



MagicBunny.co.uk

TopHat

November 2004 - Edition 32

This month, we have a great edition of TopHat for you to enjoy featuring eight top articles from MagicBunny contributors. I'd like to start by thanking once again, all of these people who have taken the time to write for the ezine and I hope that other members will decide to do the same. And so, onto the ezine...

To begin with, Nigel Shelton speaks about trouble on MagicBunny. 'Nuff said, I think. Following this, Peter Marucci presents the old Chinese Compass routine, as always on the theme that simplicity pays off. Next, Gary Scott writes about his experiences in magic and how having an arsenal of 'outs' has made them all the more successful.

In this month's column from Mid-West America, Michael Saint-Louis takes a break from his series on Mark Wilson's book and talks about a recent show and how he's applied simplicity to his own magic approach. Meanwhile, Craig Browning discusses bizarre storytelling in his column. Also this month, young Finlay McDermott gives his, perhaps extreme, opinion on the age-old topic of gimmicks.

Finally, Michael Jay discusses a new project that's hit the forums, a proposed compilation of magic effects by collaboration of MagicBunny members. Sounds like a good idea to me so I for one will be contributing to this. And, to top this month's edition off, Daniel de Urquiza returns with more expert card magic as he tips a four ace routine of his.

We hope you enjoy this edition of the ezine and consider the possibility contributing to future editions.

~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 would like to submit a piece, please email TopHat@magicbunny.co.uk

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The Latest From MagicBunny

Website News

The Other Side of the Coin

By Nigel Shelton



If you are to delve back into the archives of the TopHat ezines, you will find month after month of introductory Admin reports of mainly a positive nature. Indeed it is encouraging to hear of the latest developments and projects or to discover what has gone well and successfully on the boards, but there is more to the administration of these forums than that. True, much of my time as the site owner is taken by the various administrative duties that help the boards to run smoothly. These include dealing with the numerous problems that accompany the day-to day running of the boards; forgotten passwords, failing registration attempts, questions regarding postings, the posting of announcements, coordinating projects, queries on the application procedure for the secret section, application processing for senior members and so on and so on. However, there is one duty more than any other that takes up a disproportionate amount of my time as "Administrator" and this duty is the one that I find is the most demanding but the least satisfying of them all. On a daily basis the biggest single chore is that of policing the boards effectively and fairly and it is the one task that I dislike the most.

Without the knowledge of running a large Internet site, it can be very difficult to convey to the reader the sheer amount of wasted hours that can be accumulated in simply trying to get to the source of any problem. Without the cooperation of the offender himself/herself, each incident can literally consume many hours of time in dealing with the incident and the subsequent fallout of whatever has happened. From a membership of somewhere in the region of 3000 members, one single person can demand more time and input than that of every other member combined.

During the past year or so one offender has taken so much time in persistent actions that I have simply lost track of the amount of time that has been set aside on this person. As a member of Magic Bunny from the past, some twenty or thirty hours of my time were taken during the last few months of his membership. Since this person's departure from the boards his persistent registration from numerous different email accounts have resulted somewhere in the region of twenty or so different false aliases, all of which have had to be found, verified and then banned. Even today, I am convinced that there may be many more false registrations from this member, registrations that have failed to be activated and so have yet to be found and exposed. To label this action as slightly irritating would be a gross underestimation. Currently, this encounter seems to have subsided somewhat in intensity but I know that it will be only be a moment of time before the next encounter is stumbled upon, either with this person or some other different member who comes to the fore.

I am not infallible and I know that there will be times that I shall be unable to get to the root of a problem. Only recently, I received reports of one member using the "Trading" forum as a means of conducting a commercial venture. I am reluctant to act on hearsay and, having found it difficult to seek the information that I required to settle this problem fairly and equitably, I decided to act covertly and make two separate enquiries – both of which asked the member concerned to enter into a transaction regarding the sale of the same item in the "Trading" forum. It was my assumption that, if the sale was legitimate, the first enquiry would result from a sale and the second would end with an apologetic refusal. If, however, the thread were simply an undercover method of selling on bulk items of stock then both enquiries would result in a sale. The fact that both of my enquiries resulted in a sale, combined with other circumstantial evidence regarding the actions of this member and the style of their posting led to a ban being placed on this member. Normally at this stage, further correspondence from the second party results the receipt of a series of offensive and unpleasant emails but, on this occasion, I received a compassionate plea and some form of explanation of what had happened and why it had occurred. It can be very difficult to come to a watertight conclusion when on the Internet. I do not have access to the same body of information that a judge at court has access to and much of the evidence in many of my workload can be circumstantial and conjunctional. When dealing with problems such as these I must be content with coming to a conclusion based on relate probability. For

