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TopHat

September 2005 - Edition 42

I think that this is a first for TopHat. I should know, because I've read each one from cover to cover. For the first time, Jon Snoops has relinquished his iron grip over the Monthly Editorial, and let someone else have a go! **Why?**

A few months ago, I wanted to try and find all the effects that had been written up in TopHat, and see if I could cut them back to their barebones, adapting them for my needs. I found it quite difficult to go to something quickly because, whilst each TopHat is indexed, there is no overall, categorised index.

So - with a short and poorly played fanfare from the village band, a hearty "Huzzah!" and the throwing of hats into the air; may I present for your comment and discussion:

[TopHat - The Index](#)

Things to note:

- This Draft covers Issues 1-20, as I need to go and get treatment for Carpel-Tunnel syndrome before proceeding :)
- I have not included "Announcements" and Editorials.
- Jon and I tried to come up with a categorisation that was simple enough to work for everything, but which had a few levels that allowed for sub-groups. The first category is **Article Type**, and then the **Genre**. The **Descriptions** are a mixture of the originals, and my own understanding, so may be occasionally biased.

So, what now you ask?

We need some input from Bunnies!

1. Is this something which provides actual benefit to the current (and future) MagicBunny community?
2. I appreciate that an online searchable database is *the way to go* (e.g. "***I only want to see Mentalism***", "***Display all Card Effects that need at least 14 Pre-Requisite Moves***" etc.) However, I do not have the technical knowledge, or bandwidth to make this happen. Any takers?
3. What have I missed? I promise to listen, however we need to stay practical. No single categorisation system is universally accepted, however, it will become too complicated to create and maintain if we make it too intricately detailed.
4. How can/should it be deployed and sensibly used?

The beauty of this exercise is that it only needs to be done once, and then it is easy to maintain each month/quarter. Please accept my apologies if I have misrepresented your, or anyone else's articles; I take full responsibility for inconsistencies and any grammatical or spelling errors. Please send me examples of either, so that I can correct them.

Hopefully, a complete understanding of what we have had in the past will also encourage contribution in the future.

Let me know, I suggest the discussion is kept to one place, [here](#). If feedback over the next few weeks is positive, then I commit to completing the rest by October, fingers permitting.

Rgds - BrucUk (Bruce Graham)

PS - just for the record, Michael Jay's "Fire" articles in Issues 17 and 19 are some of the funniest pieces of instructional wordsmithing that I've ever come across - especially 19. Check them out!

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Three Tricks, One Act (AT LAST!)

Thoughts From Mid-West America

Three Tricks, One Act (AT LAST!)

By Michael Saint Louis



Well, we're coming down the home stretch on this little routining exercise. Soon we'll be back to exploring the wonders of Wilson's little book. You know, I can't help but notice that *The Complete Course* is constantly turning up in conversations on Magic Bunny. Before we get back to the routine, let me make a few points about Wilson's book. Is it worth five pounds? Yes. Is it worth ten pounds? Yes. Is it worth fifteen pounds? Most definitely. Granted, I really don't know what the pound is worth (more than a buck, I know that much) but I am quite sure of the worth of *The Complete Course*. It is indeed a complete course, granted an introductory course, but a complete course nonetheless. If

I had named it then it would be called *Magic 101*. It is a foundation for any career in magic and a fine reference book for any library. Alright, enough of that for now. We'll be back to it soon enough.

Now, where were we? Actually, I know exactly where we were. I am just gracious enough to provide a little summary of the past couple of months for everyone too lazy to go back and read the last couple of months themselves! As you may recall, we started this little adventure with all of the tricks found in four cheap magic sets and a few off the top of my head bits. We pared this down to: a thumb tip, a jumping gems stick (this is the Hot Rod's great grandpappy), napkin folds (mouse and bunny for fabric and a baby and a rose for paper), a scotch and soda set (the kind where the shell does not lock onto the gimmick coin... we'll be calling this set the SAS from now on), Okito and German boxes and a quick order prediction adapted from *The Unpleasant Book of Penn and Teller*. As I recall we left off with the idea that the napkin folds and order prediction should be left for special occasions, the thumb tip as a general performer, the SAS and boxes as a routine anchor and the jumping gems stick as the odd duck.

The walk around restaurant gig is a special kind of magic. Sure, you are there to entertain but you have some special constraints. You aren't there to keep them in the seats and ordering drinks. You are there to distract the patrons while they waiting to be fed but not stretch out their time. After all, the more that table is used in a night the more money is made! So a basic, quick routine will be our anchor. Sometimes, though,

Three Tricks, One Act (AT LAST!) (cont.)

you may be called on to give a little extra if food is delayed or for special customers. For these cases we'll have a couple a extra bits at our disposal. We'll even have a quick post meal encore.

It's now time to get to the real workings of the routine. It's probably fair to go over how I like to write my patter. I don't. I don't perform much anymore, but when I did I usually worked off the cuff. I would perform the effects, noting where dialogue was crucial (like audience instructions) and helpful (such as adding to misdirection) and use this to form an outline of things that need to be said. From there I would start talking every time I practiced, interacting with an imaginary audience to start coming up with good directions of dialogue and one-liners. I would then beef up my outline, including possible story lines and all the good throw out lines I had come up with, so that at any given point in a routine I could switch things up a bit. If an audience seemed a bit more prudish than usual I had a tamer story line to go with, for example.

I realize that this approach doesn't work for everyone. You have to have a comfort in using the spoken word and, honestly, I'm a much better BS man than I am magician so this usually works for me. Usually, but not always. When performing in Mandarin I carefully scripted and memorized my patter because a slip of the tongue can be disaster in spoken Chinese and also because I was not fluent to a point where I could talk off the top of my head and be sure that I wouldn't end up needing words I just didn't have at my disposal. Some people are like that even in their native language. There is no shame in that. The idea is to give the best performance you personally can: it doesn't matter how you get to that level! For this, I'll write out a lot of the patter

Most magicians try to be funny. At least, most magicians seem to try to be funny, sometimes it is hard to tell. The problem is that so many magicians put much more time into their technique, which the audience ideally isn't aware of, than they do in their dialogue, which is aimed directly at the audience! That is just crazy. If you feel lost in writing for yourself, get help. Take classes on writing, storytelling or improv comedy. Read books on writing comedy. Study (not imitate) comics. Worst comes to worst, hire someone to write for you. There is no shame in that either.

The first thing to do is to establish your character firmly in your head. Because of a personal fascination with vaudeville and also because vaudeville is family friendly, I am going to write everything for this routine using an old vaudeville magician as a character. I'll dress in an older style with high-waisted baggy pants, a short wide tie and a jacket (no hats, we'll be inside). I may cheat if allowed by the establishment's rules and carry an unlit cigar. This does firmly invoke George Burns but I think this is a fair thing to do in this case. For one, the man is an icon. He is the archetypical vaudeville performer to a couple of generations. Also, it quickly brings to mind his style of comedy and in a table-hopping situation you need to establish your character as fast and firmly as you can. I've been listening to a great deal of old time radio (listen yourself at <http://www.radiolovers.com/>) and feel like I have a firm grasp on the pacing the old time comics used. This is important because it allows me to write around a personality. One quirk is that I am going to constantly refer to vaudeville even though it was gone before my parents were born. I think that a 33 year old talking about how he spent the years after World War One is funny and that is important. I must think my material is funny because I am the audience who will hear it the most! If I don't like the material, no one will like the material.

Before we start writing I want to address the fact that we are dealing with a very specific case here. A couple of minutes tops, peppered with magic. In a longer routine you will probably want to write dialogue that will build on itself. You will want to draw the audience into your world and life and introduce the audience to things that will be crucial later. Next time you watch stand up, pay close attention to the last minute of each act. How many of the laughs generated in that last minute were reactions to set-ups earlier in the act. "And then came Mama with her broom!" could be some huge applause-gathering ending if the comic has spent time working up to it throughout the act. We don't really have that luxury, though. But that's okay; we aren't the stars in this gig. We are just the opening act for the food, right?

Now, I mentioned before that we will create an anchor routine and then a few other sub-routines for specific cases, like an encore. This prolonged exposure to the audience will give us a chance to repeat a line each time, kind of like a tag-line. In this case, I think every bit of dialogue I have written contains the set-up "If there is one thing I learned in vaudeville...." It ain't Shakespeare, but it is going to give the audience comfort because it is a bit of recurring familiarity. Now, let's get to the routine.

