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TopHat

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Since the beginning of MagicBunny, new features have been added and existing features improved. One such feature is the Regional Magic Clubs. In his column, Nigel Shelton discusses these forums and explains how you can benefit from them. This month, Michael Jay settles the debate on videos, DVDs and books: comparing their pros and cons. On top of this, he concludes with an effect including an original presentation. Craig Leonard investigates performing magic with props other than the standard playing cards and coins as he explores ideas utilising Top Trumps game cards.

Continuing his way through Mark Wilson's book of magic, Michael Saint-Louis discusses the chapter on forces, highlighting the key points and techniques. As always, Michael's interesting yet informative writing style provides an excellent read. Further on, Peter's monthly presentation this issue is one on Sherlock Holmes. Providing the patter, presentation and moves, all you need to supply is the practice and Peter's routine will work wonders on top of furthering your presentational prowess.

Finally, concluding his three-part series on going *beyond* bizarre, Craig Browning (Darmoe) presents "Now That's Gross" in his column on bizarre and mental magic.

Don't forget to send articles for next month to TopHat@magicbunny.co.uk

All the best,
~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

Regional Magic Clubs

By Nigel Shelton



One important objective for the Index page of the boards is that it should be as easy to navigate as possible and so free from all forms of clutter. When a new project was set up about a year ago, it was decided to introduce this project in a hidden mode so that new or established users of the boards would not have to view additional forums which were completely irrelevant to them.

Many of our established users will already know of the existence of the "Regional Magic Club" project but it is possible that a large number of newly joined members may be completely unaware of its existence.

This project was initiated about a year ago, solely for the benefit of magicians who lived in close proximity to one another and wanted to discuss matters of a regional nature. The subject matter of the threads in these forums cover a diverse range of topics, the evaluation of Magic club meetings, the loan of private items between local people, private matters of news shared between friends, local news relevant to a particular limited area and so on. The main link between these threads is that the subject matter is only relevant for members who live within travelling distance of one another. There are many times when all of us want to talk among friends; people we have met socially and have begun to form friendships, respect and trust. The "Regional Magic Clubs" project was set up to address this objective.

Currently, there are six forums dedicated to this function; The Capital Magic Club (for London based magicians), Eton College Magic Club (for students of Eton College), The Thames Valley Association Of Magicians (for members of based around the Thames Valley), The Midwestern America Club (for magicians in the Midwest of America), The Waveney Valley Magic Club (for members in the Lowestoft/Great Yarmouth Area) and the Ulster Society of Magicians (for members in Northern Ireland.) Of these six additional forums four are particularly well used and are of great benefit to those who visit. The remaining two are somewhat restricted in activity at present (due to the small number of members living in these areas) but it is hoped that, as the overall membership of Magic Bunny increases, it may have a knock-on effect on the membership of these smaller usergroups too.

Of course, if you live in one of the above six areas, you are invited to visit the Usergroups link (found at <http://magicbunny.co.uk/phpBB2/groupcp.php>) and find the name of the member to which you should apply for access. You may like to know that the membership of these forums is determined by location only and is not restricted to members with a certain post count or to those who are professionals. If you live in one of the six above areas, you are warmly invited to contact the group moderator and request to be added to the relevant usergroup.

However, you may live outside these areas but would still like to benefit from the membership of such a project. If you know of other magicians who live in your area, simply email me at admin@magicbunny.co.uk and I shall see to the appropriate details, in accordance with the Constitution. Therefore, if you know of magic friends who live close to your home, speak with them informally and decide whether you would like to take advantage of this project. After this, if you come back to me privately, I can give you further advice and deal with your request appropriately.

I do hope that this hidden project may enhance your use of these forums and help you to get as much as you are able from the exciting interest of magic.

By Nigel Shelton

From the Desk of Michael Jay

From the Desk of Michael Jay

On books, videos, DVDs and the luck of the Irish

By Michael Jay

As you all know, I am a big supporter of Top Hat and a fan of Jon Snoops. The work he puts into making this publication a worth while reading experience just leaves me sitting and wondering where he comes up with the time to do all of this. So, Jon, here's a big "Attaboy" from me!

