

PLANCHETTE [Version 2.0]

When the Dead Speak, They Might be Talking to You

by Annelise Montone
in consultation with Brian M. Kehoe

Theatrical Stage Magic Show

*To be performed in Rochester, New York
September 2016*

Length: Approx. 1 hour

First Outline - Last revised August 23rd, 2016

I. Pre-Show Preparation

When participants check in at the door, they are given a sticker or button to wear displaying a number.

II. Introduction and The First Tenant [TRUST] [15 minutes]

[SARAH enters and reads from clipboard.]

SARAH: Instructions.

You are here to participate in scientific experiment 20047 performed for the purpose of accomplishing contact with the deceased. If anyone is NOT here to participate in scientific experiment 20047 performed for the purpose of accomplishing contact with the deceased, you may leave at this time. **[Pause.]** Good. Upon your entry, you should have been given a number for identification purposes. If you were not given a number for identification purposes, raise your hand and you will be given one. **[Pause.]** Good. Please memorize your number at this time. **[Pause.]** That is enough time for the memorization of your number. Please place your number on your clothing in an easily seen location. Do not forget your number. Do not damage your number. Do not remove your number. Anything you may see or hear during experiment 20047, including anything related to Maxwell Fink, "The Method" or specific processes involving the contact of the deceased are the intellectual property of Dr. Maxwell Fink. They shall not be repeated, duplicated, copied, reproduced or simulated. If you have understood these instructions, please remain silent. **[Pause.]** Good. Experiment 20047 begins now.

[The projector clicks on.]

A. *Beyond the Veil: The Fact and Fiction of Paranormal Phenomena*

Slide announces the name of the program: ***Beyond the Veil: The Fact and Fiction of Paranormal Phenomena, Baltimore edition, September 18th, 2013***

Narrator: It all started with rumblings coming out of spiritualist groups in Ohio at the end of the nineteenth century, rumors of a new device with which to contact the other side. A board with printed letters and numbers complete with a triangular planchette that spelled out messages from the dead. In 1890 Charles Kennard of Baltimore, Maryland formed a group of investors to capitalize on the idea of the "talking boards" as they were

known. Some other men, including local investor Elijah Bond and surveyor Colonel Washington Bowie went into business with Kennard to manufacture the boards. But they weren't Ouija boards. Not yet.

Cut to man sitting in a chair interview style. The animation under him reads "Maxwell Fink, Parapsychologist and Ouija Board Expert"

Fink: Well, I guess you could say that the whole thing really started with Helen Peters.

Narrator: Helen Peters, Bond's sister-in-law and, according to him a "strong medium." Peters received the name through the board, when they asked what it meant; the board would only mysteriously reply "Good Luck."

Fink: That was the first time that they knew that the board was really paranormal, that it was really something special.

Narrator: The Ouija's board's powers were first put to the test at the patent office in Washington D.C. The skeptical officer demanded that the talking board spell out his name, which was unknown to both Bond and Peters. After a quick chat with the spirits, the Ouija board did, indeed, spell out the man's name. And so, on February 10th, 1891, a seriously shaken clerk granted Bond patent 446,054 that read for a new "toy or game". But was the Ouija board a toy...or was it a curse?

Fink: I don't know if you could really say that the Ouija board is cursed...that's a little vague, alarmist. I like to think of it more as a tool, you know? A scientific tool. And that's how I think that William and Issac thought about it, at least at first. Why else would William have asked it about where to build the factory? It was pragmatic, you know?

Narrator: By 1893 Kennard and Bond were out of the game, clearing the field for William Fuld, a former employee of Kennard's company, to step in and run the show. William and his brother Isaac formed a partnership on March 28th, 1900 to market and sell Ouija. It didn't take long, though, for the arrangement to sour. William and Isaac began to fight bitterly over the business.

Fink: What you have to understand is this, and it's what I really find the most fascinating: it's not just that William and Issac Fuld were fools, playing around with something they didn't understand. It wasn't just them. Every single family, every single one, that touched the board had something terrible happen to them. But no, I don't think cursed. I just don't think they knew how to deal with what they had.

