



MagicBunny.co.uk

### TopHat

## *August 2004 - Edition 29*

This month's edition is huge. There's something for everyone here... cards, mentalism, bizarre magic, original presentations and more. First a chance to catch up on news as Nigel Shelton talks of funding the MagicBunny project. Although Michael Saint-Louis has now brought his intriguing "Let's Build Magic!" series to an end, he's obviously inspired others and fans won't miss out as Jason Waskett (Nisassa) presents his complete guide to splitting cards and making your own gimmicks. After reading this I've gone from card-splitting newbie to master. The guides are clear concise and photographically illustrated. This is an article everyone must check out. Next, Tony Spallino examines a subject that applies to all magicians and mentalists alike: creating a performing character. He takes us through the process of finding your own natural persona and injecting that into your magic.

Michael Saint-Louis kicks off his new series, looking closely at Mark Wilson's Course in Magic. Michael's entertaining writing style will take us all back to what many have branded the 'basics' and looks at what we can all learn from this text. Daniel de Urquiza continues his work on advanced card magic with a variation of Dumbury's Delusion and, as usual, he goes into a lot of detail on weak and strong points as well as other options and adaptations. From the presentation side, Craig Leonard talks over a basic mentalism principle and builds an amusing presentation on top of it. Also on original and bizarre presentations, Craig Browning begins a new series called "Now That's Gross." This month he explains in detail a disgusting effect which can, in fact, be made at home. I look greatly forward to seeing the rest of this series in future editions. Still on the topic of presentation, Peter Marucci also takes a simple concept and proceeds to draw a story around it: this month a scaled down version of Copperfield's Statue of Liberty effect.

~Jon Snoops~  
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Every issue of the TopHat contains original effects and articles written by readers and members of MagicBunny.co.uk. If you have a submission, please email [TopHat@magicbunny.co.uk](mailto:TopHat@magicbunny.co.uk)

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The Latest From MagicBunny

## *The Latest From MagicBunny*

Website News

**By Nigel Shelton**



Many newcomers to the Magic Bunny site have little understanding of how the boards are financed or how they are supported. They see a professional looking site and assume that it is supported by a large commercial venture, without understanding the nature of how these boards originated and how they operate.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Despite the fact that Magic Bunny has risen to be the largest magic discussion site in Europe, these boards remain a private undertaking and are wholly dependent private voluntary funding. There is no commercial support for the day-to-day running of these forums.

In total, the annual expenses of this site are small, being £166 at present. This is made up of a name registration fee of £16 and Internet Service Provider charges of £150. This is funded mainly from the financial input of one individual, with further voluntary contributions from a small number of other Magic Bunny members. It is true that there are affiliate links at <http://magicbunny.co.uk/>

shopjs but these are very rarely used and this is one area in which you may help to support the boards.

There are currently four affiliate links at the above link; Penguin Magic, Amazon, Alakazam and You Do Magic. Many members may already be familiar with these sites and may already be regular customers at these when making their Internet purchases. However, you may like to be reminded that, if you enter one of these sites from one of the links found on <http://magicbunny.co.uk/shopjs> a small percentage of your spending is returned to Magic Bunny at absolutely no cost to yourself. In this way, you can support the work of the boards with no financial outlay, simply by making use of one of these affiliate links on <http://magicbunny.co.uk/shopjs> before browsing through the relevant retail site.

Please do seriously consider supporting the upkeep of the boards in this way. There is no financial penalty for any member who wishes to use an affiliate link but this is one positive way in which you can assist the upkeep of these boards as you attend to your normal online shopping purchases.

If you enjoy the use of the boards and want to see the forums remain a healthy independent free site please do support Magic Bunny in this way. The £166 fee is an annual charge and is one that must be met in order to maintain members' free access to this vast depository of magical information. We thank you in advance if you are able to assist in this way.

*By Nigel Shelton*

Let's Split

## *Let's Split*

Splitting Cards

**By Nisassa**

Splitting cards is the peeling off of the different layers that are found in quality playing cards. If you are interested in card magic, then sooner or later you may wish to purchase gaffed cards to perform your seemingly impossible miracles. A pack of various double facers can be bought for around a fiver in the UK or 6 bucks if you're from across the pond. Pretty reasonable if you consider that's only 9.5 pence per card.

These can be bought from various places such as:

## Let's Split (cont.)

### UK

[www.cards4magic.co.uk](http://www.cards4magic.co.uk) [www.magicbox.uk.com](http://www.magicbox.uk.com)  
[www.merchantofmagic.co.uk](http://www.merchantofmagic.co.uk) amongst others

### USA

[www.haineshoc.com](http://www.haineshoc.com) [www.magicwarehouse.com](http://www.magicwarehouse.com)

Check out the Magic Bunnies library indices for other shops in your area.

Two ways of achieving your gaff without splitting cards are:

1. Use Emery paper (approx P400) to remove one side of either card and then bond these together. Wrap the Emery paper around a sanding block/flat piece of wood and holding the card down on a flat surface with your fingertips at the short side sand down the printing. As you get closer to the center layer it will get darker so you can see how evenly you are removing material. This is messy, time consuming and I don't believe practical but it's preferred by some and works well for them. I have read of industrial sanders/polishers being used.

2. Just glue two cards together. This is a simple gaffed card and useful for a key card but may not defy scrutiny.

These two methods may not suit your requirements though if you only wish to remove 1/2 or 1/4 of a side.

If these don't meet your requirements and maybe you are unable to find something that does, or perhaps you just want to save a few pounds because you can't stretch your finances. Then you will have to split your own. Which without the know how you'll probably find yourself thinking that it would be easier to split the atom, with a pair of binoculars in one hand and a very large axe in the other. Perhaps with a very brave friend holding said atom between his fingertips shouting "LEFT A BIT."

### CONSTRUCTION

To split cards you'll need to know a bit about how the card is made. The paper used is normally 2 or 3 ply playing card stock often called "black liner board" in the trade due to a black layer sandwiched in between the two outer faces. A helpful security feature. This opaque centre is actually due to both sides being laminated together by a black graphite glue which guarantees opacity. Most stock is from mills in Germany and France.

The two layers, the face and the back, can be seen here with what appears to be a third layer sandwiched between them.

The latter, seen here with the corner cut off for clarity, is actually the glue which has bonded to either side. In fact so effectively so, that it has taken a layer off of each side thus making the front and back very fragile.



Quality cards tend to be printed on card around 300 gms/m<sup>2</sup> and are then coated both sides with a varnish. This is a custom formula of which most major card makers have their own. The varnish is responsible for the slip and feel of the cards. It also, to an extent, protects the cards from dirt and absorbing grease/oils from the skin.

There's probably someone out there selling specialist kit for cutting/splitting cards, and you'll find people who will make them to order, but a steady hand and only a small amount of patience (which is all you'll have left after trying this) will give excellent results. Hey just kiddin. It's a bit of a knack but you'll get there.

## Let's Split (cont.)

I originally became interested in splitting cards as I purchased an effect which came with a duff magnetic card, which I preferred to blend in with my regular pack. The effect nearly trebled in cost due to this. But it was a learning process and I thought I'd pass on what I've gleaned to others.

Note that earlier I referred to quality cards such as those made by the US Playing card company or Waddingtons, not cheap alternatives that are not manufactured in the same way, or the plastic/polymer type cards. You can practise on an old pack but old cards will have absorbed grease and moisture, will be stressed from use, and may have small scratches, nicks or cuts in them. Depending on where you live humidity may also be an issue. It's best to practise with new cards straight out of the seal as that's what you are going to be using eventually for the finished product.

### ITEMS REQUIRED FOR SPLITTING CARDS

- A newspaper.
- A heavy old book. (I actually used Expert card technique "HEATHEN!" I hear you cry), but an old yellow pages is a winner.
- A sharp Stanley blade or craft knife (careful kiddies).
- Cutting board.
- Blu-tac.
- Correct safety goggles/gloves/scarf etc.
- A ruler (preferably steel).
- Fine Emery paper (P180 grade).
- Glue.
- Plasters (optional).
- Pack of new bikes.
- Patience.
- Time.