In fact, Issue 29 was one of the most amazing publications that I've seen on the magic scene, anywhere. I wonder if there's any coincidence that I didn't have an article in that one...Ah, well, either way, the reason for that issue being such a fantastic piece was the contributions of members who don't normally contribute. The time and effort put in by those writers was phenomenal. My point is that you might have something that you want to contribute, but don't feel worthy. Please, look at Issue 29 and consider the fact that several of those writers didn't think that they should publish for the same reasons. What would we have missed if they wouldn't have contributed? Just something to think about.

While I sit here and face a great deal of blank space trying to figure out what I should write about this month, a thought occurs. I have listened to the many arguments over whether books or videos (or DVDs) is the better genre to invest in and from which to learn. So, without further ado, I give you this month's article:

BOOKS VS. VIDEOS AND DVDS

Simon Lovell said of videos (and DVDs): "Sorry to say but if anybody tells me they are a 'visual learner' I regard that as meaning that they are too lazy to read and study a book. This instant 'I want it now' syndrome is responsible for a lot of very bad magic." To a large extent, I am compelled to agree with Mr. Lovell on this point. I definitely fall into the category of "Books over Videos" because I believe that books have so much more to offer.

Let's take a look...Let's say that there is a DVD of 5 effects and you'll pay 25 dollars for it. Mainly you buy it because it has the Ed Marlo effect that is described like this: "A spectator thinks of a card and that card turns out to be the only red backed card in an entirely blue backed deck - No forces of any kind, self working." Sounds pretty good, eh? The DVD in question also contains four other tricks too! Now there's a good use of your money, right? So, you get the DVD and you study the trick (yes, the Marlo effect works exactly as described) and maybe learn one other trick off the DVD that you feel will work for you. You now have a DVD that you believe you've gotten your money's worth from. You are happy with your purchase.

However, what if I told you that you could buy a book for 3 times that amount, or 75 dollars, and you would have that Marlo effect plus 500 more effects including subtleties and such, that spans cards, coins, ring and string, sponge balls, matrix effects (and much more) and also includes essays on magic that you simply cannot get from a DVD (at any price) and a great deal more. Furthermore, what if I told you that not only does Marlo contribute to this book, but other contributors include Slydini, Ken Krenzel, Michael Ammar, Sid Lorraine, Tom Mullica, Bro. John Hamman, Paul Harris, Paul Cummins, Frank Garcia, Karrel Fox, Dai Vernon, Herb Zarrow, Larry Becker, Richard Kaufman, Patrick Page, Nick Pudar, Jackie Flosso, Meir Yedid, Scotty York, Darwin Ortiz, Al Cohen, Richard Osterlind and a hundred others. Which is the better value for the money?

Well, I have to say that the book, while it does cost triple that of the DVD, is definitely the better way to go. In the book in question, one of the subtleties that you can learn is how to turn a card end for end in one hand while still hiding a coin in that same hand and it looks natural and is so subtle that any onlookers will believe the hand only holds the card, because while the card spins through the fingertips, the hand is shown completely empty. This isn't a knuckle busting maneuver. In fact, it's so simple that I was able to do this maneuver cleanly within 10 minutes of practicing it. If you do a matrix routine, the strength of doing such a subtlety is immediately understood.

Also, if we go trick for trick, we can still arrive at the fact that the book is far more cost efficient than the

From the Desk of Michael Jay (cont.)

DVD. For example, let's say that the DVD has 10 effects on it for 25 dollars. No problem, 3 similar DVDs will cost 75 dollars for 30 tricks. The book, on the other hand, is giving you 500 tricks for the same price or, quite literally, over 1,300% more stuff than the DVDs at the same price. The DVD is teaching you tricks, but the book is giving you a huge cross section of thoughts and ideas that you can use to make new routines, or polish up the ones that you have with a subtlety which even strengthens the work that you presently do. In my opinion, there is simply no competition here - the book wins all hands down.

Furthermore, the book is giving you the same stuff that you are getting on the DVD, with someone else teaching it to you. Back to the Marlo example. Somebody read the Marlo effect in the book and then marketed it to you. You are paying this person to teach you something that is already on the market, they just repackaged it and sold it to you. If you had the book, you wouldn't need to buy the DVD to learn that repackaged effect, you'd already have it in your library (along with 500 other effects, routines, bits of business and subtleties). Do you still think that your DVD is a higher value than my book?