Three Tricks, One Act (AT LAST!) (cont.)

First, let's cover the anchor. Between the SAS and the boxes we can perform some beautiful magic. We'll use a non-locking Scotch and Soda Set, a few extra half dollars (enough to load the Okito box and the German box), a German box (a lidless box with a recessed bottom that has a half dollar glued into it) and a matching Okito box.

The table approach is quick and to the point. "Hello, kids, my name is Michael Saint Louis and I've been asked by this establishment to entertain the folks tonight with a little magic. I know, you probably remember me from my sold out tour of the Orpheum vaudeville houses back in 1925. Now here's your chance to see for free what all those good people paid fifteen cents for. Would you like to see a little something?" This introduces you (well, actually it introduces *me*) as someone there on behalf of the restaurant to perform magic. It also puts right up front the fact that I am basically claiming to be something like 102 years old and something of a star. Finally, it lays right out on the table for everyone to see the fact that this is kind of a corny little act. And if they say no, for Pete's sake, leave them alone!

"Don't worry, I don't work for tips, but remember your waiter does. And speaking of that, look what some joker left him tonight (pull the SAS gimmick, centavo side up from your pocket). You know what that is? Right, a centavo from Mexico. Can you believe that? Do you know what a centavo is worth? If there is one thing I learned in vaudeville, it's always get paid in American money. You know why? (Pull out the half shell.) Because fifty cents and a centavo is worth about (close hand, perform the SAS miracle) fifty cents.

"Believe it or not, another table left the poor waiter his tip entirely in these. (Reach into pocket and drop the SAS and pull out your handful of half dollars.) Poor kid didn't even know what they were. I explained to them that they were old-fashioned giant nickels and gave him a dollar for the lot of them. He's a good kid, but there's a reason he's waiting tables here tonight instead of finishing that medical degree. Anyway, I wanted them because they fit perfectly in my uncle's pill box. You see my uncle was a magician in the medicine shows after the Civil War. They sold patent pills and creams from a wagon. I'd tell you his name, but if there was one thing I learned in vaudeville, it was never to mention my uncle's name if I expected to work in that town again. Anyway, they sold pills and creams and back then they didn't have plastic and everything came in a little pill box like this (introduce the Okito box now and hand it out for examination if you wish). He showed me my first magic trick back in 1902, would you like to see it?

"See, these half dollars fit perfectly in the pill box. Even though the lid isn't marked, I know exactly what used to come in this box (perform your favorite Okito vanish, ditch the coins in a pocket), can you guess? (Reveal the empty box and say) Vanishing cream! (Put the Okito away.)

"I know, that was a little corny, but I love that bit. Sentimental about it, I guess. It's a quick one, but a good one... Say, maybe that was too quick for you? Would you like to see it again? Magicians say never to do the same thing twice, but if there is one thing I learned in vaudeville, it is that rules are made to be broken. Well, that and the address of every bail bondsmen along the Keith-Albee Circuit. But that is besides the point. We were going to do that trick again, weren't we (this time remove the German box and a handful of half dollars)?

"I'll tell you what, though, if there is one thing I learned in vaudeville, it was to build up the suspense. This time, let's do that without the lid and see what happens. They say that the hand is quicker than the eye... it may be true. I have been this trick since 1902 and I still don't know how it works. All I know is that I put the coins in, see, they are a good fit (flash the box around, performing your moves) and the next thing you know, just like my uncle and his medicine show, they are gone!

"Thanks folks, it has been a pleasure, but if there is one thing I learned in vaudeville, it was always to leave them wanting more. Enjoy your meal."

And that is it. Quick, painless and with a little bit of experimentation using the clothes you plan to perform in, you can easily find a way to shuttle the coins and boxes from one pocket to another. I suggest keeping the coins in a jacket pocket with the SAS set in a divided section (if your jackets don't have fabric dividers sewn in the pockets they are easy to sew in) and the boxes in a front pants pocket. As you perform, ditch the coins in the opposite jack pocket and you will reset to the opposite side as you go. This is a very, very short routine but it can be lengthened as needed with any number of coin tricks using the half dollars, SAS and even a real centavo. Plus, we have other sub-routines to use as needed.

Three Tricks, One Act (AT LAST!) (cont.)

For a table with antsy children, or simply those a little too young to appreciate magic, we can fall back on the napkin folds. I won't go into the techniques here, they are easiest enough to find elsewhere. With very young children, say anything under about the age of 7, canned patter is going to be pretty useless. They will be either too shy to talk to you or so outgoing that they will steal the show. Best bet is to ask them their names, if they like whatever you are about to fold for them and let it kind of flow from there. Looking over the fold selection I have, I'd say I would be way better off finding and learning a couple of things suitable for little boys than I would be designing patter for children. One bit of common sense that occurs to me as I think over this sub-routine is that I should carry extra napkins because many children will prove unwilling to wipe their chins with their new rose or baby doll!

Don't make the mistake of thinking the napkin folds are only for children! If you are asked to put in a little extra time with a table a napkin fold and a little patter could easily fit the bill. For example, coming back to a table could go something like this:

"Your waitress asked me to come back by, and I was delighted. I like you kids. Are you all married? (Dating, whatever is appropriate.) I've been married 86 years myself. Met my wife right after the Great War was over... that's World War One for those of you keeping score. We were both touring the Loewe's Circuit. I was doing an Oriental Paper Folding act and she was in Tessie's Tapping Troubadours. Have you seen a paper folding act, a good paper folding act? No, well, hand me a napkin please and at least you'll see a paper folding act. She had replaced her sister in Tessie's troupe. My wife's sister is a marvelous dancer and has a voice like an angel. My wife, well, my wife has a sister who is a marvelous dancer with a voice like an angel, but when her sister went solo my wife fit all her costumes so she was in. They were headliners and I was doing four turns a day. All the fellows fell for those girls hard. My wife had caught my eye, but she was out of my league... even a Tapping Troubadour who can't dance or sing is too good for a guy who has to fold paper four shows a day for pocket change. But if there is one thing I learned in vaudeville, it's being a girl who can't sing or dance in a singing dance troupe doesn't do much for your self-esteem. So she fell (present the lady at this point a napkin rose) for this. Two weeks later she became my wife and assistant. (And if the lady's boyfriend/husband seems amused, throw in the following.) You wouldn't be smiling if you knew I was looking for a new assistant."

Another bit for a table that has had a long wait for service or just plain doesn't want you to leave is the order prediction from *The Unpleasant Book of Penn and Teller*. All you need to perform this will be a pen... and a teller! Okay, well I thought it was funny. Seriously, you'll need a pen and a pad of sticky notes. I won't explain the whole process here, you can get the book, but I will go over the fine points to make it a little more table-hopping friendly. First, make sure that earlier in the evening you have picked up the name of one person at the table. You can make your predictions on the *back* of the sticky notes (put the name on the back, too) and fold the paper so that the sticky part holds the paper closed. That way you can just tuck them into your hand behind the pad as you go. Let them hang out half way so that they stay in sight. After everyone has ordered, hold them loosely in your hand, switch them to the other with a soft toss (to mix them up a bit) and then toss them on the table saying, "I'll let you all sort them out, you probably don't trust me anyway."

What does that leave us with? The need for a special encore and only a thumb tip left to do it. Luckily, that's all a magician needs, right? This one is really simple. By getting a few blank or duplicate tickets, you can do a simple torn and restored paper routine using the tip (or not... use your favorite method). Basically, when asked for an encore, time it with the check. "You all are a great group of kids, really, and I'd like to show you some more but I'm afraid it isn't allowed. You see, everyone always asks to see the same thing: make the check disappear. (This is the time to grab the check.) Now, if there is one thing I learned from my vaudeville days it is to give the audience what they want. So I would tear up the check (tear up check here) and make it disappear (make it disappear here). But, see this doesn't make the manager too happy... evidently these things are important. And if there is one thing I learned in vaudeville, it's to keep the boss happy. So, (reappear and unfold the check) you just keep this and I'll just keep my job, okay?"