### ADHESIVES

My local shop assistant must have thought that I had a serious nasal problem as I spent quite a bit of wedge, trying a varied assortment of glues. "Ah here's the space cadet again." Listed are most of the ones that I tried:

UHU SOLVENT FREE and BOSTIC. These dried too hard stiffening the card giving a lack of flexibility. MODELLING CEMENT\*\*. I didn't try this for the same reason. \*\* (that stuff that used to come with Airfix kits,

which you squeeze the tube and none comes out, turn your back for two seconds and it's absolutely everywhere).

UHU PAPER. Now this one was water based which made it soak into the paper too much discolouring the surface and expanding the card slightly.

TACKY GLUE. Which reminded me of PVA woodglue. PRITT STICK. Some people swear by this but due to the nature of the stick I found it's hard to get an even coat. If you have problems with an even application or bubbles then you can massage/work them out with a cotton wool ball or use a wallpaper roller. You might want to use some sort of spreader to get an even coat.

COPYDEX. This is a water based version of RUBBER CEMENT which is Heptane based. Both are rubber latex glues. Rubber cement will dry in seconds whereas copydex will take minutes due to the



### Let's Split (cont.)

volatility of heptane. If you choose this it's best to wipe off any excess, if you've let it dry then cut it off because if you pull it off when dry, due to it's latex nature you'll actually pull it out of the centre of the card weakening/ruining the join.

I'm going to go off on a bit of a tangent here, I never tried using Rubber cement but it is recommended by many so here goes. In the US Rubber Cement (a vulcanising glue, called Rubber Solution in the UK) used in rubber repair, such as bicycle inner tubes, is totally different from the rubber cement used for paper glueing. The specially formulated Rubber cement for paper, is a low tack glue, and will not wrinkle it. Many glues, when applied, will bleed into the paper fibres leaving a trace showing on the paper. Rubber cement doesn't. It's a contact adhesive and when dry is not sticky to the touch, but when it comes in contact with another dry surface coated with it, it will form a very strong bond. When dried it can be easily cleaned off of any surface with what is known as a rubber cement rubber/eraser or simply by rubbing your finger across the area where the glue has been applied. It peels off in little glue balls and leaves the surface unharmed. Rubber cement is a common household item in the US and if you are thinking of getting it posted over here don't.

1. Due to flammability it can't be shipped by air.
2. It can be purchased from art shops who will either stock it or order it in for you.

Cost ranges from for £2.50 a tube (but you may have to buy 6), £6.99 for a 250ml jar with applicator lid or £15 a tin (Better value but whether you'd use that much is another matter). A trade name is "Kleer Tak" rubber cement by Mecanorma.

RUBBER SOLUTION. Available from any Bicycle repair shop (UK). I had partial success with rubber solution due to the fact that the cards took on a slight yellow tinge. I used an applicator (Stanley blade) to spread it over both surfaces to get an even coat and bonded them when dry. I found that I had to be careful with the application as it can discolour the card at the edges a little. Quite nice results as it's very fluid due to, I believe a high level of solvent, but it can work out expensive for the amount you'll use.

To reiterate if you are using any of the above then be sure to remove all excess glue from the card before it dries or you may well find that you've wasted your time.

3M PHOTO MOUNT. Made by Scotch. This is an absolute winner. It's clinical compared to the mess of the others above and less time consuming. Available from art shops and larger WH Smiths. It comes in a spray can which covers a hell of a lot of area and costs around £7 or a 200ml or £12 for 400ml. There are other spray glues out there but this is the daddy. It has a fine spray for a very thin coat unlike carpet spray glues on the market which leave a thicker coating. I believe it's non staining and non yellowing and I've had excellent results with it.

Don't accidentally pick up the wrong one. Also available:

3M RE-MOUNT. A multi stick adhesive, non staining, for putting up posters so they can be removed and replaced as required. The spiel reminded me of a "post-it note" type adhesive. A temporary adhesive.

3M SPRAY MOUNT. This gives initial hold and allows for repositioning before it sets. This sounds like the ideal choice but I've read that it gives a temporary light bond. If the latter wasn't the case then it would be the perfect choice. Might be worth a try. Sorry to be unclear on this but personally I'll stick with 3M PHOTO MOUNT. Forgive the pun but if it ain't broke, don't fix it.

FIXALITE SPRAY. This is a colourless spray used to seal in charcoal drawings. Sounds to me like a cross between varnish and glue.



Let's Split (cont.)

I didn't, but if you can get hold of it you may want to try "Photo Dry Mount" as a bonding agent utilising heat and pressure. Check out associated products below.

**METHODS**

The two main methods to split cards, that I am aware of, are the wet and the dry split. The dry split has two methods, one of which I feel is by far the easier. You'll have to find one that suits you best.

**THE WET SPLIT**

For the sake of completeness I'll give this a mention, but when I experimented with it I found that this gave inferior results as the card will take on a matt appearance when dry.

Immerse the cards in warm water. You can use a little washing up liquid, I used to do this with stamps and you may find it helps, but it's not necessary. After a short while you can gently prise and peel the card apart splitting it straight down the centre.



The sides literally come apart like the pages of a book.

If you leave the cards in even longer then they'll separate themselves but they may take on even more of a "lifeless" feel.

If you then put, say two backs together, and place them in a book still wet with newspaper around them, when dry they will stick to each other. You'll need quite a bit of pressure for this and I don't know how long they would last so it's best to put them in separately and glue them together when dry.

I believe soaking the card in water damages the fibres, expanding them (thus they will have slightly larger dimensions) and leaving them dull. Both to look at and to handle. But in saying this, I've read elsewhere, be it true or not, that Theodore Annemann used to use this method. Soaking the pasteboards and leaving them to dry out under weighted blotters. I don't know but perhaps the cards were made differently back in those days (I don't go that far back, well not quite). The old phrase "one mans poison....."

**THE DRY SPLIT**

There are three methods of starting off the dry split process that I'm aware of. We'll call them the tap, the roll and the cut.



**The Tap.** You can tap the card on the table striking it with the corner thus weakening the join between the layers so you can use your nail to start the peel.

**The Roll.** As above but you are holding/ pinching the card between thumb and forefinger at the corner and rolling the card on it's corner against the table.

**The Cut.** Using a knife cut into the side of the card at the corner, aiming for the centre. With practice you'll be able to insert the blade just above or below what will end up as the centre layer. This is the best method as no creasing occurs to the edge.

### Let's Split (cont.)



How much you peel away initially will depend on how much you need to enable you to get a grip with your fingertips.

The two methods to finish the job are:

1. ON THE TABLE TOP. It's "VITAL" with this method that you peel the uppermost thicker part, away from the thinner side as you'll have a fair old game otherwise. Place the card flat on the table thick side uppermost and with your left index finger in the split applying pressure downwards holding the card to the table. As you are holding the top side corner with the right between thumb and forefinger with the middle, ring and index fingertips applying light pressure downward to the main body of the card pull the thicker side straight up away from the table. As this occurs the split will get bigger. Insert your left

middle finger past the index and walk these two fingers in. The split will widen and as it does the middle, ring and index fingertips move across to the opposite corner. Do not stop the peeling action, this may leave stress lines in the paper, as it has "memory" as such (probably better than mine). Use a constant pressure. If you need to re-position just slowdown and then speedup again. Try not to pull the layer back on itself too much as this will cause creasing.



If you are unable to get both fingertips in when you start this process, then insert a flat edge and apply pressure down on this with the left index finger. Note that the last picture has one finger holding the final corner down and this is slid off the card as the peel ends. This is so you don't "lose" the last corner.

2. USING A TABLE EDGE. Place the card flat on the table, thin side uppermost, with the started corner over the edge. Press on the side of the table with your left thumb trapping one side of the split. Slide the thumb down the side of the table till you can obtain a grip and continue to pull down without stopping. At the same time grip the card with the right hand, as in the first method, lifting the top layer with minimal force. The

### Let's Split (cont.)



card will be drawn across the top of the table remaining flat. It will not lift up, as with the first method. If you view someone doing this then it may give the illusion of the thin layer being pulled away from the thick.

You might find it easier to do this on a curved edge such as an indoor window sill.

Whichever method you choose to remove a layer, always go from the corner to the opposite, farthest away corner.