Narrator: The Fulds hated one another so much that, in 1906, Isaac had his daughter Evelyn disinterred from the family cemetery and reburied at one across town, a surely horrific experience for all involved. There was, unfortunately, no chance for an eventual reconciliation. William Fuld died on February 24th, 1927 in a terrible accident at the Ouija factory, a factory that he maintained the board had told him to build. While supervising the installation of a flagpole, a railing gave way, sending him to the ground below. On the way to the hospital, his fractured rib pierced his heart and William took his last breath. Was it merely the old story of too much money that caused this family to rupture, or was it the board's demonic influence?

Host of the show, to Fink: So, do you really believe that all this stuff about Ouija is true or do you think Hasbro just made it up to sell more toys to the gullible?

Fink: Do I believe it's real? Ouija? Absolutely. 1000%. And someday, I'm going to prove it.

[Video out.]

B. Fink, The Fink Method for Contacting the Dead and TRUST

1. Fink Introduction and Bell

MAXWELL: Good evening. I am Maxwell Fink. You probably already know my name. I was, as you saw, a featured guest on *Beyond the Veil: The Fact and Fiction of Paranormal Phenomena*. I have also appeared on *Ghost Snatchers! Europe*. Tonight, however, I come to you not as an entertainer, but as a scientist, a scientist who is about to change the world. And you are essential to my purpose, for you, you are the experiment. Well, part of it.

When I was sixteen years old, I had an experience that I have not, as yet, been able to fully explain. My family's home at the time was old, a house that many people had lived and died in. In thinking about this episode years later, I have come to the conclusion that what happened next may have been activated by the age of place, that it was, perhaps, a spiritual gateway. I was lying in my bed, somewhere between asleep and awake. I wasn't, however, dreaming. It was far too real for that. I remember the door in front of my bed opening, very, very slowly. As I watched, unable to move or cry out, totally pinned, a hand reached around the edge of the door and then I saw a dark, shadowy figure coming through. At first, I felt that the figure was evil and I was afraid. But then, even through my terror, I understood that it wasn't at all evil. In fact, the figure was that of my grandmother, Maryella Fink. She stood there for a few moments and then she faded away. I never saw her again.

Since that time, I have been absolutely convinced that there is life beyond what we know on earth. When my grandmother came through my bedroom door at sixteen, she opened another door in my mind. One I have never been able to close. A nagging, tantalizing question: Is it possible to speak to the dead and can they speak to us? I've been laughed at, sure. I've built invention after invention that have all failed. But that is now in the past. I finally came to the conclusion that it's no use slaving away by myself in laboratories. It doesn't work. I needed a living component, a machine so complex I could never build it. I needed you.

And I needed to come back to this place. It is not a fact widely known, but I was born here, in Rochester, New York, as were my parents and grandparents before me, including Maryella. In order to close the circle, take me back to the beginning, I had to travel here. It has been a long journey but one, I believe, will be worth it.

Before we go any further, however, it is necessary to test to see if this room, much like I believe that my childhood bedroom was, is activated or, in other words at precise conditions to be able to receive spirit communication. Dr. Swanson?

MAXWELL: Let me introduce Dr. Sarah Swanson. Dr. Swanson and I have worked together for a number of years, but her background is not, in fact, in parapsychology but in physics. She will be using modern technology in tandem with older instruments to record and measure many elements tonight. It is this blending of old and new that makes my methods so unique within the scientific community. Tools evolve, but that doesn't mean that the old are necessarily the weak.

Readings, Dr. Swanson. Temperature.

SARAH: Temperature. 21.1 degrees.

MAXELL: Barometric.

SARAH: Barometric. 29.75"

MAXWELL: Rising or steady?

SARAH: Rapidly falling, actually, but that can't be right, it's-

MAXWELL: Morphic levels?

SARAH: Morphic levels. 4.6

MAXWELL: 4.6 Very good. Bring forward the board, please, Dr. Swanson, and the bell.

[SARAH moves forward with the Ouija board bell and sets it on the table. She places the board on top of the table and the bell on the board. She remains standing near it, slightly to the back and side.]