And that is pretty much that. It's enough to keep everyone happy and fits easily in your pockets. I talked about loading for the anchor, but pretty much everything else (extra checks, extra napkins, a pen and sticky notes) would fit in an inside jacket pocket. That leaves only the thumb tip for you to place. I think that it wouldn't matter much since you can retrieve it before you even agree to perform another trick for the table.

Three Tricks, One Act (AT LAST!) (cont.)

And besides, all pocket management is a matter of personal taste. You could even leave out the Okito box and just use the German and the Okito's lid and free up some more pocket room if you want (of course, then you cannot hand out the box for examination). Only experience will allow you to perfect this part of the routine.

What? What about the jumping gems? Well, I said that was the odd duck. I'm afraid I never quite got anything out of that. I have an idea, expounding on how crooked my uncle was and introducing it as the only thing he left me in his will besides the pill box but it just hasn't gelled yet. I would probably carry the thing around with me, waiting for some divine inspiration (or desperation) to hit me and put it into the act. Routines are odd, they are almost like living things and they will evolve and grow as long as you allow them. Maybe some of you already have a use for that jumping gem stick, or see a chance to cut from the pill box straight to the order prediction. Play with this, use this exercise to polish your routining skills before you tackle something important like your next show. If there is one thing I learned in vaudeville, it's that you can't spend enough time preparing your act!

By Michael Saint Louis

The Ghost of a Coin (Revisited)

The Ghost of a Coin (Revisited)

Coin Classics

By Peter Marucci



The late J.B. Bobo's book, *Modern Coin Magic*, is unarguably one of the great pillars of magic literature.

No self-respecting magician can afford to be without this book; note that I said "be without" it; not "not read". Because, if you have the book, you will return to it again and again for new ideas. And you can't do that, if you've just read it once or twice.

However, even J.B. wouldn't say that he was infallible or that some of the routines in his book couldn't be improved.

One that falls into that category - and a favorite of mine - is *The Ghost of a Coin*, where a coin changes to a glass disc in the spectator's hands.

I never liked the idea of the glass disc (it was far too light to be believable). And so, I came up with the following:

EFFECT

A gold-colored coin is "melted" in the magician's hand into a glob of gold-colored metal.

WORKING

This is kept as simple as possible, to allow you to focus all your concentration on the presentation.

You show the audience a gold-colored coin, which you are holding at the tips of the index and middle fingers and thumb of the right hand. Hidden from view in the right hand is a lump of gold-colored metal, about the size of what the coin would be if it were melted down.

Using the Bobo switch (see, I warned you that you would need his book again!), toss the lump of metal into the left hand, which is immediately closed, while the coin is slid out of sight in the right hand.

The Ghost of a Coin (Revisited) (cont.)

The right hand, holding the unseen coin, goes to the right jacket pocket or pants pocket, where it drops the coin and picks up a cigarette lighter.

The right hand brings out the lighter, lights it, and waves it under the closed left fist (that is supposedly holding the coin).

Explaining that this is one way to check for counterfeit money - fake coins won't melt - you open your left hand finally and let the lump of metal fall on the table.

"Well, we're okay here because that was a real coin."

Leave the lump of metal on the table, because the spectators WILL grab for it and you want them to examine it, but without your asking them to.

SECOND THOUGHTS

This is a simple little illusion that only take a few seconds to perform and can be carried anywhere.

It's the perfect effect to show when someone says, "So you're a magician; can you show us something?"

(Little does that poor, unsuspecting person know that, having said that, they could be watching you still perform six hours later!)

The lump of metal should be smaller than the coin, so that no one is going to suspect that the coin is somehow hidden in it.

Both Canada and the U.S. have gold-colored dollar coins that are ideal. However, if you want to use a silver or copper coin, no problem. Just use a silver or copper lump of metal, too.

If you prefer to do this in the spectator's hand, as in the original Bobo routine, you can use a blank metal slug, the same diameter as the coin. That way, you can point out that the surface gold has melted off.

By Peter Marucci

Look at Yourself! Part III

Look at yourself

Part III of an undefined number in a series

By Gary Scott



THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY DECISIONS

This may be a conclusion on this topic, one which I have thought so much about in recent months.

This is mainly for close up/cabaret performers as my experiences in performing large stage productions or illusions is absolute zero. Maybe what I write can be adapted and thought about in a different context so I hope you all get something out of this... OK... where do I begin?

I've just come off the back of two very strange shows. The *worst* show I've ever done and the *best* show I've ever done. Luckily the best show was the latter. So... to get a perspective of things in a 'why they did and didn't work' kind of way, I'm going to write a small

Look at Yourself! Part III (cont.)

treatise and compare the 2 shows. Well... what went *wrong* in the *worst* show? ... I could say everything, but that would be a gross overstatement, so here is a list of what I believe led to a very flawed show.

1. I chose another magician as my assistant for the evening. Being a fellow performer, I believed that they would have the decency to go with the flow, but they never and sat there like a deer stunned by headlights. DO NOT choose a fellow magician to help you out. Get that layperson up and get the reactions. Laypeople react to laypeople. If the assistant laughs, jokes or is excited and bemused by what's happening, then so does your audience. Remember... magicians are not impressed by the invisible deck. No matter what you do with it.
2. The lack of enthusiasm from the assistant caused me to be very nervous. This affected my performance no end.
3. I forgot to do my personal psychological prep. I went out there cold.
4. Half the stage had been lost, due to theatre groups building stage sets, so I lost half my angles for everything.

So here I am writing about my cock-ups. Hey... it happens. I admit it. I did a big boo-boo. But I did learn... I learnt a lot. I learnt that the only *real* assistant is a layperson. I must do my psychological prep and I must not be enclosed in the act that I have. It must be more flexible. If I have angle problems then I must have an effect in my repertoire that is just as powerful that can be done at any angle. I must become more adaptable as a magician to make my work better.

Well, those are just the fundamentals of what went wrong, but I have a lot better time remembering the *best* show and here are the points that made it work.

1. The assistant was a recommendation for their jovial nature. This worked a treat. I had already met her earlier and I knew she would be perfect. She worked so well with me and we played off each other brilliantly. We had a great rapport.
2. Her enthusiasm had me very relaxed. Made me feel really good. I was able to give the best natural performance in my magic career.
3. I did my psychological prep. It worked wonders. I made this a priority this time and I felt confident from the start.
4. I had worked this venue before and I knew that there would be no angle problems. I could do anything I wanted and not worry if it would work or not. I could just do my act as is, no changes.

This was the best show I ever did for all the right reasons. The bad show was bad for all the right reasons too. I am the magician. I need to take control of the show that I do... and I am just about getting better at that with every performance.

I have really looked at myself. The worst show I ever did was all my fault with the decisions that I made... but the same is true of the best show I ever did. It was all the decisions that I undertook and put forward that made it the best show I have ever done.

Well it's the best so far.....

Looking at myself will hopefully inspire others to do the same.

Look at yourself across all aspects of your magic, from your dress, to your psychological set-up to your performance and decision making.

You won't regret it if you do.

Siya all on Magic bunny

Best wishes
Gary Scott

Packet Trick Beginnings

Packet Trick Beginnings

Notes to beginners

By Matthew Denham



My name is Matthew Denham, my user name is Denny and I want to discuss the ways in which we should advise beginners to learn magic. I am only 15 years old, and therefore, it is not that long since I myself was a beginner. I want to raise this issue as there has been a lot of debating on the forum about this topic, although a lot of it is disguised as a book versus DVD debate.

Well the method I used was neither of these, in fact I guess very few learn from one method. I am going to share the story of how I learnt first the basics, and onto all counts, cuts and colour changes I have so far learned. This was my method but through it I learnt to love magic greatly, and also learnt sleights and how to perform.

I started at seven from my sister's Magic Circle box, and played with it. Seeing my interest, my mother found *The House of Secrets* in Blackpool, and compiled a selection of self working effects. At seven I saw these as a toy, and this I feel meant that I first learned to enjoy magic. Over the next few years, more self working effects were bought and I started to feel quite advanced because the effects I was doing were pretty damn good.

Soon, at about the age of nine I started to look at tricks that weren't self working. Bob, at House of Secrets picked out some that used some easy sleights and then I set to work on learning them. So the packet tricks I was buying started to teach me the criss-cross cut, the double lift and various simple moves. I was only young, so they probably weren't perfect, but because it got me holding cards a lot, by eleven they were pretty top notch.