The Latest From MagicBunny (cont.)

me, the criterion of "beyond all reasonable doubt" is one that I can very rarely ever expect to attain. In the last example from above, if an error was made on my part, I can only hope that the second party will acknowledge that a remarkable set of coincidences had taken place and that, if they were acting from my standpoint, they would have come to exactly the same conclusion as me. Personally (as I stated privately to the person concerned) I had no way of knowing whether the compassionate plea that I received was a truthful and honest retort or nothing more than another round of mind games played by someone who was determined to achieve their goal in deceit. I had no other choice than to leave this task at this point and move onto the next project, knowing that there will be times when I come to the wrong conclusion but many more when a deviant person is brought to some form of action for their deeds.

I hope that this introduction may highlight yet another facet of the role of Administrator for you and that it may draw attention to the numerous and difficult problems that go on behind the scenes of this site, problems that need to be addressed in order to ensure that the majority of members may visit and access these boards with an element of dignity and trust. This month I have highlighted just one task that is performed – one task that is difficult and challenging and one, due to its nature, that is rarely known about by other members. Having said that, however, there are many other tasks that are completed on a daily basis, tasks that are attended to by all members of the Governing Body and I am sure that they could so easily and eloquently explain the pitfalls and quirks of each and every one of these too. Please ensure that a huge amount of work goes on behind the scenes of this site and, when you see a forum with few problems or none at all, then you may understand that this is a result of a great deal of input from all members of the moderator team who spend equally a large amount of their time in ensuring that the boards are to be seen as the very best on the Internet.

By Nigel Shelton

The Chinese Compass Revisited

The Chinese Compass...

...Revisited

By Peter Marucci



Take one old trick, add one old joke, and -- like magic! -- you've got a whole new routine.

Sounds too good to be true? Not at all. It can work just about every time, providing the two pieces have a logical connection.

And the best thing about it is that it is your own original, not something that everyone else is doing.

Take that old standby, the Chinese Compass. I did this as "Tate's Compass" in my column in September of 1992 issue of the Linking Ring magazine. But, for those of you who may be new to magic or have never come across the Compass, here is the handling in brief:

Take a piece of cardboard about eight inches square. On one side, draw an arrow pointing straight up; on the other side, draw an arrow at right angles to the arrow on the opposite side and pointing to the left. Hold the board so the arrow facing the audience points straight up; the left hand is holding the top left corner, the right hand is holding the lower right corner.

Show the other side of the board by turning it over on its diagonal axis, using just the fingers of the left and right hand. The second arrow will also be pointing straight up. Turn the board over a couple of times, showing the arrows on both sides (apparently) pointing in the same direction.

The Chinese Compass Revisited (cont.)

Now, turn the board upside down, so that the arrow facing the audience is pointing down. As you do so, position your hands so the left hand is now holding the lower left corner and the right hand is holding the upper right corner.

The arrow facing the audience is, of course, pointing down. But, when you turn the board as you did before (on its axis) the second arrow is pointing up, in the opposite direction. Turn the board over a couple of times showing the arrows pointing, now, in opposite directions.

There are scores of ways of designing this -- as arrows, as hands pointing, as words (a marketed version has UP and DOWN on opposite sides, with the words turning upside down and rightside up).

And there are scores of ways of presenting this -- as a driving test, as a story about how you got lost coming to the theatre, as Indians (with arrows) and on and on.

Finally, there are also scores of ways of ending the routine. Over the years, many of these have appeared in magic publications: On the trail of Bigfoot (the pointers here are giant feet), as direction signs for the Chamber of Commerce in ancient Rome (ending with ". . . and that's why all roads lead to Rome."), my own Tate's Compass, an invention of Ebenezer Tate, which started the expression, "He who has a Tate's is lost," and so on.

That last one was a gag from a radio show in the 1940s -- but I use it in almost every show and it still gets a laugh today.

