You have a volunteer or volunteers select a combination. They will keep it to themselves. The strap can be applied around the magician, around a box or suitcase of some type. It can lock you up or lock



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

up something else. The fact is that you, the escape artist, have no idea what the combination is. And yet, you will somehow open the ECS when you need to.

Other uses? Sure, why not go for mentalism? Perhaps you can divine the combination somehow. This thought I leave up to you as I am not a mentalist and do not claim to know how to "sell" that type of act.

The strap opens up to become six feet long, which is certainly long enough to wrap around most objects or most performers. Sometimes you might want to use two of these, and at the low price Chris is asking, you can certainly afford a pair of these.

How big is the dial? This photo shows you it is large enough for most spectators and volunteers to manage without fumbling. (see picture for size comparison)



The ECS comes in three colors, so choose the one that suits you act.



I chose Blue, here is a photo of Chris strapped into an orange one, and pink is also available.

The price of this wonderful strap is a mere \$30 (USD) plus shipping,

This is a fine piece of workmanship that you will use for a good long time. All you need is to throw in a little creativity, and you will soon shock and surprise your audiences! Let's all thank Chris for a job well done!

[info@fenyxfyre.ca](mailto:info@fenyxfyre.ca)



## The Art of Lockpicking A Complete Guide

Last month I took the Udemy course called the Art of Lockpicking, the Complete Guide. Those who are interested can sign up at [www.udemy.com](http://www.udemy.com). Udemy is an online company that features many classes that can be taken on your own time schedule from the privacy of your own home,.



The course is broken up into five sections with each having between two and six parts. Most of the parts are videos to watch but some are short reading assignments. The certificate you can get comes after taking several multiple choice quizzes that are after each section. You are allowed multiple attempts at the quizzes so even if you fail you just keep trying until you get it right.

The current price of the class is \$80, but don't you pay that. I didn't pay half that. Wait for Udemy to run specials as they often do and



get the info much cheaper if you want to take the class.

How high quality is the class? Maybe this is not fair for me to answer. When they give you your certificate at the end, the certificate tells you how much time you spent in the class watching the videos. You are welcome to watch and rewatch as often as needed until you develop your lockpicking skill. Notice on my certificate that I took one hour. Actually it was a bit less.

Let me be brutally honest here. If you can pick most simple padlocks, you do not need or want to buy this class. Save your money. If you are not a lock picker at all, and want to learn the basics, this class is for you. It is better than a book in that you can see the working parts. There are videos and animations to show you exactly how the locks work and to guide you in opening them. The fact that you can repeat watch as often as you feel you need to.

There is a bonus section at the end in how to open a car. If you are prone to locking your keys in the car, this might be for you. It is a good honest look at how safe your car is against Thieves and lockpickers. It is a useful chapter if you have that need, or you want to go into business assisting people with lock out situations.



What is missing? Well there really is no talking about Mushroom pins and other high security locks you might need or want to pick. Also unmentioned is the idea of locks with more than five pins. Basically anything high security is left out. This is a problem as most locks today have at least a little something extra to make them a bit harder to defeat.



So take this course for fun, or take it to see a good graphic representation of the basics. You probably can learn simple lockpicking from this course.



Note however, you will still need to purchase a set of lockpicks as the kit does not come with or provide equipment. Overall I rate the class fun and informative, but not amazing. Check it out if you like, and make your own choice.



# Kristen Johnson Injured

There are some people in this world you just can't stop! Take Kristen Johnson AKA Lady Houdini for example, a five-foot four dynamo. Kristen is a body builder, a very physical performer, a woman who holds her breath for over three minutes at a time, and an escape artist. On top of all that she is a very sweet lady too. For those who know her, Kristen is one big ball of energy, and yet, accidents happen.

On July 28th during the six PM show, Kristen was performing an aerial stunt and was preparing to rappel down when she fell almost 30 feet to the stage below. She was rushed to the hospital where they determined she had broken her left femur in a clean break. Her left wrist was also broken and this was not as clean.



Kristen went through two different surgeries. First was to set her femur and apply pins to restore and keep her leg at its normal length. Because the break was a clean one, this surgery was relatively simple. Her wrist is another matter. Because the wrist is a very complex combination of eight different bones articulating with both the two bones of the arm and the five bones of the hand, setting a wrist is not so easy. Kristen came through the surgery like a champion though. Her high energy and positive mental attitude probably played a role. There is an external rod on her wrist that immobilizes it. That will be removed six weeks after the surgery. Both surgeries were a success. Kristen is expected to make a full recovery.

On July 31st, Kristen began physical therapy. It started with simple standing on her leg for about one minute. Soon it moved to taking small steps. A day later she was able to get to the edge of the bed and stand unassisted on her own. After being transferred to the Ohio Rehabilitation Center, where her physical therapy started for real. This center has a reputation for intense



T-shirt complements of  
Robert Smith

workouts. Kristen will be performing three hours of physical therapy for two weeks. That is five days a week for three hours a day. I am sure Kristen will meet this rather grueling challenge the same way she meets everything else; with a smile and positive attitude.

According to her husband and partner Kevin Ridgeway, *"Kristen had PT yesterday (August 4th) at her new rehab hospital. Using a walker, she walked 15 feet. It was slow and a little wobbly. She sat back down in the wheelchair and rested. 5 minutes later, she said that wasn't good enough for her. She got back up and walked 50 feet, moving quicker, with each step being deliberate and steady. Incredible!"*

As of now Kristen is pushing her way through three hours a day of both occupational therapy and Physical therapy. Today she was able to walk 178 feet! As I said above, not much is going to stop her.



Kevin and Kristen have talked long and hard about how this injury will affect their schedule. Kevin expects to get back on the road next March. That is seven months away and will have a major financial impact. There is a go fund me campaign underway to help them. Please contribute if

you can.

<https://gofund.me/75eed091>