Working through the packet tricks my skills were developed, but I didn't feel like I was practising... because it was fun. I soon started to learn Colour Monte and effects using card controls such as false shuffles, colour changes and, at twelve, the Elmsley Count. As I say, I didn't feel like I was practising, and I didn't actually try to perfect anything, but the amount of time I spent on magic meant that I did perfect a lot of things.

I am now quite an adequate card handler and, through my interest in magic, I can now handle coins in a reasonable fashion. I am now fifteen and have taken magic seriously for at least two years which means I am at the stage where it is really the presentation that matters and not the skill. This is the stage which beginners need to get to, and I would like to advise beginners towards this method as I **enjoyed** it, and I have come out of it with a great respect for magic as a hobby.

I'm not saying all beginners should learn this way but want to put an account of how it worked for me and how it could for others. I thank you for reading and urge you to give beginners the choice they deserve when advising them on how to learn magic. I see magic not just as the art, but as the way it makes me smile.

By Matthew Denham

Life or Death Part IV

Life or Death Part IV

The End Days

By P. Craig Browning

2 Peter 2:1

*But there were **false prophets** also among the people, even as there shall be **false teachers** among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.*

1 John 4:1

*Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many **false prophets** are gone out into the world.*



It would seem rather obvious by the testimony of these biblical passages, that the issue of *charlatans* has been at the fore of most every culture, since the earliest of times. These two particular passages warning the reader more about *false teachers* set within the auspices of the church and those that would misuse biblical tradition as a means by which to gain personal glories and advantage e.g. the *Jim Jones* kind of guy or gal. The very kind of "twisted" mind spoken of in John Riggs book "**THE MESSIAH PROCESS**"...

Quite honestly I find it amazing that more of us haven't "crossed over" to the "dark side" of the craft. Not only do we have a fairly large cross section of the public that are *ignorant* when it comes to what the bible really says, let alone any other more "exotic" teaching, such as can be found in the East that all you really need to do is appeal to their egos a bit — their fears, their desires, their guilt and yes, their curiosities. It's just not that hard to create a reasonably small, yet lucrative cult these days. Take someone with either Johns' or my own personal background and voila! You find a generational sense of pedigree that lends itself so well to the act of creating a "church" around yourself, that it's almost frightening. Unlike our ancestors (and even living kin-folk) John and I chose to serve a higher calling. I guess you could say that we both were cursed with a bit of integrity and couldn't possibly lie to the masses in the manner our kin-folk took so lightly. True to the ways of the genuinely spiritual, we have unwittingly taken on ourselves, the role of being black sheep which stand outside the roads more typically frequented by the masses... but isn't that was gurus are supposed to do??? Take the road less traveled?

Hmmm?

Getting Back to Reality (vs. the short-lived fantasies of my mind), most of the "cons" as we call them today, seem to exist within the skirt-folds of the "legitimate" world. Truth be known, that's where they've always hidden.. The more dangerous of them at least. A glimpse of world history's more "politically intriguing" moments reveals how the real power has always been sitting somewhere just behind the throne and outside the public's eye. Trust me, even in today's world, the President of the United States ISN'T in charge... this is true of every nation and major organization; there is always someone not quite as well noted, that's behind the things that are really happening.

I know, I'm sounding like some kind of paranoid fool. To a degree you may have something on that charge, I've invested a great deal of my life studying conspiracies of all kinds, including the real manner that the "covert" artists has employed via those willing to invest themselves into playing "The Game".

So you once again ponder, how the heck any of this has anything to do with Magic, Mentalism or the theme of this particular series.

A great deal!

Though many of the Skeptic's associations in the world despise him (probably because he is the Arch-Druid of the U.S. and actually believes in magick) Philip Isaac Bonewits composed a wonderful tome in the early 1970s entitled "**REAL MAGIC**"... probably one of the better, more analytical essays on ritual magic and metaphysical theory that's available to the average human being. Unfortunately like the magic world, the born again Pagan world prefers the latest in trendy garbage and current "in vogue" authors than some kind of essay composed by a pot smoking hippie-freak like Bonewits a few decades ago e.g. many have cost themselves some valuable as well as practical insights about life, magick, and spiritual reality.

Life or Death Part IV (cont.)

In one of the latter chapters of this particular book Bonewits outlines the things people need to look out for and be aware of when it comes to [potentially dangerous cult situations](#). Simple warning signs that can literally save your life. Yet, for some strange reason this practical, viable material is never brought to the fore when it comes to public education, consumer protection or even in the act of being a parent watching out for their children. While James Randi, Ian Rowland and all the superstars of the Skeptic's world are bashing the living daylights out of everyone that does tableside Readings or channeling aunt Betsy, there are dozens (if not hundreds) of young people being sucked into these groups and at times, even their parents are being lured in. Individuals that ultimately surrender their identities, their family ties, their homes, jobs, etc. They sign everything over to the cult they've been drawn into; programmed to a level that negates any input or alternate sense of perspective. In short, these poor souls die!

A Cult embodiment can be anything from one's family and the traditions associated with that family group, to our political affiliation. What makes a cult "Dangerous" however, is based on how much of our freedom and identity they take away from us and too, how much they impose upon us and if or not that imposition evolves and becomes more pronounced over time. Let's face it, everyone benefits when church members Tithe (though very few do). This is a very acceptable practice and the "standard" if you would, when it comes to making a contribution to one's parish or temple or mosque, etc. When the demand of the cleric goes beyond that tithe however, we need to question their motives as well as our role of support towards said organization, regardless of what it may be. Especially when they are encouraging you to sign over property and high ticket possessions as a "charitable contribution" after you've passed over to the other side.

Our world has changed a great deal, just since I was a kid. On certain levels we've lost our innocence and on many other levels, we freely surrendered our common sense in exchange for the quick fix. In other words, we've set ourselves up to be a society of victims, most of us believing "that will never happen to me, I'm too smart for it..."

I've watched the children of noted magicians — kids that know all these tricks and whistles — get sucked into the mega cults like Scientology and Church Universal Triumphant. I've also helped pull them out of groups of this kind, sometimes when the bullets were flying (not an exaggeration!)

The bottom line is, even when we "know" the supposed ins & outs of things, we don't know it all. Too, the cons know that the easiest suckers to catch are the one's that think they're too wise to get caught. In other words, it's a dangerous game. One that requires us to THINK every now and then and reconsider our own position in life and how we not only live that life, but how we share it.

One of the most spiritually inspiring men I know is a devout Atheist (according to him). He has inspired more people to keep on trying and not give up on themselves (myself included) than anyone I know. He's sincere and brutally honest, which is far from what I can say about some of the other people I know that profess to be "enlightened" not to mention those who believe genuine ordination comes from a Cracker Jack box (*can you say Universal Life Church?*) What's so great about this man's personal philosophy in life, is that he's no hypocrite and more important, his "faith" is not blind. It comes from a place of knowing rather than mundane gullibility. In my book this is true spiritual greatness and akin to St. Thomas' attitude in the New Testament right after the Resurrection — prove it to me!

Where I've been involved in investigations involving Psychics I'd have to say that dangerous cult situations are my biggest pet peeve. I've watched, almost powerlessly, as these groups and their leaders slowly and methodically pick away at a person's soul, until they no longer have an identity of their own. Then, as if they were a chronic drug user, the "victims" of these groups begin to hock everything they own, giving it away to the cause. It's a hideous thing to witness!

But how do these groups manage to gain so much control over people? You ask.

The larger, more seasoned groups seem to start with similar foundations:

1. They target the young, the fear-filled and the desperate.
2. They appeal to your ego as well as the "innate" concept of right & wrong (our guilt and issues of confusion)
3. They place us into an environment that's filled with positive, up-lifting feelings that are continually being reinforced by other group members.
4. They extend to us a sense of acceptance for being who we are, as we are. (Though this part of the

Life or Death Part IV (cont.)

procedure does vary from group to group based on its founding philosophy).