I'd like to ask you a question. Think about this: How many DVDs or videos do you have that you watched one time, only to put them away and never go back and view them again? Be honest. The sad fact is that oftentimes, these videos are purchased and once viewed, will never see the light of day again. Books, on the other hand, sit on the shelf for reference and will be used over and over.

Don't get me wrong, here. I own a fair amount of videos myself. I do find them to be a useful tool to have in my collection. However, I use the books in my collection so much more than I do the videos that I find the books to be the better investment. Let's say that I want to research a new, impromptu effect with matches. On my videos, I know of a couple match effects that are on "Ice Breakers," by Michael Ammar. I would have to put the video in the machine and then start searching through the video in an attempt to find the specific effect that I was looking for. With a DVD, it may be a bit easier. However, in my library of books, I can find hundreds of references to matches including little subtleties and bits of business. My Einhorn book has a whole section dedicated to matches and in my other books I can find a huge well of match magic. The same can be said of silk magic, rope magic, coin magic and the list goes on and on.

Also, the local library has dozens upon dozens of books on magic. A few days ago I went to the library and took out three books. "You Don't Have to be a Kid to Pull a Rabbit Out of a Hat," by Paul Daniels & Barry Murray, "Impromptu Magic," by Bill Severn and "Complete Guide to Conjuring," by Ian Adair were my choices that I brought home. In Daniel's book I found two specific pieces that are worth gold. One specifically I shall be using as an advertising hook. Excellent stuff, but you won't find it on a DVD. Books are, by far and beyond, the best way to go in your study of magic.

And that brings me to my offering for you good folks today. It is a little piece that I gleaned while reading the Severn book, mentioned above. I call it:

THE LUCK OF THE IRISH

Effect: A deck of cards is shuffled by the spectator. The magician takes the shuffled deck, removes two cards and places them face down on the table. The spectator cuts the deck and the two cards at the cut match the cards the magician has chosen.

Props: Any deck of cards, unprepared.

Handling and presentation: This can be done completely impromptu and is so simple that you can spend all of your time with nothing but the presentation. Obtain a deck of cards, either one that you have on you or one in a drawer somewhere (even an old, worn and sticky deck is okay for this as long as all the cards are present in the deck - in other words, you do need a deck of 52). Say, "I'm an American mutt. I'm 50% German, 50% Scottish, 50% Polish, but mostly I'm all Irish. You know what they say about the luck of the Irish, right?"

We won't talk about what they say regarding drinking habits, though! In fact, I'm going to prove to you just how lucky we Irish really are...By the way, do you have a spare beer that I can have? Doing magic really makes me thirsty!"



From the Desk of Michael Jay (cont.)

Give the spectator the deck of cards and have him mix the cards. Continue on, "If you'll just mix that deck for me I'll demonstrate the luck of the Irish. Good, now I'm going to choose two cards, which we'll call my prediction cards. And, with a little luck, these cards will actually be a prediction of things to come."

Have the spectator shuffle the deck and you then take the deck back. Go through the cards and choose two of them to match the top and bottom cards in the deck. If the top card is the 3 of diamonds, pick out the 3 of hearts and place it face down on the table. If the bottom card is the king of clubs, pick out the king of spades and place it face down on the table next to the 3 of hearts, just to the right of that 3. Don't allow your spectator to see the card faces as you go through the deck and find the matching cards for the top and bottom cards of the deck. Once you have your two prediction cards face down on the table, square up the deck and have the spectator cut the deck.

"Please, cut the deck somewhere near the middle, if you would. Now, what I'll do is place this half on top this way, to mark the exact spot where you cut the deck."

At this point, when the spectator cuts the deck, take the bottom half of the deck and place it at a right angle across the top half. Most of you reading this will realize that this is a "Cross Cut Force." Placing the bottom half on top of the half that has just been cut (so that the deck looks like a "+" sign) simply puts the bottom card directly on top of the top card - in other words, the deck hasn't been fully cut at all and the king of clubs is sitting right next to the 3 of diamonds.

With the deck sitting there in the "+" configuration, you say, "Now, I couldn't know exactly where you would cut the deck but, it doesn't really matter - I have the luck of the Irish working for me. Let's take a look at what we have..."

