



I.B.M. RING 50

The National Capital Ring

Mitch Prayer—Walking the Line Between Possible and Impossible

Don't Miss Mitch's Special Gift to Ring 50 Members at the End

New member Mitch Prayer's first job was in his teens as a children's birthday show performer.

"I charged \$10 per show in the '70s, increasing up to a whopping \$25 per show. What a deal (for them)."

At his fifth birthday party, Mitch recalled, "a magician made milk come out of my elbow. That was quickly followed up by a Christmas visit to Macy's where my mom took me to the magic counter to start my accumulation, I mean addiction, I mean passion."

That passion took root at Louis Tannen's magic store in New York City.

"When those elevator doors opened right into the Tannen's showroom, you entered a magical and wonderful place. There was so much learning, enjoyment and amazement by those showing their latest creations, such as Lorayne, Garcia, Roth, Krenzel, Rubenstein, Regal, Stone, Latta, Dingle, Yedid, Kaufman, et al.

"And being taken to the 'back room' by Tony Spina or Irv Tannen to show me the secret to my purchase... was so amazing to my younger self.

"This was closely followed up by my first magic conference, The New York Magic Symposium, where I witnessed performances and lectures by magic legends. I was hooked. Those same feelings are what I try to convey to my audiences through every performance."

Although Mitch acknowledges he doesn't

perform often, he has performed on big stages on special occasions.

"I have performed on the great stage of

National Geographic, at company retreats at Discovery Channel and Verizon, on the Sally Jessy Raphael Show, at Jamy Ian Swiss/Roberto Giobbi's Advanced Card Clinic and between shows in the waiting area of The Magic Castle.

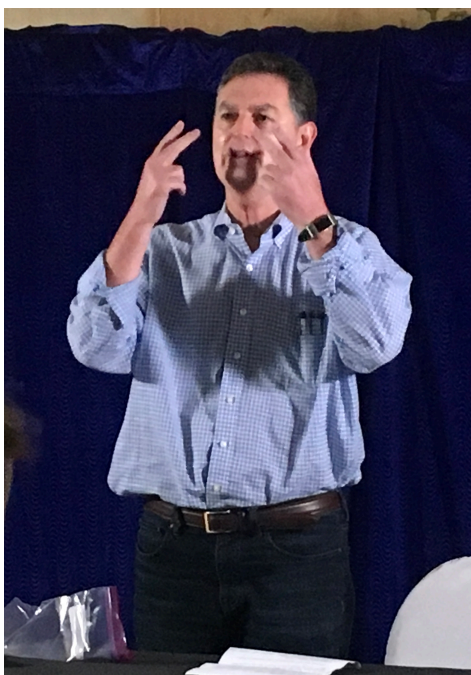
"Considering I'm just a passionate student of magic, it took a bit of courage to go outside my comfort zone to compete at the MagiCuba three-day competition there called Un Truco Challenge in both English and Spanish – and took home first prize! On my YouTube channel, (search: mprayer), you

can see some recent performances. More to come!"

Mitch has served as a digital media and technology executive in mission-based organizations including as vice president for digital distribution for Discovery Channel, president of National Geographic.com and chief operating officer of NPR.

"Most recently, I co-founded a health analytics platform startup to help epidemiologists, who take months or even years on medical studies, to generate them in only five to seven minutes, making the impossible possible."

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Mitch Prayer--Distinctive Thematic Magic

Mitch has a graduate degree in Media Studies and Communications, but he wrote that “the greatest outside influences on my magic would have to be:

“1. The impact on one particular branch of painting, surrealism, walking the fine line between possible and impossible.

“2. Impact of playing the piano, injecting passion and feeling into the art of magic. Shin Lim also speaks about this.

“3. Impact of what Max Maven calls ‘kayfabe.’ As a kid, I attended WWF matches in The Garden, and loved experiencing the line between the ‘real’ and the ‘fake.’ ”

“4. Impact of sports in NYC, when the underdog, Mets, Knicks and Jets, all made the impossible...possible, winning championships in that one year.

“5. The impact of Broadway musicals during my formative years, such as ‘Pippin’s Magic To Do’ and Doug Henning’s ‘The Magic Show,’ weaving magic into theater.”

Asked about his major interest in magic and his style of magic, Mitch said, “the close-up magic I perform is designed to give the audience the same feeling that I had at Tannen’s as a kid: enjoyment, amazement and learning – walking the fine line between what is possible and impossible.

“My routines are distinctive and thematic, walking the fine line between possible and impossible, not treating effects as puzzles to be solved. The most recent themes being: “Psychic Phenomena: Are Psychics Really Psychic?”; “Can Solids Really Pass Through Solids?”; “Is It Smarter to Be Lucky or Lucky to Be Smart?”; “Should Magic Be Considered an Art?”; “Inspirational Magicians Who Overcame Significant Physical Challenges”; “What Were the Wartime Magic Deceptions?” and “Who’s Buried in The Magic Graveyard?” If you have expertise in scripting and routining, I’d love to get your insights.”

Mitch lists close-up magicians Lennert Green, Dani DaOrtiz, Ben Earl, Mario Lopez, and Asi Wind among his favorites.

As for favorite tricks, Mitch said, “I work on the

inverse: it starts with what I’m trying to communicate in terms of theme, routine and high-level script. Then, I continue the scavenger hunt through the magic literature to find the best versions of the effects I want to use to illustrate the themes.

“As one example, for the theme/routine mentioned previously, ‘Inspirational Magicians Who Overcame Significant Physical Challenges.’ I knew I wanted to spotlight: a. Okito/No Hearing/Silent Treatment, b. Mahdi Gilbert/No Hands/Cheek to Cheek Triumph + Double Exposure, c. Rene Lavand/One Arm/Pocket Nightmare, d. Wayne Dobson/Paraplegic/Inferno + Clarity Box, and e. Richard

Turner/No Sight/Keen Sense of Touch. For every new theme/routine I work on, this creates a new list of my

favorites.

Asked What are he is most excited about for the future of magic, Mitch noted the impact of masterclass streaming from all over the world so we can better understand international schools of magic thought, and the impact of women and people of color in magic.

As a new member of Ring 50, Mitch said, “I can’t wait to meet more of you. In the meantime, I just finished compiling a book (offered at no charge as a giveback to the magic community) called ‘Impossible: The Elements of Professional Close-Up Magic,’ a handbook to transform magic tricks into magical experiences. I self-published this 300-page e-book during the COVID pandemic, and it’s my gift to all of you. Here’s the download link: <https://bit.ly/40POtWv>



Mitch won the One Trick Challenge at MagiCuba in Havana, Cuba in 2018—blindfolded.