WRISTWACKER

Apparatus and Effect:

The performer shows a guillotine type of frame comprising of a stand and a blade fixed in a wooden framework. The blade extends out from the sides of the frame, so it is always in view. There are two sets of holes in the frame: a large hole in the middle, and a smaller set of three holes at the bottom. The frame may be opened to remove the blade. The magician places his or a spectator's hand in the top hole. A carrot goes in the bottom hole. The blade is brought down, and it is found that the carrot is cut in half, but the hand is completely unharmed.

Examination of the blade will show that is 'L' shaped and will pivot. In one position the blade will cut. In another it will not. Pivot the blade so that one leg goes into the side of the hollow frame. It is in this position the blade will cut.

Method and Set-Up:

It is this pivoting of the blade and your ability to pivot it from the 'will-cut' to the 'will-not cut' position that constitutes the bulk of the secret and working of this effect. It is easily learned. The 'will-cut' position is that in which one side of the blade rests in the hollow section of the handle. It is in this position that vegetables and such can be cut in the keyhole.

In the beginning some veggies can be cut to demonstrate the ability of the blade to do harm. But, you must help them along a bit by partially cutting the vegetables thru prior to the performance. If using carrots for instance, cut a small wedge out of one side much as you were chopping down a tree. In short, you must make the vegetables easier to cut and destroy than they look. To start, have the blade up set in the 'will-cut' position, the blade in the frame, and the frame closed and setting on a table.

To set the blade for will-not-cut.....The easiest way is to grasp the handle with one hand and place your fingers in the middle hole with your fingers going down between the dropping front and the back panel. Raise up on the blade and let the blade 'L' rotate around your fingers and finally align itself at the top. When performing, turn the apparatus with it's side facing the spectators. Note the pin hole at the top of the frame. After setting the blade for the will-not-cut, insert the blade to align with the hole in the frame. All will be secure until you remove the pin.

If you are working surrounded pick up the apparatus and hold it in a horizontal position with the front upwards. Use either method to obstruct the blade so it rotates while pulling the handle letting the blade align at the top. By holding the outfit parallel to the floor the audience will not see the pivoting of the blade.

Presentation and Handling:

When inserting any wrist in the apparatus, turn the hand sideways. This will fill up the opening as much as possible.

Decide if you are going for a comedy or serious presentation. If using a serious presentation be certain that your story is believable. Stay away from the 'magic spells' and all the worn out plots from long ago. Give the spectators a plausible reason that this could, in fact, happen. Don't overdo any dramatics. Remember that they realize you will eventually push the blade down. Avoid stalling too much.

If going for comedy there is the newspaper headlines "MAGICIAN SLIPS, BOY LOOSES ARM." Or "GIRL LOOSES ARM." Rubber hands with a wrist watch attached, bloody cloths, book of instructions for the trick. All are viable possibilities.