But, until you can come up with a solid ending, the Chinese Compass is like a lot of other old standbys in magic -- the Linking Rings, the Chinese Sticks, etc. -- there's just no logical ending.

The nice thing about the Chinese Compass is that it packs flat and can be used almost anywhere, from close-up to stage, depending on the size of the board. Mostly, I use a laminated board and draw the arrows on in front of the audience in erasable marker. Then, at the end of the routine, I simply wipe the board clean and everything is examinable.

But I digress.

The following is an ending I came up with a while back and I have used it with considerable success ever since.

Instead of a single board, you need a hinged double board. When closed, the outside shows the two arrows (or fingers or whatever). When opened, the inside shows an optometrist's eye chart:

E
MXY
FBEL
HXEPM

The letters, of course, start large, with about a three-inch-high E and gradually decrease in size, line by line.

When you finish the routine, with the closed board, you comment on the confusion you experienced and say that you went to have your eyes examined.

Open the chart.

"The doctor asked me to read the eye chart. I said I could see the letters all right, but I was having trouble pronouncing the words.

"The doctor then said, 'Aha, you can't read it because it's written in Artesian. Do you know Artesian?'

"And I replied, 'Yes, I know Artesian well.' "

The Chinese Compass Revisited (cont.)

Major groan from the audience -- and the routine is over.

Second Thoughts: This plays well for an adult audience, although I wouldn't ever try it at a children's show; the gag is just too obscure. In fact, you may find a number of adults who don't know what an Artesian well is -- but I've found the vast majority of your audience will get it. It's up to you to decide how to play it.

You may want to underscore the pun with a tag line at the end, something like: "That gag is all wet," or "There goes another joke down the drain."

However, with the right audience, it's a winner. But it's up to you to read your audience -- just as you should do for every trick you perform.

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No Way 'OUT'!

No Way 'OUT'!

A Fundamental Key in Magic

By Gary Scott



About 8 months ago, I sat down and thought about magic. I mean really, seriously thought about magic and the way forward for me. I was at a life changing process, personally and in magic. I wanted to improve everything I was doing. But what could I do?... I decided to take everything I was doing and rip it apart! Piece by piece and my routines got re-structured. Everything was now scripted, learnt and ready to go....or so I thought?!

Everything was perfect in my mind, but why did I have no confidence? "What if it all goes wrong?" "What happens if I split this double card?".... " What happens if the spectator saw what I did?"..... My solution to my confidence was simple, yet had eluded my detection. I had to develop those all important outs for what I was doing!... I believe, after these months have gone by, it is a much needed requirement in the role of a successful magician as the props that are

wielded. The study of 'outs', eludes all of us.

This is, to my knowledge, the least talked about topic in the field of magic, but how so important. How many times have you picked up a deck of cards and split a double or dropped a palmed coin?

Everyone knows I'm a card man. So learning sleights to fix card problems was no problem. The easiest out in the world is a palmed card. Pull the dropped, lost, mis-counted or wrongly dealt card from a pocket to a wonderful comedy magic moment. This method of a 'wrong ending' can sometimes be stronger than a hundred routines that go right! So...technically, cards are self-working fixable, if you learn the sleights required to master the outs that you wish to perform. Unfortunately, there are plenty of close-up magic moments, non card related, that are much harder to fix.

What got me started on this ripping apart process was none other than sponge balls!

This routine has fascinated me for ages and it will always be a part of my working repertoire.

But the most famous part of any sponge ball routine is making multiple balls appear in the spectators hand!..

But the function of getting the balls IN the hand can be tricky without reading your spectator correctly...The psychological make-up of your spectator is so important for this to work.

I found some important factors about sponge ball in the hand and how to make it work 99% of the time.

No Way 'OUT!' (cont.)

First, make sure sponge balls is one of the last trick in your routines. Personally, it is always last with me or any magical effect where it happens in the spectators hand. This way you have time to assess who would be good to perform sponge balls to.

Second, try to make sure that your involved spectator is either a female or a child. They garner superior reactions to sponge balls, much more so than men. Men will give a much better reaction from seeing everybody else react.