Pick up the top half of the cut deck (which is easy to do since you have it sitting on the bottom half at a right angle) and show the bottom card, which is the king of clubs. While displaying the king of clubs to the spectator, say, "It would be fairly lucky if I had removed the mate of that king of clubs, don't you agree?" Flip the card on your right over (the king of spades) and show the face value. Give this just a second, a beat or two, to allow this to sink in. "Hey, not bad, eh? But, it would be REALLY lucky if I got both cards right!"

Flip the top card of the other half (the half that was originally cut off by the spectator - the half that you haven't touched yet) and reveal the 3 of diamonds. "Let's see just how lucky we Irish really are..."

Turn your other card face up revealing the 3 of hearts. Give this another second to sink in and say, "You wouldn't happen to have another beer, would you?"

Final Thoughts: This is a very simple trick. However, don't discount the strength of this effect. I've been showing this around and the reactions that I've been getting have been fantastic. I'm talking jaw dropping amazement from the folks that I've shown this to. It is so simple that you don't need to do any major work (absolutely no sleight of hand) and it can be done anywhere, anytime.

While the patter for this trick is based on the fact that I'm an American and can get away with it, you can still put together your own presentation (which is what you should be doing anyway).

This is from "Impromptu Magic" by Bill Severn (the presentation is mine) and the book was published in 1982 - over 20 years ago. I implore you, get out there and pick up some of these older books. You are going to find a gold mine in those books. The DVD industry will suffer, but you will be the big winner when you find stuff like this that further proves you to be an awesome magician (and at no cost to yourself!).

As always, take care and thank you for reading.

By Michael Jay

Top Trumps Ideas

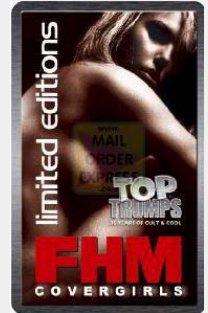
Top Trumps Ideas

Card Games

By Jesse Leonard

I recently rediscovered Top Trumps – a game I haven't seen nor played for about fifteen years. After wiping away the tears of nostalgia, I started thinking about what a great tool these would be for some pretty cool mental magic effects, especially when performing for younger people.

For the purposes of these explanations, I will be using the "FHM Covergirls" Top Trumps. Please note, this does not mean that I am a sad pervert that gets a kick out of ogling beautiful young women on the back of cards, but that the store didn't have a really wide selection to choose from! And when faced with either "Manchester United Stars", "England Rugby Players" or "Covergirls", well, I think we would all have made the same choice...



THE GAME

As most will probably know, the game of Top Trumps is a very simple one. The game consists of 30 cards. Each card contains a photo (or picture) and categories of facts about it. So, for example, on one of the cards there's a photo of Natasha Henstridge, with her age, how many appearances in FHM she has had, Star performance rating, Notoriety and Top position in the FHM 100. In the Manchester United set, there may be a photo of Paul Scholes with how many goals he scores per season etc etc. Each set will have their own categories. The cards are dealt out amongst the players face down. Each player holds their cards so they can see the top card only. One player starts by reading out a value from a category from the top card. The other players then read their values from the same category. The one with the best or highest value wins, and obtains all the top cards from the other players. It is then their turn to choose the category, and the game continues until one player has all the cards.

TOP TRUMP TRICKS

A lot of "regular" card tricks can be adapted for use with the Top Trump cards – some with great effect. For example, just using a simple cross-cut force can create a simple, effective piece of mental magic:

Ask a spectator to cut the deck wherever they like, and have them "mark the card that they cut to" (performing the cross-cut force – you have previously memorised the top card). With your back turned, ask them to pick the selected card up and concentrate on the information on it. Rather than revealing a suit and a value, you have a lot more information to go on. For example, in the set I have a typical revelation could look like this... *"This person is somewhere over 30... but under 40... round about 34, 35?"* Correct. *"She's got a really low amount of appearances though, I think maybe one or two – is it just one?"* Correct. *"I can see dark hair – short dark hair"* Correct. *"Wait a second, I'm getting the face now – its Halle Berry"* Correct. As you can see, the revelations are much greater than *"It's a red card.. a diamond.. the six of diamonds!"*. I would suggest however, that you don't reveal all the information on the card, and combine the revelation of written information with some info on the picture as well. If possible, include info that you know about the person as well (in this case I could have mentioned James Bond for example). Of course, any force could be used to create the same effect.