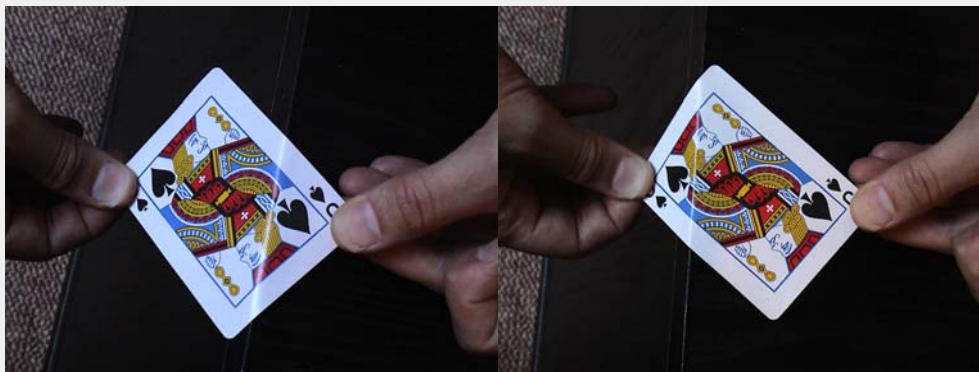
Both sides will take on this appearance, curling up at the edges.

Immediately anti-curl the separate sides by pulling them over a table edge to flatten them, and then put them in the yellow pages.



I normally then use Emery paper to smooth off the thicker of the two sides, but that's personal choice.

When ready to glue lay down your split sides on your opened newspaper (6 to 8 sides can be done in one sitting) and following the instructions on the can spray both sides. You'll get a beautiful uniform coat, and then just throw away



that layer of newspaper afterwards.

Bang 'em back in the yellow pages to set overnight which gets them nice and flat. You can apply weight if you choose.

When bonding each side together, I start at the corner and line it up along the long edge. This leaves less room for error. Do not line it up using the short side, trust me. The only way that I can phrase why this is, is that if you take a ruler and place the short/width end (just focussing on this) parallel with one edge of the table and then look down the length of the ruler you'll be lucky to get it in line/parallel with the side of the table.

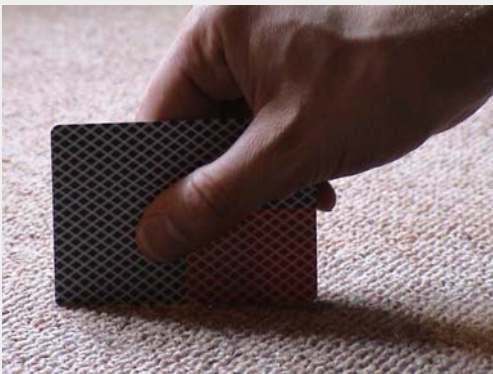
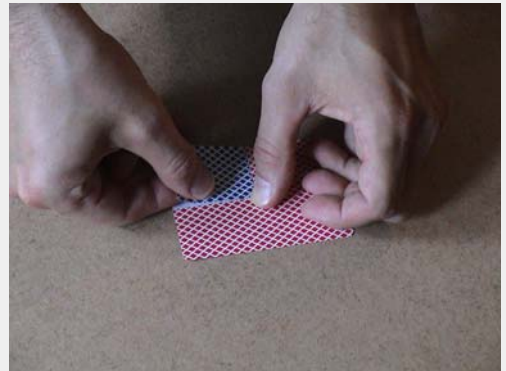




### Let's Split (cont.)

If you are gluing half or a quarter on, then line it up on the INNER longest edge and work away from that. The reasoning behind this is that the splitting process stretches the fibres of the card slightly, which is more noticeable in the thinner layer and you'll be left with a slight overhang which you can then easily be cut off. You don't want this in the centre of the card. Immediately you've bonded both sides, put them in your heavy book..... and leave them there.

You can cut any overhang off with scissors, but I use a sharp knife with the rule or carefully run a blade along the edge.



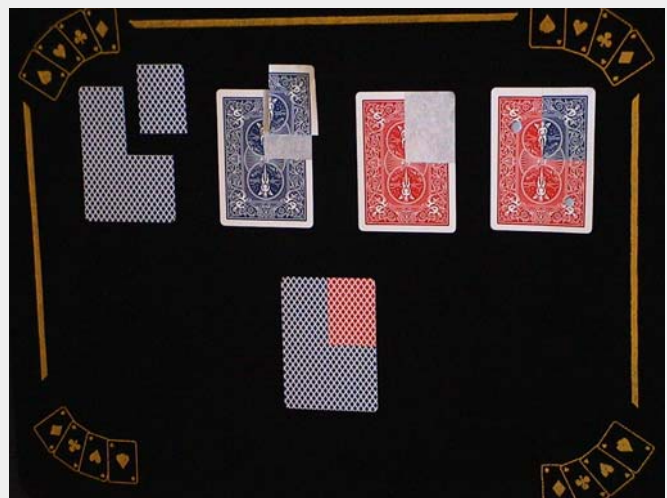
Then drag the card edges over the carpet lifting it up to make contact with the corners. This smoothes off any burrs.

Your finished card will not have the same "snap" though, as one purchased, but leaves a lot of leeway for invention.

If you want to remove say a half of the face or quarter of the back for a certain effect, then match up the cards first. There will be differences, due to how the card was originally printed/cut, if one card is turned the other way up or you use different decks. You'll be lucky to match them up perfectly but you'll get better results. Then cut a template out of one card (see above far left) and put two small

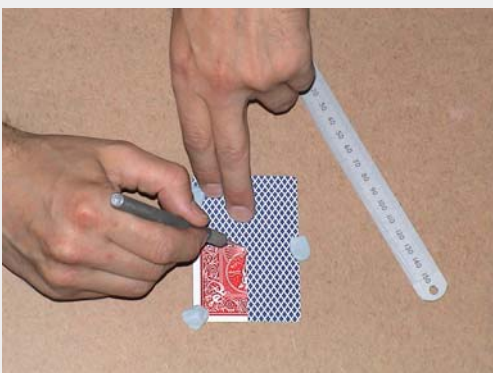
dobs of Blu-tac in between the cards to keep them aligned (seen still on finished card, above far right). If you don't then due to the nature of the finish they will slide over each other and you won't be accurate. You can Blu-tac the whole thing to the cutting board if you choose.

You'll be surprised at how little pressure is needed to achieve results with a sharp blade. When peeling a quarter off it is best to start at the inside corner if you can, peeling outwards. This way there is no chance of lifting the two corners that remain on the card at the centre lines. If you peel inwards from the outside corner these tend to lift



up, but a dab of glue will sort this.

Basically it's whatever you find easier.



If using a spray glue then the exact template can be placed over the card, as before, prior to spraying at 90 degrees, that way there's no shadow from the template. It is easier to just spray one side, but don't be tempted to, as it doesn't take as well and will peel off in use.

Try the different methods as I've read of people using laminators, flower presses and irons to achieve results. It all depends on how exacting you want to be and what works best for you.

## Let's Split (cont.)

### SHIMMED CARDS

Magnetic/shimmed cards, not to be confused with magnet cards. I purchased steel shim in 3 thousands of an inch although looking back thinner 2 thou shim definitely would have better option but the cost would have spiralled. As it is, it's pretty invisible. But if you've got the cash 2 thou is your choice. I tried quite a few places and ended up buying the shim from the trade counter of a local engineering company. They didn't stock what I wanted and had to order it in.

It's made by "Roebuck" (UK) and cost £19 for, I think, 3 metres of the stuff rolled up.

Although a good idea I don't know if using old fashioned razor blades would work as well. If you're not going to hand the card out then this might be an option but they must be made out of a better grade of steel or they would rust pretty quickly in your bathroom. Whereas shim is lower grade soft steel and contains more iron, thus more effective. I've also that shop security strips can be used.



If using shim, cut out the centre picture of a court card and use that as a template for the steel giving a good area all round for the card edges to bond. You can cut it easily with a good pair of scissors. Due to the nature of the cutting edge one side will "bow." Make sure that this is the excess/wastage side. After you've cut it down to size it's a good idea to clean it off, as in manufacture (I believe it's rolled out as such, under pressure) it has a greasy layer from the roller, which will affect it bonding to your card and you may wish to preserve it further, in storage, by spraying it lightly with WD40. You can wipe any residue off with tissue paper but it's best to

use VDU screen wipes or something that contains Iso-propyl alcohol. The same stuff that you use with a cotton bud to clean your tape deck heads.

I separate the back layer gluing the shim in and then glue the back, back on. I get a pretty good card. I prefer to take the back off as the pattern confuses the eye thus covers the slight raised edge.