Third, make sure that your chosen spectator has enjoyed everything you have offered so far. I prefer to choose a female spectator who has been sitting quietly smiling at the other end of the table. The sudden rush of attention to where she is, makes her a 'willing -to- confirm- and - not -go- against- the-grain' Spectator.

Yes, even with all this planning, working, theory, practise, study, human psychology...things can still go wrong! The most observed 'accident' is the spectator saying..." Oh you just put 2 balls in my hand!". Well what now?...This was your big finish.....Well, I have already discussed some of this and my technical out in Magic Bunny's Library, so please do pop in and read it. The title is Sponge Balls-the grand finale!

So, how do we go about *designing* outs?. First you need to know your routines technically until they are as natural as breathing. Unfortunately, most performers like to think that a *theatrical* performance is the golden key to good magic. It is only a part of the whole performance. Without the technical proficiency, your performance becomes an oddity without magical meaning! A bit like a mime, with nothing to mime. Then concentrate on your presentation around the technical wizardry. Yes, your patter and delivery must be as distinctive as your sleight-of hand! If you can combine the 2 with an even, natural flow, you are on your way to becoming a better performer, but the accidents still and WILL happen. You need to break down your routines into technical performance. What you do and when you do it! Take each phase and say to yourself..." What would I do if this went wrong?"

The initial phases of a standard card revelation are the selection and controlling of a card to a required location in the deck. You need to look at each of these phases and create outs for them. Whether it be a sleight, gag or taking everything into a different direction.

You will be surprised at how good your own creative persona takes hold.

I had managed to garner an agreement with a hotel for my magic entertainment company, the Capital Association of Magic (CAM as it is fondly known!), as their resident magicians.

This meant one thing and one thing only.....regular performances. A chance to shine with my new found confidence and working aptitude.

I had impressed the hotel with my debut and have returned on numerous occasions to perform for their guests and private functions with my partners from CAM.

Am I glad that I sat and thought about magic?...I sure am!...But why?...because of the ' no-accident' , ' infallible routine' and 'perfect magic' clauses that so many magicians put into their contracts.

Especially CLOSE-UP workers! The bad news is.... You can't fool all of the people, all of the time! None of us have our very own Dave or John, from the L&L audience, following us around.

Creating these outs will give you the confidence needed to perform a natural, authentic and entertaining piece of magical theatre. I do hope that some of this has read in a tangible manner. I can only express how this works for me and I hope that some of it helps you too. I cannot express enough how studying 'outs' has boosted my confidence no end. No way out has hopefully become no way 'OUTS'!

See you on Magic Bunny!

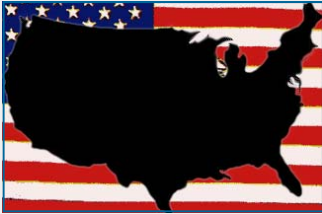
Best wishes
Gary Scott

Thoughts From Mid-West America

Post Show Rant

A Break From the Complete Course

By Michael Saint-Louis



Well, we've been doing this little study of *The Complete Course in Magic* for a while now. It's a big ol' book, isn't it? I mean, we have to be 3 or 4 articles deep now and we still haven't really started to hit the good part! When we last left off, we were ready to get into the Glide and the Double Lift. That's where the real heart and soul of card magic starts, eh?

But I want to put that off for a bit. Call me self-indulgent, but to be honest, I am not even sure anyone is reading this article series anyway! So I get to talk about whatever I want.

A couple of weeks ago I did a stage show. Let me be the first to admit it was no big deal in the grand scheme of magic! A little stage show for my church. 20 to 30 minutes to entertain kids and adults. I hadn't done a stage show since Clinton's first term. I'd never done a show for kids. My last stage show was completely performed in Mandarin, revolved around martial arts fakery and resulted in at least one girl (and I think two or three) passing out when an overloaded blood pack sprayed into the aisle. I'd never done a show suitable for a church... I reckon that goes without saying, huh? Hell, 95% of what I have written for Top Hat would have had the F-word in it if my spell-checker didn't pick it out for me!

Luckily (or was it skill? Nah, probably luck!) the show came off well. A million things went wrong before the show... I think I pretty much covered it in a post about the show. But the feedback was really good, the children all loved it and my wife (who is by far my most merciless critic) even gave it her stamp of approval. Haha! I worked around last minute problems, kept it clean and filled in when something went bad during the show but big deal. That's the fun of live performance, after all. The big deal, to me at least, was that I did a card trick.