5. They offer to you hope and even a sense of purpose.

Yes, I am repeating myself here just a bit, lending reprise of sorts, to what was said in the original article of this series. The fact is, what we are repeating hosts significant import when it comes to our obligation to protect the general public from acts of fraud. Secondly, I feel that YOU need to be able to see where the real crime exists so that you can give yourselves permission to get off the back of the typical Reader/Counselor and apply your anger and rage in those areas where genuine problems exist. To coin a phrase, stop being the cop that writes J-Walking Tickets and learn how to go into the abyss and "out" the real criminals that prey upon society.

Believe it or not, there are magicians that believe in the Paranormal. Just because you're into magic does not mean you must instantly convert to Atheism or become an Agnostic. Such antics really do equate to selling one's soul, becoming an active part of a cult-like consciousness, and loss of personal *free will* or perspective. This is something that's brought out in George P. Hanson's book [Magicians Who Endorsed Psychic Phenomena](#).

This particular article is intentionally brief; we've broached the subject, given you leads, and encouraged you to stand-up and assume some responsibility for yourself as well as your community, by learning facts that stem from the "other side" of the issue. Stop mirroring what you hear said and promoted within the magic community and learn how to stand on your own two-feet and THINK. But do so with information and understanding that comes from both sources. Unless you have a thorough knowledge of the issues from either extreme, wisdom cannot possibly be the deciding factor. Rather, you will be guided by personal bias based on limited research. Balance is always the key but, at the very same time, we must find purpose through that goal. More directly, we must understand that there are criminals in our world who prey upon the ignorant, the gullible, and the desperate. It really is our obligation to weed out such characters and expose them for what they are. We must educate the public about this style of operation, keeping current with what it is they do vs. the perpetuation of the same story line that's been used for generations and is dang near worn out it's so old.

NEWS FLASH! The Cons aren't the local Reader's using billets (for that matter I've only met one Reader in my 35 years of being one, that ever used them... outside of Spiritualists church services that is.) So I believe the skeptic's world needs to up-date their files just a bit...

Why is this kind of police action "out obligation", we're just magicians — entertainers?

Let's go back to our own pre-medieval roots when the local "Magician" was known as the Wise-ard; a guide for the masses and one that stuck up for the little guy in most instances. If you are in fact a true "Magician" then it is far more than an act of personal fantasy, it contains civic obligation within its mantel. Then again, just being a human being obliges us to look out for those less educated and "weaker" than ourselves. That's just being a decent human being let alone anything mystical or magickle. Knowledge exists and is given for us to use for the benefit of all. If it is not used, we loose it. For me the loss of knowledge is not up for discussion. I value it far too much and yet, the wreckage of my youth is now costing me that very treasure in life; my mind slowly deteriorating. Thus, I must be as the Wizards of old and pass on my own observations, encouraging those that may be willing to give my ramblings more than a fleeting thought, perspectives that might sustain our world for yet another generation of time.

I do have a prediction of sorts, one that is unfortunately covered in grey clouds. You see, the tide is turning in an ugly way at present and I fear it will get even more monstrous as this decade wanes and we find ourselves upon the threshold of the next. There are those in the position of influence who are bound and determined to fulfill certain prophetic ideas and the wheels are churning the waters of serenity, for the sake of carnal gains and false glory.

I opened this article with passages from the bible warning us of false teachers and charlatan behavior. Open your eyes that you may see; your ears, that you may hear and divine which is true and which is false. Then, in a loud voice, proclaim the truth for all that will hear you. This is the role of the Wizard — the truth magicians of the world. It is not that we do tricks, but that we deliver the kind of manifestations that are transformative and revealing — protective of those we've personally assumed obligation toward.

There are more than enough real criminals in this massive world for us to expose, harass and when possible,

Life or Death Part IV (cont.)

imprison. There is no need to invent graft where it does not exist i.e. in the image and lives of the honest, hard working people that do no harm serving as a Tableside Reader and Counselor. It is from this simple craft that the entire Mental Health Industry sprang into existence over the past century or so. Given the fact that the Psychics & Palmists have been doing their job and refining their skills for multiple centuries... well, like a bartender, they do serve a purpose now don't they?

It's something to think about...

By P. Craig Browning

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON DANGEROUS CULTS
PLEASE CHECK OUT THIS LINK
[The Global Ideas Bank](#)

A Quick and Direct Mental Effect with Cards

A Quick and Direct Mental Effect with Cards

Mentalism at its best

By Daymo



EFFECT

A spectator selects a card and remembers it as the performer turns his back. The card is then hidden from view by the spectator and the rest of the deck discarded as the performer turns back around.

By reading the spectator's nonverbal cues, subtle inflections in voice tone and body language; the performer is able to identify the card that the spectator is thinking of.

HISTORY

Due to the mentioning of this effect in a recent discussion in the close up section and a subsequent request for more information via a few PM's, I thought that I would contribute it to Top Hat. This is basically nothing more than a simple card force and reveal. Any force can be used (it can also be done without forcing) but the thing that makes this interesting is the manner in which the card is revealed. The reveal is pretty much improvised depending on which card is chosen but there are a few subtleties and suggestions that I frequently use to increase the impact and create an air of believability.

I must go on record as stating that I claim absolutely no originality for this effect what so ever. Although I have never seen this in print, nothing here is remotely new. This is a combination of ideas which has become something that I began performing and continually tweaking, adding to, and streamlining to create what I feel is a believable and impressive display. As I have mentioned elsewhere, this has become one of my most requested effects and it is also the simplest effect that I perform – which makes it both frustrating yet strangely satisfying.

I wouldn't perform this as part of a mentalism act but it seems to nicely follow up a series of more traditional sleight of hand card effects as I feel it is entirely feasible in the minds of the audience that somebody well versed in cards could have studied and practiced these skills in order to assist them in a card game. "I wouldn't want to play cards with you!" is an expression often heard by card magicians and I believe that this is not only uttered due to the obvious digital dexterity of the magician but also because of the psychological advantage that the magician would apparently have over a layman in a game. I've performed this effect for my closest friends and whilst they might not necessarily believe that I could read minds per se; because they know that I'm 'good with cards' they find it entirely believable that I could learn these skills and adapt them to effectively work out the name of card that somebody is thinking of.

A Quick and Direct Mental Effect with Cards (cont.)

This is an effect that I play with the utmost seriousness. After a set of card effects I will adopt a more serious approach and tell the spectators that it is vital that they too take this demonstration seriously and that they follow my instructions to letter otherwise it will fail. I feel that playing it this way immediately distances this particular demonstration from the "tricks" that went before it and gives it the gravitas that it needs to become believable.

METHOD

As discussed, the method here is nothing more than a card force. I have tried this with several forces; all of which do the job, but the one I have come to use most often is the Slip Cut or Backslip force due to the fact that it is quick, direct and fair looking. It is the timing used that makes this seem so fair. I riffle the cards and ask that the spectator tell me when to stop. I riffle quite quickly to the middle of the deck and then begin to riffle one card at a time as I instruct the spectator to make sure I stop exactly when he says. I then perform the Backslip force and gesture towards the spectator whilst looking away. This is performed very nonchalantly and I instruct the spectator to immediately hide the card as soon as they have made a mental note of it.

The Cross Cut Force also works very well and once the cut has been marked, I will turn to the spectator and reel off the below explanation of what is about to occur. This provides the adequate time misdirection which is desirable with this force.

Another way of doing this is by having the spectator cut the cards and lifting up the cut off portion to display the card that they have genuinely cut to. In the act of reassembling the deck, the card is controlled to the bottom by means of the Kelly Bottom Placement and as the deck is returned to the card box, the bottom card of the deck is glimpsed as per Richard Osterlind's Breakthrough Card System DVD.

It goes without saying that if you are going to be forcing a card, you will need to glimpse the bottom card and shuffle it to the correct position (in the case of the Backslip force you would control the card to the top of the deck.)

PERFORMANCE

"For anybody that knows anything about poker, you will have heard about what are known as 'tells'. I'm sure everybody has heard the expression 'keeping a poker face'. Basically, Poker players study body language, non-verbal cues, and facial expressions and then use the techniques that they've learnt to determine whether or not somebody is bluffing, and even to some extent – to learn more about the cards that the other players are holding. This is something that can be very effective and I will attempt this very feat right now. Now, this is not something that you could really do in a real card game as it relies on me being able to control the situation and ask questions and so forth – and that would never fly in a game of Poker – however it does use the same techniques and with some practice it can be a very useful tool when playing a game of cards. I ask that you take this seriously and genuinely follow the instructions that I give. Ok? So when I ask you to concentrate on your card, genuinely do so or this just will not work."