Well I've waffled on enough, but hopefully this article has been of use to you. I've tried to make it as complete as possible but would welcome other opinions or further insights. Any problems, after you've read and digested the article, then please don't hesitate to contact me.

### OTHER SOURCES YOU MIGHT FIND HELPFUL FOR RESEARCH:

Expert card technique by Jean Hugard & Frederick Braue.  
Likely Split the art of card splitting by Marty "Martini" Grams. available as booklet or DVD  
Encyclopedia of card sleights by Daryl Martinez. DVD vol 8.  
[www.wowbound.com?split.html](http://www.wowbound.com?split.html) site owned by Ben Harris.

### ASSOCIATED PRODUCTS:

Lassen Card Gaffing Genii at <http://www.toddlassen.com/current.htm>  
Bicycle playing cards at [www.ace-of-spades.com](http://www.ace-of-spades.com)



### Let's Split (cont.)

#### WITH THANKS TO:

Daryl, Your DVD's rock, Simon Wintle's "World of Playing Cards" [www.wopc.co.uk](http://www.wopc.co.uk), Jon Snoops, Mike Jay, Wayno, MagicTom, MagicJohn, Glenn Godsey, and Gill for their contributions, although they may not realise it.

*By Nisassa*

### It's Alive!

#### *It's Alive!*

#### Creating a Character

**By Tony Spallino**

The more I perform bizarre magic, the more I want to add something to my performance. I've found myself almost unconsciously developing a kind of character. Why not finish the process and create a performing character to use? This is a topic that's been discussed many times on various boards, but let's look at it from a different viewpoint. Let's take it from the view of someone who's actually developing a character. I'd like to share with you the development of my performing character. (Please keep in mind that this is my personal situation. Your own needs may be different, but hopefully this will help you by giving some practical advice from the magician's viewpoint.)

First thing to do is some research. Several message boards in the magic community have threads discussing the development of a performing character.

The smart thing to do is to start by reading these. There is a lot of great advice there and I strongly urge anyone considering this to start by doing that research! Once I had some book learning, I had to examine just what I wanted from this. How could I use that knowledge to get it to work for me? I always like to step back and examine the situation first, then decide a course of action.

Ok, let's see what my situation is. I'm not a professional magician. I don't book shows or hire myself out. I've volunteered at the school where I teach and have done effects for family and friends. I still like doing magic spur of the moment, the close up slight of hand that you can do anywhere. But, I'd also like the possibility to perform bizarre effects.

We often hear about people who are "in character" all the time. But, is this necessary or even desired? Is it possible for a magician to turn the character "on and off" when necessary without destroying the illusion of the character? Being a teacher requires me to be The Teacher during the school day, but if I'm doing a bizarre routine on my personal time I'd like to be able to use my character. After thinking about it and conversations with several magicians, I decided "Why not?" Other performers turn their characters on and off. It's the nature, and often the complaint, of actors that they are not their characters. Why should a magician be any different?

There are many situations that may require a magician to not be in character all the time. Ok, first question solved.

But, what kind of character should I be? One of the best pieces of advice out there is that your character should be a part of you. Being a magician already involves us using a persona that is a variation of our everyday life. Perhaps we exaggerate certain parts of our personality, but we're still basically ourselves. Your character should be interesting to you. If you are not interested in what your character is doing, then how is your audience going to enjoy themselves. Have fun with it! If you don't like vampire stories then why would you choose one as a performing character?

Let's take that a step further in developing a character. I love horror movies, and old classic television. Two

### *It's Alive! (cont.)*

of my favorite shows are The Twilight Zone and Tales from the Crypt. As most of us know, they involve a kind of storyteller or narrator. Hmm...Some possibilities there, but let's see where else we can take this. Many shows and books that I like have characters that are the "scholars" of the story. Examples of this include the Talamasca (from Anne Rice stories), and even Dr. Who. They spend their time teaching about something, watching their subjects for study, or even helping to defend from an evil or situation that only they are aware of. Now this is starting to form a mental image.

My character is a scholar. He (it helps to think of the character in third person) has gathered these artifacts and mysteries to help control what happens to them, so they're not out there in the everyday world floating around. Ah, but this brings up a question: Why is he showing these effects to people? What's his purpose? Being a scholar, he would also want to educate people and to also show them what is really "out there". But, it's not all nice. He walks the line between the light and the dark. He pulls back the curtain of our nightmares just enough for us to know what's there, but not enough for us to walk through. Now we've got the beginnings of a personality. Is this final? No...I know that as I use this character and perform with him, his personality will flesh itself out a bit and fill in the gaps that are there.

At this point, I found out that some visualization helped. Close your eyes and picture your character in your mind. What does he look like? Picture him performing effects for people. How does he move? How does he talk and interact with spectators? Even picture him walking down the street. If you're comfortable with your image, then you're doing fine. If you don't like what you're seeing, just go back a step or two and revise your character until you're happy with him. Get a good gut feeling of whom he is.

If you've done a good visualization, you'll realize that you've also pictured how he was dressed. What kind of clothing is your character going to wear? Since my character is a mystic scholar, he's going to dress similar to everyone else. This isn't Hogwarts, so no robes or fancy outfits. But, he has to somehow stand out from everyone else. There has to be something that identifies him to the audience. I've already pictured my character wearing dark clothes, black or dark blue. These are colors I like anyway so it's a good choice for me. Many articles give advice about wearing jewelry for your character. This sounds like a good choice. I usually don't wear much jewelry, so actually wearing a particular item would work out well. This could be a ring, bracelet, or necklace. I have a silver Celtic ring that I sometimes wear. It's wide but not distracting. Good for getting noticed. I also have a Celtic necklace on a leather thing. Another good alternative.

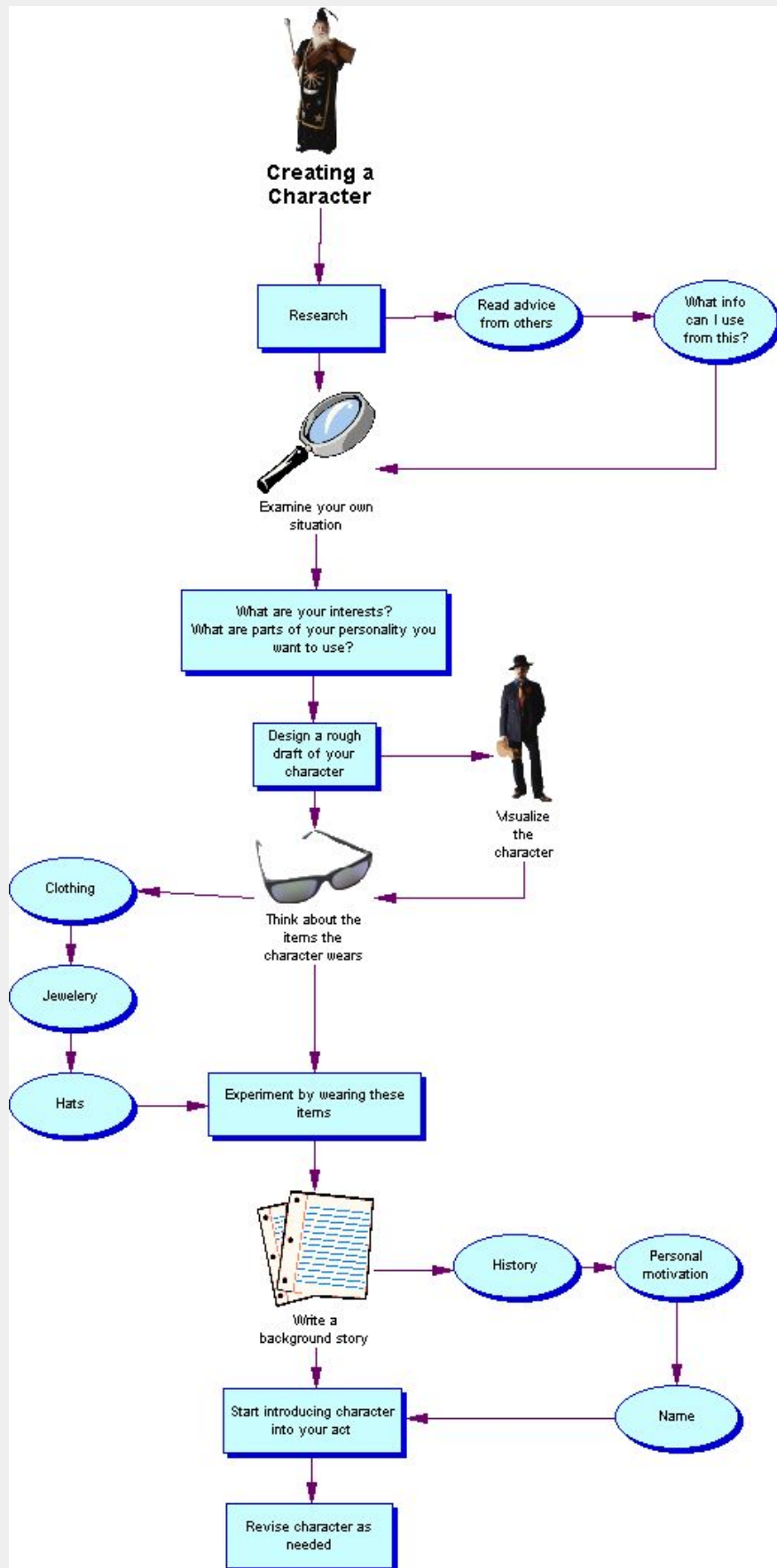
This brings up a piece of advice that I had never read before but was incredibly helpful in developing my character. The more you work with your character and the things that make them distinctive, physically, you'll find that wearing that item will almost unconsciously cause you to be "in character". That ring or necklace may act as a kind of switch for helping you to turn your character on or off. It's very similar to feeling special wearing a fancy watch or a particular suit. Why not use that mental trigger for your character as well? A great experiment to try is to wear that item when you go out. Go to the grocery store or out shopping. You'll probably notice that you start to take on aspects of your character, just by wearing that item. It's an interesting mindset to have and will help you to make your character real to your audience.