Another aspect of these cards is that they have a one-way back design. There is a whole host of effects out there that utilise this, so I won't go into any here – but they can be adapted easily.

The following effect does need some set up but would be well worth it.

EFFECT

The performer shuffles a deck of Top Trump Cards and lays them face down on a table. He then explains the rules of the game to one spectator and invites them to play with him. He is so confident that he can win, the

Top Trumps Ideas (cont.)

performer bets £20 that every card will be won by him with no losses at all. To eliminate any trickery, the categories will be selected at random – as this is explained, the performer shows a stack of index cards, each one bearing the name of a category on them. The spectator is asked to deal the cards out one at a time into two face down piles, while the performer mixes the index cards. After the cards have been dealt and the index cards have been mixed and placed face down, the spectator chooses a pile to play with. The performer takes the other. The performer explains that to ensure fairness, the spectator should take the first index card and read out the category to be played. As per the rules of the game, one card will be played at a time and the person with the highest value for the chosen category will win. The spectator reads the first category, and then the values of their card for that category. The performer shows that his card beats it, and wins the spectators card. The next category is chosen in the same manner, and it is another win for the performer. This continues, with the performer winning every card until the spectator is left with just three cards. To make it even more fairer, the spectator is given a free choice of category to play with for the last few cards – but to no avail, the performer still wins every time!

METHOD

The Top Trump Cards and Index Cards are both stacked, and false shuffled. The stack for the Top Trump Cards is very simple. There is a winning card followed by a losing card, then a winning card and losing card all through the stack apart from the first six cards – which we will get to in a moment. So, for example the first card will have beat the second in a specific category, the third will beat the fourth etc etc. The index cards are stacked to match the winning categories – for example the first card may have an age of 38, the second an age of 36. The first category in the stack of index cards would be "Age". The third card has a Notoriety of 17, the fourth has 15, the second index card would be "Notoriety". This ensures that when the cards are dealt into two piles, the person who chooses the pile that the first card was dealt into will always win. The performer always gets this through a simple magicians choice. This is achieved as follows:

"We now need to choose a pile of cards, you need one and I need one. So, which one will it be - just point to it".

If they point to the first pile *"Ok, thanks - you chose me to use these so you take the other pile".*
If they point to the second pile *"Ok then, pick them up and turn over the first card"...*

The first six cards are stacked in a very specific manner, and each set of Top Trump cards will be different. In each set, there are certain cards that can beat certain other cards in every category. In the set I'm using for example, Carmen Electra beats Caprice in every category, Jennifer Lopez beats Mariah Carey and Naomi Campbell beats Natasha Henstridge. These are stacked winner-loser-winner-loser at the top of the deck, but it just means that when you reach these cards, the spectator can choose any category they like and you are still guaranteed to win.

Take care when making the stack of index cards – bear in mind that when the cards are dealt, their order will be reversed!

NOTES

There is nothing complicated or spectacular here – just a couple of simple, effective routines to hopefully get you thinking about the other possibilities with these cards. The more unusual the cards are, the better. There are countless different sets, including fictional monsters, goblins and the like. These sets are particularly interesting for revelation purposes as you struggle with the elaborate names and weird facts, and give accurate descriptions of the detailed accompanying pictures. The "Covergirls" set works well purely because most of the women on it are very well known, and it helps when revealing info - you could include things you know about them that isn't even on the card. And even if you don't like them, at least you've got an excuse to ogle beautiful young women...

By Craig Leonard

Thoughts From Mid-West America

Use the Force

Michael Saint-Louis on The Complete Course in Magic

By Michael Saint-Louis



Has it been a month already? Aiya! So much has happened since my last column! If you haven't caught mention of it on the forums, Mr. Jay and I took a trip up to Appleton, WI (the fake birthplace of Houdini) to take in the Second Annual Houdini Days. Man, was it great! One of the main topics for the long trip back (made longer by our second experience with the fickle nature of Wisconsin state roads and the apparently random assignment of terms like "East" and "South" the state applies to them) was how we were going to be back for the Third Annual Houdini Days. Truth be told, Mike was almost ready to move to Appleton. And come to think of it, I haven't talked to him since we got back... maybe he did!