I've never done a card trick on stage before. When I ran a little art theater I used to do card magic fairly often in its tiny lobby in an attempt to keep my staff entertained and my customers from noticing that their movie should have already started. I'd go out after work and do magic as we drank until closing time... good times! But I'd never done any formal card magic because it didn't fit in with the magic gungfu act I used to do.

I probably wouldn't have included cards in my little charity show, either, except for two things. One, I've been practicing along with Mark Wilson for a couple of months now and someone is going to watch me do a slip force dammit! And a slip force is what I used for my bit. The other thing was that I recently had the pleasure of sitting through a Jeff McBride lecture. The master of insanely complicated card sleights spent a great deal of his time trying to convince everyone that we could do card magic and it didn't have to be crazy or knuckle-popping to be impressive.

Jeff McBride can only be so many places at once, so I'll assume that most of you haven't had the chance to attend a lecture. He runs that school in Vegas, though, and we can all get there if we really want to (I'm saving my change!). We pretty much can all go through the *Complete Course*, though. It's in print and, at least in the US, available in a new paperback edition for something like \$15 (which is incredibly cheap given the amount of information in it). I started this series in hopes that I would get back to the basics of magic and some of y'all would join me. Well, so far it is working for me. I just hope I'm not the only one!

By Michael Saint-Louis

The Dickens You Say...

The Dickens You Say...

By P. Craig Browning



Mystery/Bizarre Entertainment is not restricted to a particular season or even market place. Such limitations exist only within our mind and our own inability to see how to apply said principles to situations "outside" the norm. Or, as the case may be, those realms deemed as being most appropriate. Case in point, the up coming Yuletide holidays.

Over the years I've had considerable fun presenting my annual Halloween Season programs and had the desire to expand upon the concept so as to have a longer run. The result of that desire being the creation of a Christmas seasoned show – a good ole fashioned ghost story based on Charles Dickens "A Christmas Carol."

Think about this a bit, you have four ghosts with which to work. Too, the theme allows room for a family setting vs. the demand for a more mature "adult" audience we tend to be limited to with normal Bizarre work. Too, because it's a Yuletide program, you are free of the "dark" stigma some within society would place on the same exact program if and when presented during the Halloween season.

Truth is the telling of bizarre tales and ghosts stories holds a much closer rapport with this latter year holiday than it does the late-autumn solstice season. By matter of tradition, the nights leading up to the day of Yule were the times our loved ones – our ancestors – were remembered and honored. Unlike Samhain (Halloween), when we say good bye to those that had fallen in the past year's time, Yule allowed us to lend homage to the more extended aspects of family and the adventures known to them.

Admittedly such airs of tradition probably elude the mind of many in this 21st century world. After all, most all of us grew up with Television and other distractions, not having the privilege of living in a multigenerational environment in which the elders of the clan gathered the youngsters around the family's hearth and told tales of years long past. Our modern era robbing us all of some very valuable rites of passage that are costing us, as a society; especially in regards to such acts of simplicity. Nonetheless, we are in the unique position, as bizarre entertainers, to bring about a sense of restoration to such traditions, delivering a new kind of story weaving that's highly interactive; catalysts for the imagination within the young and old alike. So why should we willingly limit ourselves and our ability – our "obligation", some would say – to restore and preserve such things?

Where I have intentionally exploited the Dickens tale of Mr. Scrooge, there is a vast plethora of Christmas season stories from which we can pull, creating an interactive form of theater that's unique as well as memorable. The novelty of our offering lending to us a sense of viability – a commercial advantage not typically known to the average performer; the very kind of novelty that almost insures us of ease in sale as well as success in promotion. The only requirement, so to speak, is our own willingness to be creative, less droll, and attuned to the spirit of the season and how to make it magickle.

Prior to the creation of my Dickens program I found myself doing magic that was a bit more traditional, superimposing it upon my very own Victorian era Father Christmas (not Santa Clause, as he's known throughout the U.S.) Needless to say, this character closed his show by creating a great snowstorm (often times in the middle of a school's library or gymnasium.) But he too delivered some more phenomenal demonstrations, all of which were geared towards educating the patron about the season of Yule and how it was observed the world over. Granted, it was controversial, explaining to children that this time of year had meanings and implications not directly tied to the adopted Christian ideas surrounding the "birth of Christ." Via the art of magic I was able to explain the Menorah and other holiday symbols – how this time of observance represented "new life and hope" simply because it was the end of the short days and long nights and the beginning of longer days – the days of the sun and thus, life itself.