By now, you should have a pretty good idea of who your character is. He should start to feel more real to you, an extension of your own personality and someone you don't mind being for a couple of hours. To improve on this, you should write a background story for your character. How did he get involved in his magical situation? What is his personal motivation for doing what he does? What is his name? How long has he been around? This will help round out your character's personality.

From this point, you should be ready to start introducing your character into your acts. Let him emerge and start to interact with your audiences.

Don't be afraid to tweak the character a bit as you work with him. The same revision process happens all the time in literature, movies, even comic books. I think you'll be pleased with how well the interaction between audience and magician will go.

It's Alive! (cont.)



By Tony Spallino

Thoughts From Mid-West America

## ***Let's Not Build Magic!***

Thoughts From Mid-West America

By Michael Saint-Louis

Yup, seriously, let's not build magic anymore. Don't get me wrong; I'm still all for building as much of your own equipment as you can, I'm just kind of burned-out on the series. Hell, truth be told, I've built more magic the last year than I have been able to practice because I knew I'd have an article to get in. Now that I am generally accepted as a grown-up, time is scarce! I've got two girls, a wife, a mortgage, a day job which I am preparing to quit and a side business that I am quitting my day job for. Plus, I teach gungfu, my house is getting ready to turn 100 years old (which requires maintenance) and I'm about to turn 32 (which also requires maintenance).

Since I'm coming up on another birthday (my favorite cake is German chocolate, by the way, but by the time you read this the big day will have passed... I'm just letting y'all know for next year) I'm kind of evaluating my life, especially since the last year brought that second baby into the house and the coming year will (hopefully) bring major changes as I try to go full time with our business so I can stay home with our little ladies almost everyday. And magic hasn't been fitting in. Gungfu used to not fit in anymore after my wife got pregnant the first time. The hanzi characters tattooed down my chest would mock me in the mirror every morning when I got out of the shower. Everyday in red-shadowed black the characters that read "small trees fist" and mean Shaolin boxing would remind me of my previous years of commitment. I wanted to have the time; I always planned for it but it seemed my plans would get pushed aside on a daily basis as I worked hours and hours of overtime and prepared for the baby.

So I started teaching gungfu again. I still screw myself out of time I dedicate to gungfu, but I try to never let my students down. So at least once a week I'm out in the park practicing and passing on 15 centuries of butt-kicking experience. Sure, it's not as hardcore as back in the day, but I've gone five years without breaking a bone! For a while there in the 90's I was good for about one a month...

And now every month the e-mail reminder that it's article time has been mocking me. Sure, you have a nifty little project lined up here or there, but can you still switch smoothly from a classic palm to a finger clip? Since I have broken my hands so many times (I stopped counting at forty and that was before I met my wife...) I really have to do alot of practicing to just retain skills and I knew I wasn't. So I am dropping Let's Build Magic and I am going to teach some magic instead.

Well, consider me the gym coach who gets stuck with that study hall hour. This is magic study hall and our first book will be Mark Wilson's Complete Course in Magic, which from here on will be referred to as MWCC. Each month I'll read ahead a section or two and leave my thoughts, tips and difficulties. I might even start a MWCC Study Group thread because I want to answer questions and will probably have a few to ask, too. I'll be using the hardcover American version published by Courage Books, although as far as I know all of the MWCC printings are consistent. I'll try to reference specific sections and tricks instead of page numbers, though, just in case!

So let's dive in. I almost immediately regretted the decision to do this because, save 16 pages of introduction and contents, the first 174 pages are all card magic, which is something I have been retired from for the last seven years. But, a refresher is probably in order because who knows where Grandmother Moon will guide me tomorrow, right?

The first few pages are biographies of the contributors and I suggest you read them if you aren't familiar with Mr. Wilson and company. There are a few cool ics, too. Do y'all think Nani Darnell is too old for me? Oh well... there's Walter Gibson again. Sometimes I think 2500 magic books were published in the 20th century and Gibson wrote 3000 of them! UF Grant's blurb is too short and there's a great picture of Larry Anderson (of "Jawdroppers" fame). Let that be a lesson to y'all: Don't use your high school yearbook picture in your first book! Now follows all too short essays on Practice and Misdirection. Although the points are good and valid, if this is really going to be a magic course these topics will need more attention.

And now the magic starts! Or at least the magic definitions. Still, I read them and they are necessary. When I deal with practitioners of other fighting arts we often find that we use the same terms for very different techniques and this is taught me the importance of agreeing to a standard lexicon.

### Thoughts From Mid-West America (cont.)

Two things that I think should have been mentioned in the next section on shuffles and deals are deck quality and shuffle consistency. Wilson doesn't say it, but buy good cards people! You can bet he wasn't just grabbing whatever decks were for sale at the Stop'N'Go before Magic Circus tapings and you shouldn't either. Find a good couple of decks, alright? When I used to do card magic I would get casino decks. They aren't the best and they either have a hole punched through them or a corner cleaved off, but they were about fifty cents a deck (in 10 packs) at the local casinos. Speaking of casinos, an ex-dealer (Grampa Ken, I think I've mentioned him before) taught me to count off half the deck, flip it so half the cards are face up and half are face down and then shuffle the piles together. A quick scan of the cards will tell you how consistently you are shuffling. Your riffles will start with decks that have two cards up, four down, three up, three down, five up, etc. but practice will result in a "clean" shuffle-- face up, face down, face up, face down. This is also a good way to learn to skip the riffle when shuffling if you are trying to keep the a small section of cards together.

Time for an honest moment: I can't ribbon spread cards. Never could, still can't. Isn't that pathetic? And I use to cheat at the casinos and in poker games to pay the bills! I guess that goes to show that all those fancy moves maybe aren't so darn necessary after all, huh? But I am going to try to learn now (again) in the spirit of this project!

The last section we'll hit this month is the self-working stuff. In my book a lot of the sections aren't clearly defined in the text, only in the table of Contents, so I should warn you that the self-working section ends with "You Do As I Do." We'll start with the Hindu Shuffle next time.