MAXWELL: The purpose of these instruments will become clear to you in a moment, if indeed we proceed. We will test this space for the potential of spirit presence, or, in popular parlance-

SARAH: Haunted.

MAXWELL: Yes, quite right, haunted, though that is imprecise. Test 1, Dr. Swanson.

SARAH: Test 1.

[They both stare intently at the bell.]

MAXWELL: Mark, test 1, fail.

SARAH: Test 1, failure, marked.

MAXWELL: Test 2.

SARAH: Test 2.

[They both stare intently at the bell.]

MAXWELL: Mark, Test 2, fail.

SARAH: Test 2, failure, marked.

MAXWELL: Test 3.

SARAH: Test 3?

MAXWELL: Test 3.

[They both stare intently at the bell.]

MAXWELL: Mark. Test 3. Fail-

[The bell rings.]

2. The Fink Method for Contacting the Dead

MAXWELL: Test 3, success. We are activated. Mark. **[Sarah doesn't answer.]** Dr. Swanson. Mark.

SARAH: Test 3, successful. Act-activated. Marked.

MAXWELL: Tonight,

SARAH: [Date]

MAXWELL: - beginning at exactly

SARAH: [Time]

MAXWELL: - we embark on a series of parapsychological tests to attempt to reach the dim realm, the life beyond. Tonight is the culmination of many years of research and development into The Method **[SARAH moves to the chalkboard.]** That is, **[SARAH whips off the cloth covering the board.]** The Fink Method for Contacting the Dead. I'll attempt to simplify for those who may not have scientific minds.

The Fink Method is actually very easy to understand. **[Projector clicks on.]** There are three major areas: TRUST, COHESION and TRANSMISSION.

We'll take these one at a time. The first tenant is TRUST. I have found that it is very important to establish trust prior to any sort of paranormal undertaking. Trust will ensure that we are creating an environment where only those that we wish to contact can come through. That we are inviting loving, gentle entities into our midst.

The second point is COHESION. Cohesion is the act or fact of creating a united whole. Tonight we will be creating Cohesion in that we will lock our energies together in order to form a strong, living wire. There is evidence that spectral apparitions are a form of leftover energy that may be able to arc, if you will, to our own.

The third part of the Method is, of course, TRANSMISSION. Transmission is really the crux of the entire system. Transmission merely refers to the act of transmitting messages both to and from the dead. I believe that once Trust and Cohesion are accomplished, Transmission will be possible. If I am correct, and I think that I am, both the physical and spiritual worlds will be completely transformed.

And that brings us to our last point, our unification. In order for the elements of TRUST, COHESION and TRANSMISSION to come together, it is necessary to employ a focus, a locus, a transmitter. I have tried many other objects for this purpose: tarot cards, crystal balls, mirrors. But not one, NOT ONE, has worked, except for, possibly, **[SARAH picks up the board and displays it, placard style, to the audience.]** the Ouija board. I believe that the reason for this is because of this object's extraordinary history.

There you have it: Trust, Cohesion and Transmission achieved through the use of an object with human-based metaphysical power. The Fink Method to Contact the Dead. **[SARAH applauds.]**

[SARAH sets up for Touching on Hoy. Three chairs in a row, Ouija board away.]

3. Childhood Memory and Roulette: TRUST

a. Childhood Memory

MAXWELL: We will begin with the first tenant - trust. You must trust me and I must trust you for the method to work. One of the simplest ways to establish trust is through the communicating of memories. We are rarely at our most intimate and vulnerable as when we are sharing our personal experiences. So now, I ask that you join me in recalling some very specific memories, those which involve our Ouija Board. Close your eyes. I don't have to describe the Ouija board to any of you. It's in your blood, I'm sure of it. That's why you came tonight. No matter when the last time you saw one was, when you saw it again just now, there were memories that came flooding back to you. You thought of something connected with the board, something inside of you...it remembered. So, I ask you to think back. What was it? A slumber party? Halloween? Who were you

with? A sibling, a cousin? Maybe you were just fooling around with your friends, trying not to look afraid but really a just a little freaked out? You know what it looks like. That tan board, those black letters. The feeling of the plastic planchette under your fingers, the burning in your face as you hoped your partner wouldn't feel if you accidentally moved it. That thing in you that wanted it. That wanted it to be real. Tonight I'm going to ask you to access that part of yourself again, even if it's been a long, long time since you've met. Raise your hand if you can contact him, or her, if you can try to hear that little voice inside of you. Keep them raised. Very good. Open your eyes. You, you, you and you, please, stand up here.