I won't rub it in too bad... for a mere fifty dollars (or about the cost of a decent quality square circle) we got entry to something like 10 or 11 lectures. And the lecturers were kind of well-known in a Joshua Jay, Doc Eason, Michael Ammar or Jeff McBride kind of way. Jealous yet? You should be. But like I said, I won't rub it in too bad. I only bring it up because we saw Mark Wilson.

During the first night of lectures I noticed Nani Darnell in the back of the room. I wondered who that old guy was with her (that's how dense I am!) for about ten minutes before it hit me... *THAT'S MARK WILSON!* I know, with brain power like that it's a good thing I have my pretty face to coast along on. He's shorter than I expected and the hair is now completely white and, quite honestly, he didn't give the best performance (for my money that went to Michael Finney and his show stealing child volunteer) or the best lecture (hands down, ICE McDonald) but it was a real thrill to see Mark Wilson and benefit from a little of his experience. Especially since he's been doing magic professionally longer than most of us have been breathing. I probably only have two living magic heroes and I got to see one!

Okay, back to his book. In my edition we are up to page 76, "FORCING A CARD." To me, card forces are among the most important of card handling skills. I won't argue that there aren't more useful techniques or that there aren't more technically challenging but forces are among the most important. Why? Almost every laymen knows that magicians have ways to make you take a certain card and so they look for it to happen. Luckily, most of them have no idea how it is realistically accomplished! Because there are times that you simply must force a card for a given effect and because your audience is looking for it (I think that almost all card revelations are thought to be forced cards) it is vitally important that the cardsman has solid forcing methods at his disposal.

Because I believe that the audience is looking for the force, I have always shied away from the counting forces. Although the Count Force and the 10-20 Count Force both work, to me they scream out "Hey, bozo, look at me screw around with these cards in a pretty unnatural way because I think you are too stupid to realize that something is up." Okay, maybe that is too much to scream, but it is still pretty suspicious! I have similar feelings about the Rollover Force. Oh, don't mind me, I'm just flipping over cards at random for no reason... yeah, right! I don't know if these worked better at some point. I remember using the 10 20 as a child, but what kind of cruel SOB would have busted an 8-year old? I think that the current popularity of the gaming industry affects cardsmanship, too. In the States, not only can I not throw a beer bottle without hitting a casino (and I do not live anywhere near Vegas or AC), but I can turn on the ol' tube and at any given time at least 45 of my 200 channels are running casino shows, cards tourneys or (the worst) celebrity card tourneys. The average person is now more than casually aware of the professional manner a real dealer handles cards and I think that if you are doing card tricks you need to keep this in mind

Luckily, Wilson and company included the Slip Force. I love the Slip; I think it is a great way to force a card. It's natural, it's easy and it works. What more could you want? If it is too hard (like when you have been

Thoughts From Mid-West America (cont.)

drinking) you can slip a short card in (slip, get it?) and use it to force using basically the same outward handling.

I know that the section is barely seven pages long, but forcing is a HUGE topic and I think that covers enough for one month. Next month we'll start with the Double Lift and we may even get into the Glide, which I think is one of the most underrated card techniques in history! But that's a topic for next month. Until then, I leave you with this quote on forces from introduction to this section:

...it is best to use a regular card location to reveal a chosen card, reserving the force for times when it is definitely needed.

AMEN!

By Michael-Saint Louis

Elementary, My Dear Watson

Elementary, My Dear Watson

Criminal Conjuring

By Peter Marucci

EFFECT:

Two cards, representing Sherlock Holmes and Dr. John Watson, find a card selected by the spectator and representing a master criminal.

PREPARATION:

None

PRESENTATION:

"And now we take you to Victorian England, a time of high living and low crime, a time of Jack the Ripper, and a time of Sherlock Holmes, (as you say this, go through the face-up deck and deal the Ace of Spades to the table) ace detective, and his trusted companion Dr. John (here deal the Jack of Spades to the table) - - Jack to his friends - - Watson."

"As our story opens, London is an uproar (riffle the deck), Scotland Yard is baffled. (riffle the deck again) - - Sounds a lot like London being in an uproar, doesn't it? - - and all because of a master criminal who has escaped capture." Fan the cards and let a spectator select one. "Would you choose a card to play the part of the master criminal, please?" Have the card shown round, returned to the deck, and then control it to the top.