Have the spectator shuffle the deck and as he hands the deck back to you, glimpse the bottom card. Shuffle the card to the top and perform the Backslip force as detailed above. We will assume for the purposes of this explanation that the card forced is the Six of Hearts.

"I want you to take a momentary snap shot of that card and burn an image of it into your mind. Then put the card away in your pocket and continue to concentrate on it. Don't imagine the name of the card in your mind but see an actual image of the card as though you were still staring at it. Do all of this whilst my back is turned and tell me when you've put the card away."

Once the spectator has instructed you that the card is out of sight and that they are concentrating on it, turn around to face them. Have the spectator hold out both of their hands palm up. Take hold of the spectator's wrists with both hands and grip them gently around the area where you would be able to feel a pulse. Do not check for the spectators pulse in the usual way; simply hold them by the wrists with the thumbs on top where the pulse would be.

"Now I'd like you to imagine that the palms of your hands are completely covered in paint - One with red

A Quick and Direct Mental Effect with Cards (cont.)

paint and the other with black paint. Don't look at your hands just look at me and imagine it."*

*As you say "red" gently squeeze the spectators left wrist with your right forefinger and thumb. As you say "black" gently squeeze the spectator's right wrist with your left forefinger and thumb.

Without pausing continue by saying: *"I felt a slight tension in this hand"*. Lift the spectator's left hand by the wrist and continue: *"You're thinking of the colour red. Your card is a red card. Don't say anything; just continue to see the image of the card in your mind. There are two red suits: hearts and diamonds. Please concentrate on the suit of your card."* Immediately name the suit: *"Your card is a heart. Again, continue to concentrate on the image of the card in your mind."*

Let go of your grip on the spectator's wrists and gently guide his hands downward, placing them firmly by his side and take a step back: *"Now I need to determine the value of the card and we will do this a little differently. I'd like you to imagine the image of the card in your mind being completely erased so you are now staring at a completely blank playing card. On the white surface of the card a number is drawn in thick black strokes. This number is the value of your card. If you are thinking of a picture card; then Jack would be eleven, Queen would be twelve and King would be thirteen. Do that now. See this number in your mind."*

Remain silent for a moment staring directly into the spectators eyes.

"I'd now like you to count out aloud from 1 to 13 and be sure not to place any emphasis on certain numbers – do it in a completely monotone voice."

Continue to stare directly into the eyes of the spectators as he counts. Allow him to finish and pause for a beat.

"I'm going to go for a five or a six. It's a six. You're thinking of the Six of Hearts."

AFTERTHOUGHTS

Although this is quite a drawn out and in depth explanation it is a very quick and direct effect to perform. Usually, this whole presentation would take no longer than two minutes. There are a lot of subtleties and suggestions at work in this effect and they are there to give the impression that you are really doing what you say you're doing. For you to go through the process of holding the spectators wrists, having them imagine colours and numbers, asking them to count aloud from 1 to 13 you are effectively creating the illusion of muscle reading, the illusion of reading subtle voice inflections and of analysing body language. You are working with the "creation by definition" principle as discussed by (among others) Banachek and Luke Jermay. For a more in-depth description and explanation of this particular suggestion I would suggest (pun intended) picking up a copy of Psychological Subtleties by Banachek or Skulduggery by Luke Jermay.

With this often ridiculous looking byplay, you are also giving the audience a glimpse into the actual mindreading process and the procedures that make it possible. This is a rarity in the performance of mentalism and is a subject that is discussed at great length by Derren Brown in many of his works including The International Magic Lecture, Pure Effect and The Devil's Picturebook. There is also a lot to be said about the manner in which the odd miss can increase the believability in performances in mentalism. This is a subject that has been theorised upon for years by many different performers and in the case of this effect certainly helps to "sell" it. This effect has become a party piece of sorts for me and I've performed it over and over again in the same room with the same people. This is an effect that is practically tailored for repeat performances and a lot of the time I will deliberately miscall the card. I won't say "Six of Hearts" if the force card was the Jack of Spades but I'll perhaps get the colour wrong or, in the words of Kenton Knepper, be off by one.

I think that's pretty much all I've got to say about this diverting little trinket. Have a play with it and don't let the simplistic method dissuade you.

'Till next time.
Daymo

Going For It Part II

Going For It Part II

'Faking It' for real

By David J. Bodycombe



Here's the final piece to my diary of my first-time performance at the Magic Cavern. If you missed the first part last time, see Issue 41 for the full, gory details.

Monday 4th July 2005 – show day

Well, the day is finally here. I pack up all my stuff in a suitcase and two large storage boxes. It's a precariously-balanced mix that I only just transport to my local station down the road. Sod it, I'll get a cab from Wimbledon. This all adds to the cost, however. I reckon all the props, clothes and directly relevant study materials will have cost somewhere in the region of £1000. Wheeee...

I get to the venue at about 4.30pm. Gary "The Hotshot" Scott is already there. Doc (Dominick Zwolinski) is going to be here shortly. We have a quick drink before going down to the venue whereupon two things strike home. Problem 1 – the stage is a lot, lot smaller than I remember it. Problem 2 – the resident theatre company have built out a fountain from the back wall, reducing the floor area even further. My very big Monopoly board is laid out on the floor – it only just fits. Phew.

My Die to Ball (Dice tray) trick is looking very ropey after so much practice. I discuss with Doc whether it should be dropped in favour of the Driebeck Die, to ensure a smooth (and low stress) start to the show. While unpacking my stuff, I realise I've left my Driebeck Die (£75 worth of trick) at home. Bugger. Arse. Damn. Blast. It's probably such a large thing that I've remembered the hundreds of tiny details but forgot such a big thing. Ah well, the dice tray is back on the running order.

I slightly juggle around my running order a little so that the quiz show routine, which I think is the strongest trick entertainment-wise, is in the middle. I place the running order in my props boxes as a prompt, together with notes of my first lines. This gives a very bizarre list, thus: "How low can you go, Dale Winton, White bones, Council regulations" etc.

Thankfully, I am last on the bill – scheduled for 45 minutes or so. This gives me quite a lot of time to get settled behind the scenes. I'm also going in to a 'warm' audience, so my theory goes. Paul Martin, the night's host, starts the evening off with some nice bits of comedy business interspersed with card and sponge tricks. Gary Scott does what he describes as his standard 30 minute cabaret act. Then there's the interval.

After an all-too-quick interval and an introduction from Paul, I'm on. Strangely, I'm very calm as I walk on stage. Let's see what happens...

Tuesday 5th July 2005 – the aftermath

I feel really ill – as if I've used up enough adrenalin for July, August and September all at once. I think I enjoyed it, but it felt like I'd just been in a near-miss car crash. I'm unscathed but a bit weirded out by what I've just done. I'll write more later.

Thursday 7th July 2005

Having had a bit of time to re-adjust to normal life once more, here's a run down of how the evening went.

1 Dice tray (die to ball)

Huge reaction from the crowd as I walk on – applause lasts for seemingly 20 seconds. Are they expecting someone better? I eventually have to hold my hand up to stop them. The trick itself seemed to work smoothly – phew! Good start.

2 Noughts and Crosses

Bit of a ropey introduction to this one, because of the loss of the Driebeck Die. It takes a little while for a victim to volunteer, but the one who steps forward seems jolly enough and she gets into the spirit of the game. Unfortunately, she chooses the one square that brings the trick to a halt (because it's a guaranteed

Going For It Part II (cont.)

win for me). I do have an out for that – i.e. demo how I win and start again to give her another chance. At the end, the reveal comes undone a bit too quickly which doesn't explain the photo but still – the effect worked well and I'm quite relieved.

3 Monopoly

After a self-devised trick, straight into another one. Talk about putting pressure on yourself early. The crowd start warming up from this point, as they get to interact with this large-scale trick. People enjoy this effect, even though it goes on a bit long. One person in the crowd chuckles to himself as if he thinks he's spotted a gimmick. I suppose it's possible. One of my volunteers gets a bit awkward and I have to use force of personality to steamroller him somewhat. I think the audience just about buy it.