When we learn to weave such a web of "edutainment" within our work, we gain significant benefit when it

The Dickens You Say... (cont.)

comes to the public's perspective. We've given to them facts – insights – that can be sustained via their own research or casual study of holiday traditions. This is a valuable form of credibility few of us weigh when creating a program. Application of this habit however, adds to the public's perception of us, as magickle entities vs. some clown that does tricks. Too, our awareness of historic and traditional fact, opens doors of creativity that will lead us towards the creation of shows appropriate to each season. The culmination of which, establishes us as being far more than what most assume when they think of magic or magicians. I hope these thoughts help you find a new way of looking at your work and how to apply bizarre thinking to the whole of your year's work.

By P. Craig Browning

Classic Magic?

Classic Magic

... I think not!

By Finlay McDermott

Sleight of hand and straight packs of cards, that is what I believe in. Unfortunately many people nowadays do not. Many magic dealers only sell gimmicked props and I think that this is not right....

Do gimmicked props make magic better? No. It is the presentation that counts, the way the magician shows the trick and how he presents the "magic".

I, of course, am not saying that gimmicked props are bad, in fact you can produce some amazing (and when I say amazing, I mean it !) effects. Yet I am simply saying that we should not forget the old methods of magic.

Use gimmicked props all you want, just remember that magic is in the presentation and skill by the magician. Why go blow money on loads of tricks

When you can learn sleight of hand, although this is not the view of everyone. Indeed the 'debate' of sleight vs. gimmicks has been going on for ever, in fact since magic began! Most people's views on the subject seem to be the sort of "I'm not bothered" and don't seem to care as long as they do the show. However, many people think that it is the magician's job to entertain and go out and buy a ton of props. Being young (and I mean very young!) I do not have the money to go out and buy 'full-scale props' therefore I worked with coins, cards, dice and anything I could get my hands on! This is why when I realized how many devices there were out there and how much less skill you had to put into them I was filled with rage! All the time and effort I put in was a waste, 'Magicians' would go out and perform things that would take hours to learn. The worst part of it was that they would take credit as though they practiced 'really hard.' Ok, by now you'll be thinking I'm some kid rambling on about things he doesn't know about, yet this is not the case. From about 5 years of age I got interested in magic, I have never seen a magic show or someone who does magic in their life, no one I know does it, my family are not supportive and I have no idea what the hell got me into it! Your typical magician... Yet I practiced so hard...

Let me describe you my opinion of a gimmick. Try going through this article and replace the word 'gimmick' with self working trick. That's my view of gimmick. Yet I do have an exception - I will buy a gaff if it allows an effect that would otherwise be impossible through "normal" handling or, if it causes a greater impact than through sleights and handling. The Invisible Deck is a perfect example of this. To stress how much people buy gimmicks today, the magic dealers even put **NO SLEIGHT OF HAND REQUIRED** in big bold letters! Now I'm not accusing anyone here (it would never be the Magic Bunny members!!!) but I ask you now a question, do you have gimmicks in your routine? If so think about it. Could you do the same, or better, effect without having the gimmick ? Plus, never forget the old way of magic.

By Finlay McDermott

From the Desk of Michael Jay

From the Desk of Michael Jay

The 'Chatter on Patter' Project

By Michael Jay



I've been thinking a lot lately. One member in particular of the MB forums has forced me into this very painful process. Let me explain...

I've said over and over that the presentation of a trick is much more important than the trick itself. Doc Eason has a saying, "It's not what you do that they will remember, it's how you made them feel." That is a fact and it is in the presentation that this sadly overlooked fact comes to fruition. The stupidest, little trick can become a miracle with the proper presentation and the greatest of miracles is a stupid, little trick if poorly presented. So, the study of presentation is of ultimate import.

The MB member in question (you know, the one who actually forced me to think) is Will, or better known as Gold Fish. Recently, he has started a project that I fully endorse. He has requested that members contribute simple effects for an e-book that he is putting together. The big difference between this book and most of the books that are being published, is that this particular work will be for the reader to work on presentation.