These tricks are pretty basic, but hey, it's the beginning of the course, right? A couple of them have devices I abhor (like putting the cards behind your back), but they are pretty solid. One thing I can't say strongly enough is how much I love the key card. A stolen glance key card is a beautifully easy (read: easy after drinking) method of performing some really fun magic on the fly, especially with a borrowed deck. One thing I used to do was do a card trick where a card leaves the deck and has to be returned to me (even passing out a discovered card for examination accomplishes this). Talking about the card face, I would keep the face visible as I segued into the next trick by turning my left wrist (I hold the deck with my left usually) to put the deck face up when returning the card to the deck. The selected card is now on the bottom and can be your key card. Shuffle two or three times being sure to keep that key card on the bottom. Do your trick, pass out a card, get it back (your new key) and put it on top of the deck this time, shuffle again keeping the key at the top. Now do a discovery with a top of the deck key card. Simple, yes. Can a magician catch you at this? Of course, but this is not for the next club meeting... it's for the next pub meeting!

I think that's enough for this month! Now you know what will be going on next time, so be ready for that Hindu Shuffle! PM or e-mail me any questions or comments and stay out of trouble. And don't forget: German chocolate.

*By Michael Saint-Louis*

### Rio de la Plata's Dumbury

## ***Rio de la Plata's Dumbury***

**By Daniel de Urquiza**

This effect is the result of a brainstorming session between me and Gonzalo Larre Borges, a magician from Uruguay, but more importantly, a friend of mine. As you know, I'm from Buenos Aires, Argentina. Gonzalo is from Montevideo, Uruguay. Every few months, or so, Gonzalo travels to Buenos Aires. In his last travel, I invited him to my house. My wife was at her swimming lessons, so we had a good two hours before she came home. My wife came home, and we were still concentrated on our decks. While my wife made dinner (and not because my wife always make dinner, she did it to help me and let me enjoy the visit of my friend), we came up with the idea I'm going to share

### Rio de la Plata's Dumbury (cont.)

with you. I have the permission of Gonzalo to do it.

How it went.

Ok. 2004 June 18. Friday night. We are at home, with croissants and cookies (actually, they were "medialunas" y "biscochitos de grasa", but I'm afraid those words have no translation to English). Also, there is a table, a close up pad, and two decks of cards. Both blue back.

We begun to talk about my routine "Dumbury eats a sandwich...and he likes it". He said something along the lines of "yeah, well...I like the ending", the typical remark that rather disappoints me. But, hey, I'm still breathing, you know.

Then, I remembered the version of Father Ciuro of the classic Dumbury's Delusion, as published at Expert Card Technique. You can't now this (because you are there and I'm here), but when Juan Tamariz came here, to Buenos Aires, he explained at his conference "Emociones" (Emotions) the version of Father Ciuro of Dumbury's.

The main feature was the replacement of the second deal for the glide. And, I must say, it was a successful replacement. Since we learnt it, both Gonzalo and I became fans of this version.

Well, I showed to Gonzalo the classical version of the effect. He said to me: "Ok...let's begin to deliriate" (sic). We came up with an unexpected kicker to the effect, and a complete different method to achieve it. Also, we mixed a little of the conditions of Father Ciuro's version. I think you'll like it.

#### **EFFECT**

The classic of Dumbury's Delusion, but with an extra kicker, courtesy of the Rio de la Plata Awesome Magical Team (or Gonzalo and me).

#### **METHOD**

Setup: any four of a kind, with an indifferent card at the middle. So, if using 7s, it will read, from top, 7,7,X,7,7.

You are going to force one of the 7s to the spectator, the one that it's on top.

The force you choose to use must let your stack on top of the deck.

So, you'll have 7, X, 7, 7, and the spectator will be holding a 7.

Once spectator knows the identity of the selection and has showed it around, take it from his hand, and shove it in the middle of the deck...or so it looks like. Really, do a tilt, leaving it fourth from top. So, you'll have 7, X, 7, Selection, 7.

False shuffle and false cut.

Do a double lift. Show X, saying this card will give you the value of the selection. Leave on the table a 7 face down.

Slip cut in the hands, losing the indifferent card in the middle, leaving on top 7, Selection, 7.

Double lift again, show the selection, saying that this card will tell us the suit of the selection. Of course, you'll get a completely wrong card. Leave on the table another 7 face down.

Now you have the selection and a 7, reading from the top.

Ask spectator in which position he wants the selection to be. Let's say he says 9th.

Second deal 8 cards. Of course, the bottom card will of this pile will be a 7. On 9, take the selection, face down.

Say: "ok, the cards showed us that the selection was the X of X. You indicated the position in which the X of X should be. This is the card at the position you told. Now, lets everybody hear it...your card was?" Spectator names the selection.

Now, the acting part. You say: "no, that card indicated the suit...I'm asking you for the card you choose at the beginning". Spectator insists. Finally you understand your mistake.

But, hey, magic can do everything...you blow over the card you held, IS THE SELECTION.

They clap. You touch with the selection the pile and the other two cards, and then turn them face up. The other 7s are seen. Finish by placing face up the selection (the missing 7) face up.

So, you end up with the selection and the other 3 mates face up on the table.

#### **WEAK POINTS**

There are 2 weak points.

a) Spectator cannot shuffle. Or, at least, it is more difficult than the original version, where you have to palm only one card. In this version, you'll need to palm off 5 cards if you want spectator to shuffle. It can be done,



### Rio de la Plata's Dumbury (cont.)

but it is hard in real close up conditions. I have an effect, that maybe some day I'll translate to English, called "Finding the Threes", where there is the need of palming 5 cards. My cover is the gesture of stroking my beard (or chin), you know, the typical "I'm thinking" gesture.

It fits inside my routine because you are supposedly improvising a trick, so you are inventing as you go along. It may look good inside this routine, to show non-verbally some insecurity, which will later reinforce the credibility of your mistake.

I must say that my actual choice is not to give the deck to be shuffled.

b) The tilt. I don't like how it looks in the context and handling of this routine. Some sort of kick or swing cut, and a few breaks, should be able to render a more free (from the spectator's point of view) control...but I'm still working on it. Any ideas, more than welcome.

#### MY SOLUTIONS

To this day, I'm still working trying to improve this weak points. Right now, I'm using some ideas from "Dumbury eats a sandwich...and he likes it", another routine previously published in here. In that routine, I proposed to arrange your setup in front of the spectator, covered by openly searching for two "sandwich" cards. Well, give to spectator the deck, and make sure he shuffles it. Ask him to select a card, control and palm it. Give the deck again to be shuffled. Add the selection to the top, shuffle again keeping it at the top. Then, say that you are going to search not for one, but for 3 cards, and that you are going to set them in a very special way. Really, arrange your setup using the Hofszinser under the spread culling maneuver. If you are good with this technique, nothing will be noticed. If you are as bad as I am, you are covered by your line on "arranging 3 cards on a very magical way". Then, false shuffle again, and you are ready to go.

In this way, you have the spectator shuffling the deck several times, the card is freely chosen, and the tilt is eliminated.

But, as I said before, I'm not yet quite satisfied, and I'm still working on it.

#### STRONG POINTS

a) Spectator names the position where he wants the selection to be. That's a goodie.

b) The finish, because you have several transformations, coincidences and transpositions going on, all at the same time. Let's make a list:

- 1) The selection, which was on the table, is now on your hand (transposition).
- 2) The card that was the selection is now a mate of the selection (transformation).
- 3) The first card showed, which indicated the value, is now a mate of the selection (transformation).
- 4) And the bottom card of the pile of "second dealt" cards is another mate of the selection (coincidence).
- 5) All the cards at the table are of the same value (coincidence).

But all this simultaneous effects are not THE MAIN EFFECT. The main effect is that magic can overcome all obstacles, and do the impossible, fixing a lost case, a desperate situation. It's really a miracle, if you can sell your mistake and the ending.

*By Daniel de Urquiza*

### The 'Big Brother' Game

## *The 'Big Brother' Game*

Themed Mentalism

**By Craig Leonard**

What follows is a simple, light mentalism effect based on the TV show 'Big Brother'.

#### PRESENTATION AND EFFECT

The performer explains that he is about to engage in a game of 'Big Brother' with a member of the audience. After selecting a member of the audience, a large opaque envelope is produced. From the envelope the performer removes seven photographs - each of a different Big Brother contestant from past and present shows - Craig, Brian, Alex, Kate, Nasty Nick, Helen, and Michelle.

### The 'Big Brother' Game (cont.)

The photographs are set aside and the game is explained as follows:

Both the performer and the spectator will take turns at nominating two housemates. After the two have been nominated, one will be selected for eviction, until one Big Brother contestant is left - the winner.