"Finally, the police seek help of the ace detective Sherlock Holmes and his trusted companion, Dr. John - - Jack to his friends - - Watson. " Point to the ace and jack on the table.

'Well, Watson, the game's afoot, ' says Holmes. ' So we've been asked to track down a master criminal who's loose in London, breaking into schools.'

'What kind of schools?' says Watson.

'Elementary, my dear Watson.' says Holmes.

Wait for the groans over that pun to settle and continue.

"So Holmes and Watson set off into the London fog to track down their master criminal." As you say this, get a pinky break under the top chosen card. "Holmes started out on one side of the city. (Place the Ace of Spades face up on top of the deck and double undercut bringing the Ace of Spades and the chosen card to the bottom of the deck) and Watson started off on the other side. (As you say this, put the Jack of Spades



Elementary, My Dear Watson (cont.)

face up on top and cut the deck. The set up is now: Ace of Spades and Jack of Spades face up in the middle of the deck with the chosen card face down between them.)

"As they worked their way through the grog shops and back alleys, they had planned to meet later and review the results of their invested investigation. They hoped that, between them, they would be able to capture this fiend that was terrorizing London." As you say that, ribbon-spread the deck, showing the two face-up cards with the face-down card between them.

"Well, they seem to have caught something between them. What was the name of the card you chose to play the master criminal?" (When the spectator announces the name of the card, turn it over and reveal it as the one captured.)

"Watson was overjoyed with their success. 'Holmes', he said, 'you're brilliant; you're a genius; you're the greatest detective of all time'.

'No, no', said Holmes, 'It was nothing, really nothing at all.'

"Which goes to prove that, be he ever so humble, there's no police like Holmes."

By Peter Marucci

Now That's Gross - Part III

Now That's Gross - Part III

Going Beyond Bizarre...

By P. Craig Browning

Long ago, in the zaniness of my youth, I created a wonderful Illusion feature based on Queen's "*Bohemian Rhapsody*" – a song about suicide. The course of the routine involved my deliberately taking a .38 cal. Smith & Wesson snub nose from my pocket and blowing my brains out.

Oh no! I'm not talking about using blanks... I mean my brains splattered all over the curtains behind me and my lifeless body fell to the stage floor as the music started. Ironically, a single spotlight rose on the opposite end of the stage, showing me standing and lip syncing the opening words of the song... *Mama, I just killed a man... put a gun against his head, pulled my trigger, now he's dead...* Soon, the lights raised on the stage and an entire troop of strange Mardi Gras styled characters joined me in an opera-like sequence that included a version of the Nicola Spike Cabinet. Needless to say I was placed into said device and killed, yet again. As the music slowed to the song's close, lights lowered back to that single spot and as I made my exist (in true Frank Sinatra style) a dim yellowish light rose in focus on my lifeless, bleeding form where everything began.

Now for the bad news... I'm not going to tip that routine. It's far too messy, expensive, and DANGEROUS to attempt without proper supervision. In short, there are some very real high explosives involved along with a very elaborate "meat pack" (as it's called in Hollywood jargon). But I do have a reason for sharing the basic idea of death and mayhem.

Let's say you're working with a group doing Murder Mysteries...

What would be wrong with the blood of a victim giving one or two people in the group an eerie, surreal clue?

Let's face it, most murders aren't pretty sights and pools of blood can be found all over the place. So in this case, you have a fair sized pool of dark red ooze spreading out over the dining room table when suddenly, it is seen to move and take on a life of its own. Slowly but most certainly, it shifts into the shape of letters – a name!

Yes, we're talking about an adaptation of Hiro Sakai's "*Think Ink*".

Think Ink is a very cool, very expensive illusion made popular some years ago by David Copperfield, when he featured it on one of his Tv Specials.

Now That's Gross - Part III (cont.)

Like many, I too fell in love with this little ditty. But I looked at it from the perspective of being more than an effect, it's also a method when used properly. In the case of a Murder Mystery it allows us to deliver a "psychic impression" to just one or two members of a group.

"But that's throwing away the impact of a great bit of business." You scream.

