



MagicBunny.co.uk

<< Part I

TopHat (cont.)

Finalé Edition Part II...

...last ever monthly TopHat

By Jon Snoops

...continued from Part I



Welcome back to the last edition of the ezine. This is the second part so if you've not yet checked out the first, go pick it up! [Part I](#)

Part II of this bumper publication commences with an essay by young magician Alex Musciano. Alex approaches the subject of buying magic from a position we've all been in... that of the 'see it, want it' mentality. Here he suggests the key things that we should look for and consider before making our purchases. These are honest opinions which apply to anyone who buys too much magic (who doesn't?) and could save you a few pennies. If you want to read more on this subject, have another look at [Issue 22](#) where Tim Arends gives his thoughts. What's interesting is that when you read Tim's article, he asks many questions which you should consider. In contrast, Alex provides the answers!

Next, Gerard Scanlan takes an old plot and gives us his presentation. Whilst conveying a key idea in all magic presentations, he uses the example of the bottle through table to illustrate how rationalising certain actions within the plot can enhance the effect. Reading between the lines will allow you to use similar ideas to eliminate the 'discrepancies' in your own magic routines.

Matthew Smith teaches us his versions of two classic effects of card magic along with the little touches he's picked up through repeated performance of these well-honed routines. Not only are these routines technically doable, professionals will realise though their construction and subtleties that these are true workers. It's quite likely that you're already using parts of these effects in your repertoire already; most magicians I know do at least one ace-cutting sequence so it's always interesting to see how others achieve the same effect. Perhaps there are some pieces you may like to use.

Will Wood, having read a quote that threatened to turn his perception of magic upside-down, discusses the idea of 'close-up' magic. After much thought, he suggests that we break down the boundaries in our thinking allowing us to take a different perspective. They point being that instead, we should concentrate on one key aspect which applies to them all: communication.

Finally in this part is an article from Gary Scott. The topic is something that I think is extremely important. I notice some members are quoting JackScratch with "Professionalism, it's not just for professionals anymore." Gary examines in his article exactly what it means to be a professional. It's a term used very loosely these days and the high standard that are set out in this article, if maintained, will get you far!

...continued in Part III

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FINALÉ EDITION

Due to the overwhelming number of submissions, this month's ezine has been split into three parts which together comprise the final edition. Please click on an article below to jump to it (or its corresponding issue) or scroll down to begin reading. You can also use the Bookmarks panel (left) to navigate.

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Tips on Buying Magic

Tips on Buying Magic...

...and developing you own performing persona

By Alex Musciano

I've been doing magic for a little while now, and I (like many others) went on a spending spree trying to learn as many effects as possible. If I saw something, and it looked good to me, I had to have it. I've learnt a lot recently though, particularly while looking at my empty wallet. Just because something is amazing for someone else to do, does this mean it will be for you? I'm not asking whether or not you're a good or bad magician. I'm referring to your own personal style. You really have to think about yourself and the persona you wish to portray and not just about the effect. Here are some tips I've realized and I think are really important before buying new magic.

DOES IT FIT YOUR STYLE?

My belief in a performance of any kind is that it should flow, and not consist of random single tricks pointlessly arranged into a 'routine'. If you bounce around from cards to coins to appearing rabbits to a bill switch in under five minutes, yes you might perform them well, but something that flows will leave a lasting impression. People will recall "Wow he was amazing with cards" more than detailed descriptions of your effects. You must find what you do best and stay with it. I'm not suggesting that you don't do anything else, but make sure it will fit in with what you already do.

HOW OFTEN WILL YOU DO IT?

If you want to get, say, the most amazing dove production ever, you have to think: will you do it as a restaurant worker? Just because something is great doesn't mean it's great for you (I don't know how many times I will repeat myself but I want to get this point across). It may be excellent for a stage worker, but is it good for close up? Similarly, if you perform stage, would you want a Raven for example? While doing kids work, would you pull out a two card monte routine, or expect them to be impressed by a pseudo-gambling demonstration? Okay, enough with the examples. You really have to think about your surroundings as a performer. If the effect is logical to use in the places you normally perform then that would be smart. But if it really has nothing to do with your environment then you shouldn't even think about buying it - it will end up in a box on a shelf along with the many other things you do not use.