4 Dice stacking

I only go 3 for 6 on this, which is a bit of a disappointing hit rate given the months of practice I've put into this. More disappointing is that I forget to cue in most of my drop/fail lines, which is the real sin. I really should use a much bigger surface so that I have more chance to stop the cup properly. However, I start and finish strong so I guess I got away with it.

5 Quiz show routine

Thank you Dan Harlan. This worked really well. Lots of laughs – some big ones – right throughout what is a long routine. The crowd were pretty warm at this point so I put in a couple of audience participation bits (a catchphrase, and getting sections of them to support 'their' player in the game) which worked staggeringly well. I was amazed at the amount of applause this was generating, so much so that overall I often forgot to thank them for it. I was not ready for this kind of reactions from just 40 people (a near full-house at this small venue).

6 Chink-a-chink 4-way

7 Climax to dice routine

Probably the low point of my evening. I really didn't take the audience with me on this one. These two tricks were a late change for another type of chink-a-chink that I ditched when I realised that the angles wouldn't work for an audience that were sitting down. Sight lines for the audience on my left probably wouldn't be great either. I can't work out whether I was rumbled on any parts of this – certainly my handling wasn't super smooth. I find these kinds of tricks very difficult to pull off in public because they seem so unjust. You can put in weeks of practice but still have a crap performance. Nevertheless, the audience applause was still quite warm.

Climax to a dice routine was OK but not great either. It had a very nice ending that I had come up with – I think I got away with that, which rescued this session. By this point, my transition between tricks is not great and I'm somewhat relying on my running order sheets (hidden in the equipment boxes) to prompt my next move.

8 Card location/muscle reading

My (somewhat weak) intro line for this was "Council regulations say that card tricks have to be completed by 10pm, so I better sneak one in now". One of the audience members asks "Is that true?" "No," says I – getting a big laugh from the audience. "But thanks for being so gullible. Makes my job so much easier." Magic.

This is a complex trick which requires a bit of work on behalf of a spectator while my back's turned. The guy who's volunteered by his mates says he doesn't play cards. Greeeeeat. Anyway, I bash on. Halfway through I can see various members of the audience smiling in a "We know something you don't know" way. I hear someone from the audience shout out *sotto voce* that he is dealing out the cards in a row. Uh oh. I don't panic, and say "If it goes wrong, it goes wrong". This is a useful attitude I picked up from Michael Jay when he performed in the same venue a few weeks back. All my tricks have, by and large, worked thus far so I don't mind a miss by this point. As it happens, I hit the right card – making this something of a miracle. I count myself lucky, although I had to examine the pack for longer than I should have because I was half convinced it had been messed up.

9 Coca Cola Roulette

By this point I'm in the zone and going off on one and ad libbing madly. This next trick is a good one to get

Going For It Part II (cont.)

the crowd going. My cut/no cut scissors gag backfires a bit as he manages to close them. The main trick has a plot twist to it which, I think, worked well. At least half the people I spoke to afterwards seemed to be sucked in by it. Satisfyingly, the crowd suck inwardly each time I let off a 'bullet'. There's a great round of applause at the end. The 'prove out' ending goes a bit flat – there must be a better way of showing that the final 'bullet' was the live one. Good routine but needs a bit more polish.

10 Dice off rope

Silly quickie to send people off home. Everyone cheered at the right time. Seems to have hit the spot.

The ending goes a bit wrong. I say something to Doc which he takes as me handing back to him. He turns the house lights off briefly (which I presume is some kind of theatrical tradition) and I don't know what to do. Do I stand there or do I walk off? In the end, I stand there like a lemon for a while then walk off. I don't get a chance to thank the audience that much, which is a shame as they'd been really great in getting involved. They were quite sympathetic even though only 6 were friends. Ah, well. Most of the audience traipse off pretty quickly and not many stay behind, which is a shame too.

I had overrun, though. I should have been on for 45 minutes, I was actually on for an hour. Not good – if this was a 'proper' professional gig at a less friendly theatre, that overrun would have had consequences. There wasn't much in the way of timing run-throughs I could have done but I was surprised that I'd overrun by so much even though I'd left one trick at home! Nevertheless, I had fitted 10 effects into an hour which wasn't a bad clip, I thought.

So, what next? What have I learned? The minor points:

POSITIVES

- Two self-devised effects worked really well, by and large, and I felt satisfied by that.
- My audience laughed! And joined in! This is the best feeling in the world. The patter that I've had rolling around in my head for weeks came together very well, and although I forgot a couple of good lines, on the whole I think I hit the spot with a good range of jokes.
- Thankfully, I think I ironed out the speech tics in time.
- Surprisingly few nerves.
- The variety of the theme is great. There's plenty of material (since there's plenty of games), and I'm fairly sure the texture throughout the show was reasonably good. As far as I could tell, there was a good pacing of interaction, stuff I did by myself, funny stuff, some slightly more edgy material... I could be wrong, but the "routine-ing" held up once we'd got going.
- Fairly strong bookings despite the summer date. How much of that is due to my act is impossible to say. (On the negative side, I am slightly disappointed on how few of the people I had emailed and flyered had actually come along.)
- A good life experience.

NEGATIVES

- Need smoother transfers between tricks. Someone suggested that I should throw in more bits of background about dice and games, something several people mentioned as being of interest.
- Concentrate less on pure slight of hand classics, as (a) it's not my main skill, and (b) I'm competing with the other magicians who do them, no doubt better than me.
- Need to build from this basis and polish up the edges so that it's a solid, professional show. I've done pretty well just working on my own, but I may need a director or just a second opinion in the longer term.
- The timing was not good.
- Prop management could have been a lot better. By the end of the set, the floor resembled a war zone. Although better suited to a larger stage, nevertheless I should have tidied up as I went along. Also, I think I would have taped down the large Monopoly board onto the floor and had it at the start of the show – for both safety and to save time.
- Oh yeah, and I ran at a big, big financial loss.

Going For It Part II (cont.)

The major things, however, are significant. I did enjoy this. I do think my personality is suited to it. I would like to do this again. Discovering I like parlour/stage magic is interesting given the large number of card and close up tricks I've bought to date. In effect, my show probably owns more to mentalism, which does have a big crossover with puzzles, codes, symbols etc.

I feel like I've hit on a good theme. No one else seems to be doing this act. I did this show mainly as a learning experience, to force myself to set a goal and work towards it. I've "gone for it" now, and I'm surprised to find that maybe this'll turn into more than an interesting experiment. Whether I'll find enough venues to support this mission further, and whether it'll lead onto fortune and fame, that's for another time...

David Bodycombe would like to thank his co-performers Gary Scott and Paul Martin, Dominick Zwolinski and the other Bunnies who were there on the night, and particularly Richard Leigh at False Impressions for the opportunity to perform in the first place.

By David J. Bodycombe

Unrealities

Unrealities

Card Miracles

By Daniel de Urquiza



Hi. This is Daniel de Urquiza again, broadcasting from Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Do you remember a routine of mine, previously published here, named "Argentinean Miracle"? Did you like it? Okay, "Unrealities" is the evolution of it. I'm very proud of this little piece. If you never read "Argentinean Miracle Routine", my advice for you is to go find it, read it, and practice it. Then, come here and learn this one.

Fair warning: I'm not going to explain every move used. Otherwise, the explanation would take 10 pages. You are supposed to be an average card handler... like myself.

EFFECT

Spectators drop dead. When they resurrect, they worship you like a demigod.

A new Theocracy is created around you. At the end of the process, you are the sole ruler of the world.

METHOD

Perform the following routine.

Now, seriously:

EFFECT(S)

The magician openly takes a card from the deck, and places it into one of her front trouser pockets.

Spectator picks a card... any card. The card is lost in the deck. Magician explains that four cards are going to be her helpers to find the selection.

1) She cuts 4 cards, not showing the faces of the first three, the last one with a very nice one handed flourish, in such a way that the last card lands face up at the table. They see that it's a red jack. Magician shows all the cards. They are the four jacks.

2) The four jacks are going to give some hints about the identity of the selection. They do so, in a very surprising and funny way.

Unrealities (cont.)

