



THE CRAZINESS OF EVENTS

Into the second half of the year and I don't know about everyone else, but things are starting to get cray cray.

As the silly season looms and we head into Christmas – yes I said it... I figured I needed to put things into perspective a little before we hit the wall. What better way to do this and take the edge off (like a Friday afternoon Serepax), than to share some of my funnier / crazier event stories with you.

One of my most lasting memories was a very large corporate dinner at the Australian Museum. I had been engaged to organise the entertainment for the night. The theme was Latin – of course. Halfway through the Latin show, all the dancers and drummers left the stage to do a fast change and two couples came on stage to tango and salsa. Cute, fun and not the most exciting, but necessary.

The event manager runs over to me and tells me this is boring and to immediately remove them from stage. My answer: it's mid show, it will look really bad to pull the performers off stage and then wait with a dark stage for the dancers to return. She looked at me and I saw the madness cross her eyes. She walked over the distro and pulled the hot three phase cable out of the wall, sending the whole event into darkness!

What followed was complete pandemonium with the tech director screaming, the client screaming, and the event manager screaming. Amidst all the screaming the three phase got plugged back in and the dancers took to stage, but what a night!

There are some events that are just slated to never succeed. They not only cross over into Murphy's Law but embody them! This was a charity event, again not my event thank goodness.

I was there pre-guest arrival when I saw the headline magic act rehearsing. He was (with the aid of an EA) trying to get the MD into a wooden crate for a later reveal. The MD was explaining he got claustrophobic, but eventually was convinced to get inside. Guests were ushered in and the magician was introduced. As the act began, there were a few bungles due to a funny noise, but no one really noticed except a few of us back stage and the magician. About 10 minutes into the act the magician was introducing his pretty assistant, she did a twirl hand outstretched, which the magician was to catch in a snazzy "ta da" moment, when a blood curdling scream started.

With a crash the wooden crate, stage centre disintegrated, and the MD came thrashing out in a mad panic, the magician lost concentration, missed the girl – who went flying off the stage into the audience, all to a background of screaming profanity from the MD.

This next story is not mine but was told to me in a "you won't believe this" events story swap.

The client was a large corporate with a lion as their logo. The idea was to have a real lion on stage during the show and this had taken months to get sorted with the venue etc etc.

It was decided to put the lion in a clear Perspex box (with air holes) during the show – see folks no bars!

The client decided the agency quote for the box was too much and organised to get one made up for less than half the price themselves.

The box arrived and was installed. It was noted that the box looked much smaller than originally planned and was glued and not bolted together.

The lion was brought in asleep and placed in the box. An hour later, the lion started to wake up and due to the smaller size of the box the lion was starting to show tension and standing up a lot, trying to move around. The room was in the final stages of lighting and audio checking. The lion started to make sounds and eventually the box broke apart at the joins.

Large hotel ballroom, staff and crew everywhere and a real lion!!! Oh and guests starting to arrive for pre-dinner drinks

The everyone ran screaming; the doors were bolted and Taronga Zoo was called for a lion handler to come and help as there was no trained personnel onsite to take care of this.

Eventually the handler arrived and sedated the lion who was placed back in the box asleep and sleep he did; for the whole night!

So, when things get really crazy and don't go quite to plan, just stop take a breath and count yourself lucky.