PRACTICALITY

People find that the things they can relate to are the most magical (cards, coins, money, everyday objects, your body, defying physics), but when you start drifting away from publicly recognized objects you will end up with a "Hey that's pretty cool" reaction rather than the "Oh my God! What just happened?" you're hoping to achieve. I find that a simple prediction card trick gets amazing reactions. There's no way you could have known their card. The other situation generates a typical "That's probably just a special box with trap doors and a secret this or that and blah" response. Since people are so familiar with certain objects which they assume to be un-gimmicked (even if they are), borrowing objects gives some amazing reactions because it's THEIR object rather than yours. So make sure people know what your prop is and can associate with it and the ensuing effect will seem reasonable to them. I just recently purchased the self-tying shoe laces (Jay Noblezada) and it gives me the best reactions ever. Why? Because EVERYONE ties their shoes.

EASY TO ACCESS

If you do street magic you don't really want to transport something big around with you. Also, it should be easy to set up (if required). You don't really want something too inconvenient for you. If it becomes a problem for you, the chances are it will end up in that box. Make sure you know the item you wish to purchase will be accessible during the time of performance and it won't take too long to get at once you have it with you. The longer you take, the less interesting it will be (remember to flow). Get something reasonable for you. This really fits in with everything stated above but I felt it needed to be mentioned on its own.

SINGLE EFFECT VS. BOOKS/DVD'S

This is a MAJOR problem for people just starting out. I will ALWAYS suggest a good book/DVD over a single trick. With the single trick, yes it's good but you must have a routine set up and books/DVD's will help you to do that. The single trick will look good, but in the end, it's still just a one-trick wonder. I wish I'd have known this before because it would have saved me a whole lot of money. You will learn much more in a book than you will in a trick and most of the time they cost around the same amount. Go with something you could use

Tips on Buying Magic (cont.)

as a foundation and expand rather than do the same things over and over.

The key points: remember your own personality and make sure you will use the effect often. Make sure you can have whatever it is you use on you and ready to perform. Cost is also an issue but I will let you be the judge on that.

By Alex Musciano aka philliefan4life1

Rationalisation

Rationalisation...

...a real argument for wrapping a bottle before making it penetrate a table

By Gerard Scanlan



Dr Daley once stated that every trick has a discrepancy, a weak spot. Many tricks have several. The better you can disguise these flaws in logic the more effective the illusion becomes. If you explain a situation, describe an event a logical sequence of events will arise that can provide the misdirection you require. Let me give an example. I really like the bottle through table effect but I had a Nielsen set in the cupboard and I felt I personally needed a good reason from wrapping it, as I couldn't think of one it stayed in the cupboard. Until one summer's day I remembered I had a packet of plastic ants and the two just seemed to fit. You will need a packet of plastic ants, a sheet of newspaper, a beer bottle and a bottle through table gimmick... and yes, and a full head of hair is advantageous.

Half fill the gimmick with the plastic ants so that you can still insert your finger and place the gimmick in your pocket. Drop a couple more ants onto the top of your head so that when you lean forward one or two will fall onto the table. I have a few sheets of newspaper pre-cut to the correct size lying under the table or in my case within easy reach.

You explain that you have had a lot of trouble with ants recently in your garden. Whilst during a barbecue someone suggested that you place an almost empty beer bottle in their path. All the ants climbed up the bottle and fell in and it worked a treat until the ants inside started warning the others outside to stay away. So you took a sheet of newspaper and wrapped the bottle while leaving the opening free. This worked even better than expected and the bottle was forgotten about until by the end of the afternoon when the bottle started to overflow. The ants had driven you so crazy that you started using the bottle to swash the ants that were running all over the table and suddenly you slam the bottle down so hard that it goes clean through the table.

All I really need to add here is that you drop you head down to scatter the ants from the top of your head onto the table when you start talking about the bottle overflowing with ants. As you start to bang the bottle against the table another shower of ants will fly out of the gimmick. At that point I dump the bottle onto my lap and start flattening the ants by banging my left hand onto the table a couple of times before I bring the newspaper that is supposed to contain the bottle smashing down onto the surface.