"Would you like to play first or second?" the performer asks. The spectator replies "Second", and the performer nominates two housemates. From these two, the spectator is asked to play the role of the public and decide which one should be evicted. Then, the roles are reversed and the spectator nominates two, from which the performer chooses which one is to be evicted. This continues until there are only two housemates left. To act as the public for the "final", the performer asks for a show of hands from the audience to see which one of the two remaining housemates the public would like to evict. This then leaves the outright winner, for examples sake we'll say its Helen. The performer then asks the spectator to remove an item that has been in the envelope (that the photos were in) all along. They do so, and in it is a single cheque from Big Brother, written out to Helen - winner of BB.

#### METHOD

Yes, its our old friend the PATEO Force, with a multiple out. I'll explain the outs first:

1. Cheque inside the envelope written out to "Helen - winner of BB"
2. Envelope addressed to "Alex - Winner of BB"
3. Back of Brian photo has "Winner" written on it - rest are turned over to show blank.

If the winner is Helen - ask the spec to produce the cheque, if Alex, turn the envelope over, and if Brian, turn all photos over to show that he is the one previously marked the winner.

Now for the force. With an odd number of items, as long as the spectator chooses the initial two, the performer will be left with the final elimination - this is the key to the whole trick. When you are choosing two to be nominated, make sure you don't choose the force photographs. If the spec chooses to nominate a force photograph, eliminate the other. In essence, simple. However, there will be cases where eliminating a force photograph can not be avoided - this is ok, as long as the final two housemates contains at least one force photo (which, if you follow these instructions, always will). If the final two are both force photographs, ask the audience to play the role of the public as described, and use the appropriate "out". If there's only one, no problem - it is your turn to evict a housemate, so just eliminate the other photo, leaving the force the winner. As you've never involved the whole audience in the game up to now, it will appear natural.

That's all there is to it - very simple, but an effect you should be able to have a bit of fun with.

Craig Leonard

### Now That's Gross Part I

#### ***Now That's Gross - Part I***

Going Beyond Bizarre...

**By Craig Browning**

Long ago when I sported a bright red Mohawk haircut with fluorescent green side trim and dressed in bright yellow painter's pants, rainbow suspenders and tight fitting T-shirts I was doing sidewalk macabre. That is to say, I had material that was down right disgusting, that went just a bit beyond Harry Anderson's popular Needle thru Arm or stringing needles on dental floss.

Let's consider the Cardician's favorite gag in which a marked card mysteriously appears in a random object. How could such a thing possibly be transformed into a tid bit of disgusting magic? You ask. Well, let's try having that marked card appear inside the magician.

Now That's Gross Part I (cont.)

What?!

That's right, I first marked the selected card by taking a bite out of the corner. Allowing the participant to hold the bit off corner for future identification. I then proceeded to eat the playing card and swallow it. Using my advanced abilities to control my internal organs, muscles, etc (or so I explained) I was able to control that card to a specific point of my anatomy... usually my left forearm.

After slashing my arm wide opened with a butterfly knife (blood oozing all over the place) the audience could see my fingers reaching deep below the skin... the could actually see the flesh moving as I retrieved the card... the bloody, neatly folded pasteboard appearing in my extended blood saturated fingertips. It was carefully opened and the bit piece held by the spectator matched perfectly!

Yes, it is very gross and it is incredibly visual. I had folks choking, barfing, gagging and laughing their butts off.

How is it done?

Well, it's a pain in the tukiss to set up, but God is it ever fun to perform.

Needless to say, you need to force the card that's used... that's the easy part. Prior to doing this, you have one duplicate neatly tucked away in its stage blood marinade... I'll get to that part in just a second. What is important is that you've removed a large chunk of corner on which the index number is printed. It should look like you took a bite out of the card. This is kept in a safe place where you can easily steal it when it's time.

Now, for the really fun part... get a cheap disposable razor and shave your left forearm from the wrist to the elbow (trust me, you want to make certain there is no hair there or you'll regret it later, when you remove the gimmick.)

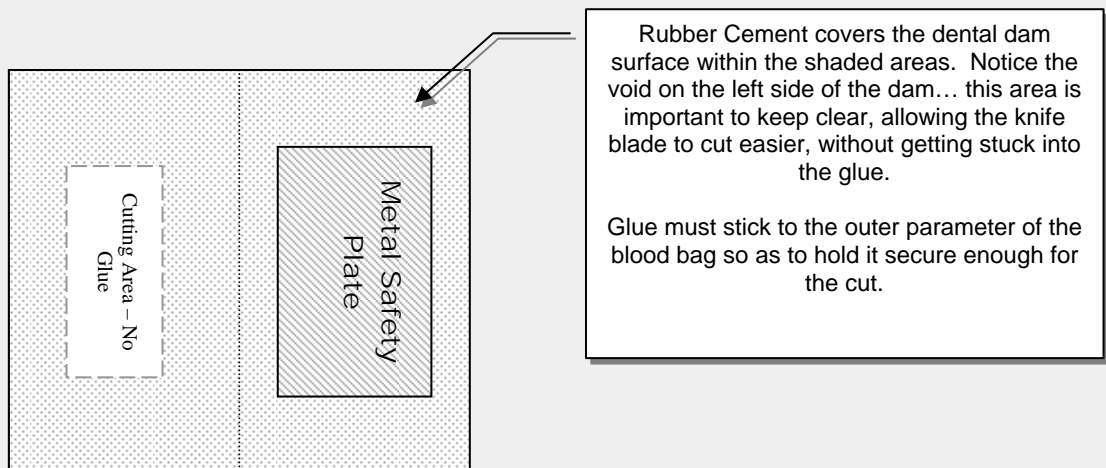
The gimmick involves a thin metal sheet approximately 2 1/2" wide x 3-4" in length size will vary based on the size of your own arm and being able to place the gimmick properly. I used the bottom of a disposable pie-pan. This is a very important part of the gimmick, in that it prevents you from actually slashing your arm when doing the trick with a razor sharp knife.

The next thing you need is a Dental Dam – this is a thin piece of clear or flesh colored latex approximately 10" squared. You'll also need some rubber cement.

Fold the Dental Dam in half, this will give you a working size for the gaff. Once you know where the center is, mark it using a very thin, light ink mark (try to use something that will clean off easily or blend in.) With your centerline known you can now place the metal part of the gaff into place. This will lay centered between the

two ends and rest at least 1/2" to 3/4" in from the edge and centerline.

To secure this piece you want to mark its location first. Then place rubber cement onto one side of the metal gaff. While this dries,



### Now That's Gross Part I (cont.)

apply a layer of cement onto the latex within the area that the metal plate is to lay. Once both areas have dried for about 10-minutes time, carefully place the metal plate and press... this will adhere the two surfaces in a very secure manner.

The next thing you're going to do is create an envelope with the latex. Essentially the procedure is exactly like placing the metal plate e.g. you are going to run rubber cement along the edges of the dental dam {see illustration }

Before you get ahead of yourself, you need to get the blood and load packet set in place.

The packet is made from a condom, it's just that simple. Use the thin walled non-lubricated type and wash it off in soap in water so as to get rid of that pesky white packing powder they tend to have. Make certain it is completely dry before proceeding.

It will take some experimentation to get this part right. What I ultimately started doing was waiting to fill the condom with the blood after I'd mounted the completed unit onto my arm. Before we worry about that part however, let's take care of some important business... loading the folded duplicate card that's missing the bit corner into the condom and securing the condom onto the metal safety plate. This is done in the same exact manner as you've done with everything else, by rubber cement. However, you must first measure the condom to the plate. To do this, push the folded card all the way in so that it squares the end of the condom, even stretching it a bit (the reservoir will still leave a slight tip but you want to fit the card in tight.)

For this next step you may want to find a ruler or some kind of flat wide object that can fit into the condom and make it more squared. This done lay the now rigid item onto the metal plate so you can accurately measure where it is going to lay. You want to cut off the excess latex from the top of the condom, leaving it about ½" longer than you need. Discard the excess rubber and take your supported piece and put rubber cement on the "back side". As before, you cover the metal plate with rubber cement, allow the two surfaces to dry, then attach.

Next, you'll want to open the condom and remove your flat piece but wedge the condom opened so that you can place rubber cement along the inside edge, all the way around. Again, let it dry completely before continuing.