[The four participants stand in a line off to the side and the first person is given a notepad.]

MAXWELL: Please write down the memory you just thought of: a sentence will do. In addition to that sentence, I would like you to write a word. Not just any word. The word must be one that is emotionally resonant. I will explain. There is evidence to suggest that spirits respond to emotions. It calls them, they feed off of the warmth because it is something they can no longer experience. So, please, a word that is emotional, that has special meaning to you, underneath your memory. Then turn the page and pass the pad to the next person. When it gets to the end if you would just close the notepad and that will signal to me that you are done.

While you four are doing that, we will facilitate part two of the test, namely, broadcast telepathy. Dr. Swanson, that would be -

SARAH: [Number]

MAXWELL: [Number], would you please make your way up here.

[Participant comes to stage.]

MAXWELL: All right, [Number]. We will perform a short evaluation to make sure that you are, able to achieve broadcast telepathy. That is, that you can send messages with your mind. We will start easy.

[SARAH hands him the slates.]

MAXWELL: As you can see, these slates are completely clean. I will draw a picture on the outside of this slate...let's say a star. Now, what I would like you to do is concentrate, hard, on the star. Put the star into your mind. One the count of three, I would like you to transmit the star from the top slate to the clean one below. Are you ready? One, two, three. **[Square is revealed on the inside of the slate.]** That's excellent! **[He hands the slates back to SARAH.]** Thank you four, you may sit.

Broadcaster, again, you will transmit a message, this time directly from your mind into mine. You have the notepad, if you would stand directly behind me so that we are all sure I can't see anything. Open the notepad and tear out the four memories and I'll take that now. Mix them up a bit. Now, select one that you particularly connect with. Put into your brain the memory and the magic word. Now place all of the memories into your pocket.

Now face me. Let's start with the word it'll be a bit of a warmup for me. Imagine the word being spelled out in front of you in the air. Focus on a letter near the end of the word. Not the last letter, but one near the end. Do you have it? That's an "e" isn't it? And the letter next to it, say it over and over in your mind. Sounds like a "p"? Oh a "d"! They sort of sound the same. Okay. Let's look at the whole word say it over and over again in your mind. Are you thinking of the word "Abandoned?"

Now picture the memory associated with that word. Did it happen recently or a long time ago? Are you inside or outside? Just think it, don't say anything. What was the time of day – morning, afternoon, dusk, evening? Put yourself in the scene. Concentrate. Thank you, I have it.

“With Val talked to Johnny.” - GRANDAD

“My mother said no and threw the board away and I cried.” – CHEAT

“I wasn’t the one who did it.” – SLAP

“Slumber party, sixth grade, best friend and it moved by itself.” – BACKSTAB

Thank you, you may sit.

[SARAH sets up for Roulette.]

b. Roulette

MAXWELL: We have opened a line of trust between us. I have asked you to trust me, which you clearly have, and let me into your minds, your memories. But it’s still very one sided. Now it is time for me to prove my trust in you.

I will need one person, please to act as a surrogate for the room at large. And that person is

SARAH: [Number]

MAXWELL: Very, well [Number] please come up.

I need to ask you a question. Can I trust you? Yes. You think yes, but I’m a scientist, I work on the basis of proof. **[SARAH hands him a bottle.]** Here I have a bottle. It’s a glass bottle, please, examine it for me. **[Participant examines bottle confirms that it is made of glass.]** And we introduce trust’s cousin – danger. **[MAXWELL places bottle into brown paper bag and breaks it, still inside of the bag, with small hammer].** Now we will put the bottle under this brown paper bag, much like these other three paper bags. The bottle is jagged side up in this wooden holder. Do you see this? Are there any identifying marks on the bags or the wheel that you are aware of? Good.