If you read my most recent article with Online-Visions, then you know that I am against generic magicians doing generic tricks (if you need an explanation, then pop over to Online-Visions and give my article a look). With everyone out there marketing any and every effect that they can add an extra finger palm to, or take the extra finger palm away from, I see our art being reduced to a generic genre of entertainment. This is why it is a breath of fresh air to see a member of the magic community who wants to publish material that is geared toward helping other magicians take a look at their presentation, rather than giving them a trick that everyone else is doing.

Now, the idea presents itself that since it is various members contributing to this project, that it shouldn't be an item that should be charged for - no money should be charged for this e-book. Well, I have to respectfully disagree with that idea. One person is collecting the data and putting it together, along with thoughts and ideas of the author himself that will automatically be included. Anyone who has ever aspired to publish a book realizes the huge amount of time and work that such a thing entails. Why would anyone begrudge the creator/author of such an item putting some lucre in his own pocket? Of course, I do believe that the contributors should be given a free copy and I further believe that some of the profits (should any be forthcoming) be tithed to the MB forums.

Without any argument, Will fully agrees with those facts put forth in the paragraph above.

So, I ask that members who would like to contribute to this project contact Will to see if these simple effects would be a good addition to his project. Consider the fact that you will get a copy of the finished product, you will be contributing to something that you can actually add to a resume (or just for the good feeling you'll get to be a contributor to a worthy project) and you'll also be helping out with the cost of running the forums of MB, assuming that any profits are forthcoming. There are no guarantees, of course, but if several of us get on board with this project it may just turn out to be a very good thing. However, it can't happen if we don't make it happen.

In this vein, I offer you a stupid, little trick and challenge you to take the time and make this little gizmo and turn it into a miracle. You'll need a measuring stick, a wooden type match, a knife, a micro-file (or coarse fingernail file) and a safety pin.

Take the match and cut the head off with the knife. File the freshly cut edge down so that it is smooth, like the other end. Use the measuring stick to find the center of the matchstick and use a pencil (oops, I didn't tell you that you'd need a pencil, ah, well, suffer) to put a small dot on that spot of the headless matchstick. Open the safety pin and push the sharp end through the matchstick at the pencil dot that you put in the middle of that matchstick only seconds ago. Slide the matchstick to about the center of the safety pin's shaft and close the pin. With your left hand, hold either side of the pin (the head where it closes up or the bottom where it is "spring-like") and, with your right forefinger, push the stick against the pin's shaft, like you are trying to push it right through to the other side. While putting pressure on the matchstick, allow

From the Desk of Michael Jay (cont.)

your finger to slide off the matchstick and it will spring backwards, against the pressure. This is a knack, but with only a minute or two of "work" you'll get to the point where the matchstick will spring back and go almost 360 degrees. The illusion (and, it is a convincing illusion) is that the matchstick cleanly penetrated the shaft of the safety pin.

This is a small item, will travel easily in your pocket, can be used to routine with any safety pin magic that you may do and, if presented with any panache at all, can be a nifty little piece of magic. It can also be found in hundreds of beginners magic books and gets absolutely no respect from any magicians in the community (are you looking for something that NO OTHER magician is doing?). Presentation is the key.

You could also paint the beheaded matchstick black. Then, paint the tips in white. You will then have a wand impaled on your safety pin and, if you're of a mind to, give it a story and further strengthen the presentation. Maybe, you could even go out and buy some really nice materials (found in most hobby shops), print up a patter line and handling and do what everyone else does - market it. This would make a good generic trick for many generic magicians who simply are too lazy to build their own presentations and be original. And, based on what I see rife throughout the magic community, you'll have a good chance of getting them to buy it.

Or, you could take a simple effect that you do and contribute to Will for a useful and much needed project.

As always, you all take care and thank you for reading.

Mike.

Four Aces

Four Aces

Pick-a-card routine with a four-ace twist

By Daniel de Urquiza



This time I will share with you an effect that I thought of while reading [Chameleon Card](#) by Andrew Loh Chang, published at the free tricks section of Magic Den, the site of Euan Bingham. This is no advertisement, it's the truth, and my sole wish it's to give proper credit.