Not really! You see, in the real world those that have *Psychic Impressions* are seen as being cracked by most everyone else because they can't prove or replicate their experience. In this kind of setting, you are able to tip one or two key people in a group by cleverly timing and presenting this illusion without calling attention to it... they'll do that on their own. Thing is, there's no proof... once the message is revealed the "blood" goes right back to being nothing other than a small puddle. Everyone will think they're cracked and yet, they "knew" all along, *whodunit*. All because of their *psychic experience!*

In experiments I've toyed with using the *Think Ink* technology as a means for creating an Instant Stooze from within the audience, but in so doing, making certain that it couldn't be proven I'd done so. You see, I love the idea of having a means by which to stooze someone in a group, but I loathe doing so in ways that are deliberate and potentially easy to discover. Secondly, I've discovered a very interesting *side-effect* when using this more covert technique for tipping a limited few guests, to information – it delivers to them the fulfillment of their own fantasy of having a "genuine" psychic experience. Simply put, this is the kind of thing people are going to talk about for years to come. This in itself places high value for us, into discovering means by which to deliver such cues. Let's face it, *Think Ink* may be cool but financially it's not practical for most of us to use on a regular basis. But other methods are available.

Subtle modes of forcing a thought have been sought out by our kind for generations. Those familiar with psychological forces have, no doubt, discovered alternate means by which to exploit these known common factors. But there is much more that can be done. For an example, the old Waterfall force e.g. you allow cards to fall freely from one hand to the other, offer but a brief and very subtle pause on one particular card, allowing it to become easily registered on the mind. Similarly, there's the act of flashing a bottom card several times to one particular spectator, this subliminal tactic encouraging them to name that particular card when you give them a "Free" choice of thinking of any card in the deck later.

One of my favorite bits can be found in Corinda. It's a demonstration in Telepathy in which one person is sent out of the room and another asked to write down any thought they wish; a single word, color, number, simple object, etc. on a small slip of paper, crumple it into a ball and put it into their pocket and return to their seat. The person sent out returns, is handed a single slip of paper and asked to concentrate on it and jot down their first impression. Again, the slip is crumpled into a ball. The previous spectator (the sender of the thought) is returned to the stage, the two exchange slips and voila! They match!

Because of the kind of paper used the evidence is destroyed and no one becomes any the wiser. Yet, you get credit for proving a telepathic connection between either party "under test conditions" as they say.

In my mind it is this kind of subtle business that proves the difference between a magician doing mental effects and the devoted mentalist. A magician seeking to deliver an experiment in Telepathy may do something along the line of using a force deck on spectator #1 and in a separate deck, insert a large indexed card amongst a deck of small indexed cards, so as to tip off spectator #2. It becomes an obvious joke vs. a subtle miracle. It's right up there with the old gag of passing a note to a spectator that's a supposed "Prediction" that tells them *"Just nod your head and agree that I'm right... ok? It'll be our little secret."*

Admittedly, these are fun and effective TRICKS, they are NOT however, true Mentalism. Folks like to talk, especially in today's world. That being the case, it's easy for us to lose credit in the eyes of the layman if and when folks discover just one little chink in said magical armor. The formula being somewhat easy to retrace and figure out... and you think those 'expose' shows are a problem? About the only people fooled by such tactics are other magicians that think such deliberate insta-stooze methods are practical and aren't the same as exposure.

Don't get me wrong, there are times and situations where material of this kind can be used in a positive, less "risky" manner. Where a "joke" on someone within the audience proves worthy and you have the confidence of an audience member you know, won't tip things off. Besides, the CEO and other executive types love to be "in on it" and it's a great way to build brownie points with them for future gigs.

Getting back to the issue however, I believe you'll find my thinking practical if what you're seeking to accomplish is a true psychic-like experience for your audience. Too, I believe if you invest just a hint of imagination you'll find other techniques that can be manipulated in the manner described that will work to your advantage.

Now That's Gross - Part III (cont.)

Though I am a Mentalist my style of performance tends to place "the power" into the hands of those participating in the program. I may be the catalyst being some of the manifestations, but when I'm able to place insights, and answers into the hands of those working with me, doing so in a way that they can't fully explain, we both win as does the audience!

It's something to think about...

Catch you next issue!

By P. Craig Browning

A big thank you to all contributors this month. Please send next month's articles to TopHat@magicbunny.co.uk before the 20th October for publication on the 1st November.

See you next month!
Jon Snoops
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