I am going to turn my back while you spin the roulette wheel so that I am not sure where the bottle is. You don’t have to spin it hard, gently please so that they don’t all fall off from the centrifugal force. Once it has spun a few times, stop it gently with your hand **[MAXWELL turns his back and participant spins wheel.]** Have you spun it? Good. Turn your back and I will spin the wheel. Participants please watch to ensure I do not mark or touch the bags in any way. **[Participant turns away and MAXWELL spins the wheel.]** Wonderful. You may turn around.

This is a test of trust. I am going to smash my hands down onto the paper bags that you will choose for me. Under one is a bloody, jagged mess. Only you know which. I trust that this is so. Let’s call this one, two, three, four. Which first?

[The participant choose the bags in random order. MAXWELL smashes them down until he has two bags left.]

There are only two bags left. I won’t lie, I’m a little nervous. I make my living with my hands. I want you to look into my eyes. Which is it?

[Participant names a bag, MAXWELL smashes it down and pulls the bag off the “real” bottle with a flourish.]

And trust has been tangibly achieved. Thank you.

III. The Second Tenant [COHESION] [20 minutes]

A. Introduction

MAXWELL: I can now reveal to you the projected outcome of our evening together. The Method works best when we are very specific in who we attempt to contact. I chose William and Issac Fuld, inventors and creators of the Ouija board. If anyone will be able to speak to us they will. The Board was, some may say, their obsession. Not only the brothers - every single family who came in close contact with the invention of the talking board ended up fighting, practically to the death. There are many who even believe that the board is cursed. I don't say that to frighten you! I say it to convince you of the very real power this object possesses. First thing is first, however, it won't do to rush. We must move on to the next phase in The Method: Cohesion.

B. Touching on Hoy

MAXWELL: This test is an important one. If it works, it will lock our energy together into a force that is strong enough to wake the dead. I need three participants, please. **[SARAH gives him the numbers.]** Now, please relax as much as you can under the circumstances. Take a deep breath in and let it out. Put your feet flat on the floor and your hands flat on your lap. In a moment, you will hear this sound **[MAXWELL snaps his fingers.]** When you hear that sound I would like all of you to close your eyes. You will keep your eyes closed until I ask you to open them. One more deep breath in, and out **[MAXWELL snaps his fingers.]** I would like each of you to keep your eyes locked closed until I specifically ask you to open them again.

[MAXWELL taps person in the stage left chair.]

If you just felt me touch you, on the shoulder or back of the shoulder, you are Number 1. I need you to think of two simple shapes. When I say simple, I don't mean as complex as a heart or a star, but more like a square. Obviously not those, but think of two simple shapes. Focus your mind only on the two simple shapes, not the other participants or anything else. Just the two shapes.

Now we'll move on to Number 2. If you just felt me touch you on sort of the middle of the back, you are number 2. I need you to think of a name, a name you hear practically every day, could be a loved one, significant other, your parole officer, whatever. Focus on that name and only that name.

And now we find ourselves at number 3. If you just felt me touch you around the middle of the back, you are Number 3. Your task is to think of a significant year or a date. A birthday, a deathday, a date you'll never forget.

Now, all three, please, open your eyes. You have thought of one concept and ignored the others? And you? And you? Very good. Please stand up, look out above the audience and see in your minds what I have told you to focus on.

Visual imagery is often the most difficult, the two shapes may not come through exactly. So if we've managed to get even one shape correct, we will count that as a success – it's not an exact science. But the other two, being words, are quite clear. The shapes, I believe, are a circle and a triangle. The name is Laura and the date was a year, 1987. If our minds have accommodated and aligned and we are all seeing the same things, please, sit down. **[Participants are seated.]**

C. Candle Alight

[SARAH turns on the book, checks remote in pocket.]

MAXWELL: This has been incredible so far. I think we have achieved the blending of our energies into one pulsing life force: Cohesion! But to prove beyond a shadow of scientific doubt that we have reached this stage of consciousness, I have one final test. And I think we will be using the board as well. Yes! Let's warm it up.