EFFECT

Five spectators each select a card. 4 of those cards change into the four aces. The remaining selection is found face down in the middle of the face up aces.

METHOD

It's a nice introduction for a four ace routine, but I wouldn't advise to use it as an opener, because it involves a lot of audience participation.

SETUP

Four aces on top.

Extend face up the deck between your hands, while asking one spectator to touch one card. Spectator touches a card, and you up jog it. Repeat this with other four spectators. Explain that you did this to see what kind of poker hand you would have got if this was a real game, and each spectator could give you a random card.

While talking, get a break above the four aces, and perform the Vernon's Addition.

I must say this: I liked the idea of Jennings's optical addition; which was briefly explained in the routine of...and also used by Euan in other routine. But to my routine, it lacked naturality. So I chose Vernon's

Four Aces (cont.)

Addition, but with the aesthetics of Jennings's addition.

I mean this: in Vernon's method, you strip the aces below the upjogged selections. In Jennings addition, you strip the aces AND PIVOT them, pivoting at the same time the upjogged selections. In Vernon's method there is no pivoting to do the stripping motion.

Well, why not?

It looks great, try it. And it looks even better face up. Let's call it the Vernings Addition...dunno, maybe the Jennon Addition?

So, when you do the stripping motion, pivot face up both the upjogged selections and the aces, and strip. Show openly, cos' they see a selection in the face, and simply throw the rest of the deck on top of that.

It's great, it's clean, and it's so nice that if I were you, I would be in love with me.

Rather obvious idea: great switch to change four indifferent cards into four aces. See 'Pick of the ladder' of Elmsley, T: 1 of his Complete Works written by Stephen Minch, to see the exact opposite method...read it, and you'll understand me.

Going on with the routine: turn the deck face down. Reverse count five cards, taking them in a fan in your hand. Say: 'Five cards, the last one now first, cos' I reversed the order, of course, as you saw'. Of course, is bull...(we magicians call it 'discrepancy') but, believe it or not, it's a convincer.

While finishing the above sentence, get a break above the now top card of the deck.

So you have a fan of cards in one hand, and the deck with a break below the top card.

Square the fan over the deck, keeping the break. Turn over first card, showing the last card selected. Square it, face up. Lift EVERYTHING (oh God, I'm so clever) above the break, perfectly squared, and say: 'Second card' You are doing a quintuple lift, but what is best, you are getting away with it!!!! Use the quintuple has a shovel to turn face up the third card, saying (of course) 'Third Card'. Turn the third card face down the same way, and say: 'But the order doesn't matter in a poker hand' and square the quintuple, let loose one card, and keep a break. Peel with the thumb that holds the deck the first card onto the deck, taking away the four aces, and use the four aces as one as a shovel again, turning the last card on top of the deck. This leaves you with the 'last' card on top of the deck, seemingly second from the top.

Say: 'As we saw, your cards weren't such a great poker hand. I this would be a real poker game, I would have to do some cheating...'. Blow gently over the deck, and say: 'And so, I change the first card, the second card, the third card and the fourth card into the four aces'. While saying this, simply turn face up the cards, showing very cleanly the four aces. It's a great effect.

There are two possibilities now.

- a) A sharp spectator says: but one card is missing.
- b) If nobody says so, you say: but one card is missing.

When you showed the aces face up, you were so keen and strong of temper as to take the last selection below the last ace. Place this ace on top.

Now leave the deck on the table, and take the four aces in your hand.

Now they ask you, or you tell spectators. The first option is better.

When they do it ask, look perplexed at the aces. Take the last one and place it on top, like toying with them, or examining it to see what are they talking about.

The last selection is face down in the middle. If performing for lay audiences, do an Ascanio Spread. Don't do it for magicians, you'll be tipping off the next phase.

Change your face and your body language. Smile triumphantly. Say: 'Yes, I know it. You see, to have a poker of aces you only need four cards. That's why I needn't change the last ace...but that's were I leave cheating aside, and do magic...just for the fun of it'.

Spread the aces. Show a face down card. Ask for the identity of the last selection. Show coincidence. Climax.

KR

Daniel

Please send anything that you wish to be featured in December's ezine to TopHat@magicbunny.co.uk by the 26th November. Many thanks to this month's contributors.

Jon Snoops
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