At this point you have an option. As I said earlier you could wait and add the stage blood later, there is a way that works. On the other hand, if you have experimented with this arrangement enough to know how much blood can be added and still deliver a "natural" appearance when the device is worn. You can however take a hollow needle, such as that used in the Needle thru Arm or an old basketball hand pump. Cover it in petroleum jelly (a thin coat) and attach it to the syringe that's been filled with the stage blood. Lay the needle at a slight angle and to one side of the opened end of your condom. Once in place, you can remove the item wedging the condom open and carefully secure the end closed, enveloping either side of the lubricated needle. Once secured (I suggest pressing and holding pressure on the glue joint for at least 3-5 minutes) you can pump in the blood. Don't over fill the condom! It should have a nice load of blood, but not bulge. If you get air bubbles (and you probably will), simply tip the unit up after you've removed the needle and "burp" it e.g. gently push the condom flat until all the air has escaped from the slight opening left by the needle.

Needless to say, this needle hole is not going to seal too well. So while the unit is held upright and before you burp it, you are going to paint a 1" wide stripe of rubber cement across the end of the condom, let it dry. Then fold it in half e.g. ½" fold so that it sticks to itself. Remember when I said to cut the condom a ½" longer than the safety metal? This is why.

At this point you're just about ready to do the toughest part of the assembly, carefully folding the dental dam in half and keeping it as smooth and flat as possible. Before you do this there are a couple of things you can do to make things work better.

Firstly, get a wire coat hanger and cut one side off. What you want is and L shape. One leg of this L will be covered with a thin coat of petroleum jelly and then laid onto the exact center of the dental dam. This will

### Now That's Gross Part I (cont.)

give you a straight line when you fold the flap over but it is relatively easy to remove. The other thing you want to do is paint thin stripes of rubber cement along the outside edges of your condom – top, sides, and bottom section. Once they are dry, you are ready to begin the hair pulling process of folding the dam. The more you do this the easier it will get, the catch is, you need to keep everything as smooth as possible and free of air bubbles.

Once completed you will need to make a template of your arm. Quite literally you are going to take a stiff piece of thin, hard plastic and draw a silhouette of your forearm then cut that out. Once you've done this you need to draw a vertical and horizontal centerline. The template itself should run the full length of your forearm (from wrist to elbow).

Next, mark vertical and horizontal centerlines on the bottom side of your latex fake, allowing a very slight bit of this mark to show on the outside edges. This allows you to line up everything. The next step being to cut away the excess latex making certain you have at least 1" all the way around the blood packet and everything fitting to the outline of your template.

Attaching the gaff to your forearm is a bit tricky. As with everything else you are going to rubber cement both, your arm and the bottom portion of the gaff. Once dry, start at your wrist and "roll" the gaff onto your arm in the appropriate position. Bear in mind, with both surfaces being tacky you must make certain that everything is lined up and that the latex gaff fits into place from the start. It will take some experimenting, but you will catch on as to how to do it right each time.

Now that the gaff is in place you get to become a make-up artist. First, apply nose putty along the long edges of the gaff and smooth them into your flesh so that everything looks as flawless as possible. Then, using some good liquid make-up (facial base) cover the latex with a tone that best matches the underside complexion of your forearm, covering the nose putty as well. Once it has dried, you may want to use some powder make-up of a similar tone so as to blend the edges and make it all look as natural as possible. Wear a wide band watch, this will help conceal the lower end of the gaff. By wearing a long sleeved shirt that's been rolled up into a cuff, or a football jersey, you are able to conceal the top end. My preference has been to wear a long sleeved shirt and roll it up when I'm ready to do the bit. This helps conceal any suspicious appearance the gaff may have.

When performing this bit you simply force the duplicate then move into the obnoxious action of biting the card's corner off (for real). The catch is, as you do this with your left hand (holding the card) you steal the matching corner with your right hand. The right hand reaches up to retrieve the bit off corner, which appears in your teeth. As you move towards the participant to hand them the corner, you simply do a single handed switch and ditch the unused corner via your favorite method (I typically ditch it when I go for the knife.)

The knife is a very important and dangerous part of the routine. If you're good at handling them, the butterfly knife is most excellent in that it can be flashy and "cool". Unfortunately, these are illegal in many municipalities, so check the laws first. What is critical is that the blade has a very sharp (as in razor) edge. This allows the latex to roll open when sliced, just as human flesh would do. It also prevents the need to apply heavy pressure when making the slice into the arm e.g. it prevents the possibility of really slicing your arm.

Once you've made the slice blood will automatically ooze, that's perfectly fine. Catch is, you don't want to use a stage blood that's too thin... it should be a high-grade blood, such as that sold by the Scarecrow Make-up Company in LA. It's nice and thick and looks exceptionally real. There are other upper end stage blood formulas that can be purchased through professional companies but be prepared, they can get very expensive depending upon how "perfect" a quality you're after.

After the initial gasp it's time to get gross. You stick your fingers in a very deliberate manner into the cut and allow folks to see them moving around beneath the flesh. Take your time and then slowly remove the bloody card.

As to what to do with the originally selected duplicate... well, that's up to you. I have eaten them (literally), burnt them, and simply made them vanish in some bizarre manner. Play with it and find an approach that

### Now That's Gross Part I (cont.)

works best for you.

This basic method can be used to produce a card or most any small object from just about any part of the human body. I've done patches of this kind on my legs, arms, chest, stomach and a few places we'll not get into. The impetus to this idea stemming from something I'd read about an East Indian Fakir demonstration in which needles or razors were swallowed and then "psychically" made to emerge from a selected place on the body. The original method that most investigators claim the Fakir's used involved the placement of said items months ahead of time. They were literally inserted beneath the flesh, the wound allowed to heal, only to be reopened some time later, when such a demonstration proved appropriate. Though I've used that method a few times, when working the carnivals, I knew there had to be a simpler, safer way. That's when this little ditty was born. Hope you all enjoy it!

Catch you next issue with more...

Craig Browning

### Lady Liberty

#### *Lady Liberty*

Patriotic Presentations

By Peter Marucci

When David Copperfield made the Statue of Liberty vanish, several years back, I came up with a routine using a picture of the statue on a nine-inch silk and a TT.

Now would seem like a good time to revisit that routine, with some new and, I hope, fitting patter.

#### **EFFECT**

The magician gives a spectator a red and white silk handkerchief and then shows a nine-inch white silk with a picture of the Statue of Liberty on it.

He stuffs the picture of the statue into his hand, where it vanishes. It is found in the hank that the spectator is holding.

#### **WORKING**

You'll need a nine-inch, white silk with a picture of the Statue of Liberty. This can be made by taping the silk over a picture of the statue and, using a Sharpie, lightly sketch the statue. You'll also need an 18-inch silk, red and blue if possible, and a thumb tip.

The spectator holds the big silk, you show the statue silk and stuff it into your left hand (the tip, stealing it out on the right thumb). Showing the silk gone from your hand, you ask for the clearly empty silk at the spectator is holding.

As you take it with the right hand, the left hand comes up underneath and grabs the silk and the TT through the silk; you then remove your right hand, leaving the TT.

You now have the big silk with the TT in a little well in the silk, all held by your left hand.

Pull the statue silk (apparently) out of the other silk.

#### **PRESENTATION**

This is very flexible, so I'll pretty much leave it to you to come up with a story line. Given the recent events, that shouldn't be hard.

When you come to the end, just before you pull the statue silk out of the big silk in your left hand, you say: "There's an old saying that 'you can't keep a good man down.' Well, (begin to pull the statue silk out of the big silk) recent events have proven that you can't keep a great lady down, either."

Take your bow.

*Lady Liberty (cont.)*

**SECOND THOUGHTS**

This almost HAS to be used as a closer or as a single trick on its own, for obvious reasons. And the reason the silk colors are red, white, and blue is . . . well, do I really HAVE to point that out? Enjoy it; I know your audiences will.

Peter Marucci  
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This month's edition has been fantastic and I'd like to thank all contributors, new and regular who have taken the time to write for the ezine. The quality of the writing of articles and effects here has been getting better and better and this ezine has been made a success, only because of the hard work put in by various members of the forum. Anyone can send in articles by email to [TopHat@magicbunny.co.uk](mailto:TopHat@magicbunny.co.uk) or by Private Message to me on the forums. The deadline for September is the 20th.

Many thanks,  
Jon Snoops  
*MagicBunny.co.uk*