Are you ready? All right, please relax, and clear your minds of anything that may cause interference. Good. It has been scientifically proven by Andrew Newberg that this type of ritual, this exceptionally focused attention, engages the frontal lobe of the brain and may expand the mind beyond what was previously thought possible. And so, a candle. **[SARAH sets the candle up on the board.]** And an incantation. Dr. Swanson?

SARAH:

To light the dark

To see unseen

To fire the spark

To wake the dream

Speak to us one

As days of old

The deed undone

The tale untold.

MAXWELL: Unite your minds together and focus on the candle. With your combined energy, please – light the candle.

[The candle lights.]

Cohesion has been tangibly achieved.

E. Wine Glass

We are ready to move on to the third stage, Transmission.

SARAH: Max! Uh... Dr. Fink, we haven't even –

MAXWELL: Please, Dr. Swanson, I know what I'm doing. We need to establish that the spirits have, indeed, joined us, so we will skip right to it. Prior to the invention of the planchette, people would use anything they could find for the purpose. We will do our best to replicate those conditions. Dr. Swanson, the glass, please!

[SARAH hands him a wine glass, he sets it on the table.] Can you see that, in the back? **[Grabs the book off of SARAH's desk and repositions the wine glass on top of it.]** Better? Okay, good as it's going to get.

I will warn you before we start: the evidence here may be very, very slight. It may even be almost imperceptible to human eyes. I don't want you to take this as a sign that The Method isn't working. Dr. Swanson may, in fact, need to look at the recordings later to measure the variation. Sarah, Test 1, spectral to physical locomotion! Mark!

[SARAH and MAXWELL step back.]

SARAH: But I -

MAXWELL: William and Isaac Fuld, if you are here, please, move the glass, if only a little bit.

[The glass does not move.]

I say again to the spirits of William and Issac Fuld, please, if you are here, move the glass.

SARAH: I told you.

[The glass does not move.]

Please keep your eyes on the glass. As I said before, I am convinced without a doubt that the movement will be extremely small. We may need to –

[SARAH pushes the button and the glass shatters.]

MAXWELL: Ah. Um, well, that's a bit stronger than I thought – all right. It's all right, don't panic!

SARAH: **[sotto voce]** I just wish that you would listen to me, these levels are all over the place-

MAXWELL: Please, Sarah, we'll look at it later.

SARAH: Max, listen to me! You don't ever listen! I told you before, it seems crazy but it's almost like it makes them angry. You can't just –

MAXWELL: All right, all right! **[MAXWELL slams his hand down onto the table, remembers he's in front of an audience, smooths his hair and turns to address them.]** All right. We are, indeed, going to push forward. We will try to be a little more careful as I feel, and I have to be honest with you, that our evening is going to...well.

SARAH: Tell them!

MAXWELL: *All right!* Participants, at this point I will warn you: once a door opens, there's no telling what might be coming through. When the dead speak, they may be talking to you. We will push on *in the correct order*, with The Method.

[SARAH places the board onto the table facing participant and one chair set to the side of the table.]

IV. The Third Tenant: [TRANSMISSION] [15 minutes]

A. Living and Dead

MAXWELL: We must make sure that there is a clear distinction between the living and the dead. A quick review. Living: breathing. Not Living: not breathing. Living: pulse. Not Living: no pulse. Living: brain functioning. Not Living: brain not functioning. Clear? Remember: *we are not trying to achieve transmission with other people*. We can already do that just fine. We are attempting to transmit to and from the other side and that is an extremely different place from our own reality. Consider this: the living are often much more strange than the dead could ever be. Spirits can often become extremely confused in times of heightened emotional state such as the one in this room. Through this test, we will ensure that when the spirits transmit, they are the voices of the dead, not merely specters parroting our own, living, thoughts.

SARAH: [Number]

[MAXWELL has the number participant come up and sits them in the chair to the side of the table.]

MAXWELL: I know this may be difficult, but I need you to think of a person that you have had some emotional connection with that has passed away. Close your eyes if it's helpful. When you have it, open your eyes and write the name on this card. Alright, now I need you, you and you, please.

[MAXWELL hands three additional participants cards.]