3) But the magician, even when to everyone the identity of the selection is very clear, is still hesitant. So she need more help from the jacks. One jack leaves the jack packet, and end ups in the deck, face up in the middle of the tabled deck. It's the jack that matches the suit of the selection. Still, the magician can't fully understand which card is the spectator's selection.

4) As a jack is face up in the middle of the deck, so the other 3 jacks visually turn face up one at the time (as Aldo Colombini says, I do this phase "Just because I can").

5) As the magician seems to be unable to grasp the identity of the card, she finally asks the audience, openly and directly, 'WHICH CARD WAS SELECTED?' They name it, she says 'NO, that one CANNOT BE THE SELECTION. 'Cos it's the one I had all the time... in my pocket.'

METHOD

Ok, you'll need at least this setup:

J,J,J, rest of the deck, face up J, one indifferent card on bottom.

Let me explain a few things first.

I use this routine as a "loner" while doing table hopping. So, **my** setup is a little more complicated. My setup is:

J, J, J, all the spades, rest of the deck, JS face up, X card.

Why?

Because, as I told you, I'm doing ONLY this routine. Think about it, I have packed 5 effects inside of it (actually, there are 6 or 7, as you will see). The reset is almost automatic. It's perfect for my venue, table hopping. So, I'm more than willing to complicate the setup a little if the overall effect gets enhanced. Stay with this all for a while, chap.

a) Start by presenting the deck to spectators. False shuffle if you will, but only as an unconscious act. Don't make a big fuss about it. It's not mandatory to false shuffle ALWAYS. So if you don't feel like doing it, then don't.

Spread the deck in your hands, classic forcing them one of the spades. Let the 3 Jacks go away, then slow down, and ask your spectator to take a card. This is not classic forcing, this is abuse. You have 12 cards to offer.

Tip I: Place the K and the Q first, next to the JS. You don't want spectators to choose a picture card, 'cos it won't make a good contrast with the JS. Spectator will tend to let the first 2 or 3 cards go, so this way you are controlling the identity of the selection a little bit more. You'll know it's going to be a spot spade. This is your opportunity to learn the classic force. When performing this routine, try to force a particular card inside your possibilities. If you fail, still you are succeeding. I wish the real world could be like this.

b) So, they have selected a card. While they are looking at it, swing cut the top portion of the deck to the palm of your other hand. Make them place their selection in there, get the break and perform a classic pass. Stack, with selection above, it's again on top.

Tip II, the Fair: The swing cut looks funny. It makes noise and has an awkward handling. So, use the easy misdirection given by the spectators looking at the selection to perform it. That's to say so the swing cut as they're looking at the card. "Perfection is in details, but perfection is no detail" Who said that one?

Tip III, the Great: Why I use the pass? 'Cos I want to keep my setup. So, feel free to use any other control, but as long as you keep your setup

c) Now yes, false shuffle.

Claim that you'll find the selection using some helpers, a few cards of the deck.

This is your opportunity (you see, this routine is full of opportunities. It's like America) to put in practice all your fancy, dancy false-triple (in the hands!) cuts.

False cut, produce a card, don't show its face. Repeat 2 more times. For the last card, a Jack, turn the deck over, Charlier cut (I have this line: "And for the last card, I know you are going to appreciate my effort... with one hand"), place the Jack in position for the hot shot cut, do it, catch the Jack, place it on the table.

Unrealities (cont.)

Say: "Yes, I know, a Jack is not too magical. But what if I tell you that all the four cards... are the four Jacks?"

You have on the table: face down selection, 2 face down jacks on top, a face up jack on top of everything. Turn over the jack, take the four cards. Now, a handling (very old, not mine) to rearrange order. One hand takes the bottom 2 cards, the other hand the top 2 cards to show four. Place the bottom 2 cards on top of the other cards. Turn them over and, you guessed it, Elmsley Count. 4 Jacks are seen.

Tip IV, the Valiant: Let me use some common terms that I love to use (they don't, unfortunately, exist in Spanish) to describe the aesthetics of the above explained handling: 1) nonchalant 2) off hand 3) casual. Also, try to give it an air similar to the Ascanio Spread, 'cos we are going to use it later (we are conditioning viewers to perceive a sleight as an innocent handling. We magicians are like mean little Pavlovs, you know!)

d) Say: "These Jacks are going to give some hints about your card." Turn the packet down and repeat the handling described earlier (transfer top two cards to bottom) to rearrange the order, thus placing again the selection 3rd from the face down the deck.

Say: "So, your card is black, is a spade, is odd and is minor than seven."

What you do is a diminishing count. Or: triple lift, show selection, turn face down, leaving a Jack at the table, double lift, show selection, leave jack, perform an variation of the top change (see "Jumping Gemini" from Mr. Ortiz, or the videos by Daryl on sleight of hand) to show the selection each time. Finish, saying "minor than seven" with the selection in your hand, showing its face to spectators.

Of course, you can use any method to achieve this: Rhumba Count, Frustration, Gonza Count (I invented it, not translated yet)

So, the spectators get to see all the jacks transformed into the selection. It's a very, very (I mean veeeeery) nice part of the routine. Enjoy their faces. A gift from Daniel de Urquiza to you, gentle and patient reader.

e) Gather all the cards, face down. Say: "I'm still not sure about the identity of the selection. I will ask the JS to help me again." While saying this, Jordan Count. Again, you'll hear gasps, 'cos they are seeing the jacks again. Blow over the packet, and do what is called in certain circles, (Stephen Minch, Complete Works of Alex Elmsley Volume I, while explaining variations of the Ghost Count, wrote: "This is called in certain circles an Underground Elmsley." Since then, I wanted to say it myself. Thanks, God!) a half Ascanio Spread, showing 3 jacks. Take the double to the top of the packet. Show clearly that the Jack of Spades is missing. Ask: "What was the suit of your card, again?"

Spread the deck, face down. The face up jack of spades reveals itself. Use the natural misdirection of the climax to perform a half pass of the bottom card of the face up jack packet.

f) Say: "Hmmm, I still don't know what card you selected, so... see! A face up jack! As this Jack is face up, then this other Jack turns face up, then this one, then the last"

You have a face up jack showing. I use the flip flop move to turn over the packet, showing another face up jack. Then again the flip flop move, but using the top 2 cards of the packet. Then, the flip flop again, with all the packet.

This way of presenting this phase, it's coherent with the plot, 'cos you don't know which one was the selection. Also, it justifies the effect of the jack turning. You don't know what else to do, so you try to "distract" your spectators.

Tip V, the Roi Soleil: Another way I use is the blow away change, but I turn the whole packet when need to. A small idea, independently developed by me. Think about it, and experiment with a whole deck. Instead of turning the top 2 cards, turn the entire deck.

g) You are holding the packet, showing a face up jack. Say: "Would you like to see the 3 jacks turn face down?" No matter their response, perform a triple lift. If you did things rights, you'll end up OK. It will seem that you openly turned face down the jacks.

It's a gag, you see. A GAG. And I don't see you laughing.

f) Say: "Ok I give up. Which one was your card?"

While saying this, perform a face down Half Ascanio's Spread again. Take the double to the top, placing the selection to be palmed.

They answer you and you say: "No, not that one. It cannot be. I had it in my pocket all the time."

Unrealities (cont.)

Reach inside your pocket, produce selection.

Tip VI, The Final: You should end up with a face down spread deck (from when you revealed the face up JS), the four jacks face up on the table, behind the spread, and the selection, face up, ahead of spread.

To reset, find the setup of spades, cut them to the top, replace selection, add jacks, add face up JS on proper place, done.

CREDITS

Well, a lot of credits here. Where do I start? Everywhere and Nowhere from Hofszinser, strong influence from the Dai Vernon impromptu version. Jumping Gemini from Mr. Ortiz, the Hofszinser Card Magic Problem, Mr. Hartmann Blow away change, the Flip Flop move I think from Mr. Harris, a variation of Mr. Ascanio's Spread, Mr. Elmsley's Ghost Count, my own Argentinean Miracle Routine, etc.

KR
Daniel de Urquiza
AltaCartomagia
Argentina

Many thanks to all contributors this month who've made this edition such a great read. We'll have more great effects and articles next month so please send any material which you'd like published to TopHat@magicbunny.co.uk.

Jon Snoops
MagicBunny.co.uk