By Gerard Scanlan

Two Classics

Two Classics...

...in my own words

By Matthew Smith



Below is what I consider to be a simple yet effective way of introducing four aces. This routine does not require "knuckle-busting" sleight of hand instead uses a few simple sleights (most probably already in your repertoire) along with a short card (a corner short). Please don't dismiss this effect. It seems very simple but gets me great reactions. The revelations are nothing impressive to most magicians, but to spectators seem like real sleight of hand.

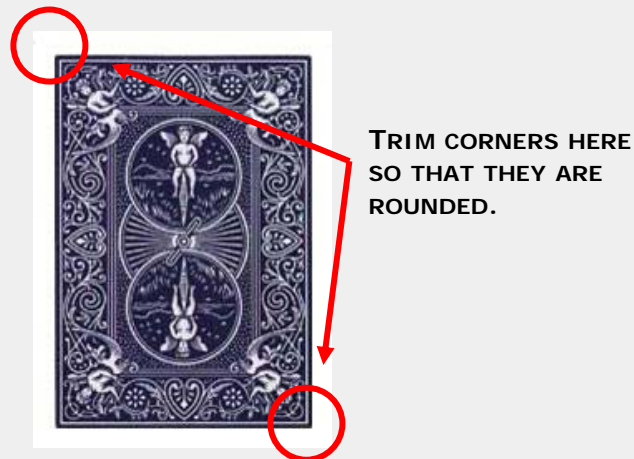
ACE REVELATION

Effect: The performer mixes up a pack up cards, gives them a cut. One by one, the performer is able to produce the 4 aces.

I never see many routines nowadays that use short cards – so this is simply an idea of what you could do. Feel free to take this and use however you wish.

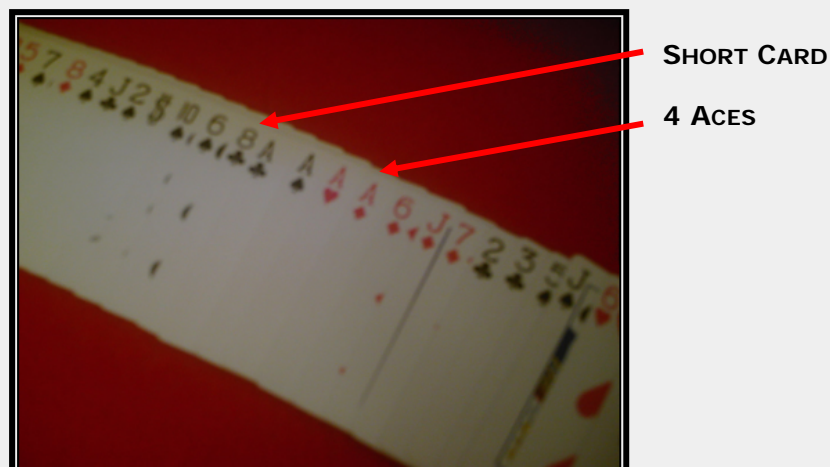
The Short Card

The short card I use is the one which has the corners opposite the indices are "trimmed". See Mark Wilson's Complete Course in Magic Page 125. See the diagram below for a brief illustration.



The Setup

The deck is face down in the performer's hand. The short card is roughly 35th from the top. Below the short card are the 4 aces in any order desired.



Two Classics (cont.)

The Handling

Give the deck a few false cuts/shuffles. If you have a table available, I like to use the Michael Skinner Table Cut (as taught on Bill Malone's on the Loose Vol. 1 VHS/DVD). To perform this cut, take around half of the cards from the bottom of the deck and transfer them to the top of deck out jogged. Now strip out cards from the bottom of the out jogged pile and place them on the table. Repeat this 3 or 4 times, and then place the remaining cards of the out jogged pile onto the table followed by the other block.

Cut the deck at the short card and complete the cut (You now have the 4 aces on top of the deck and the short card on the bottom). To the spectator, this series of 'cuts' and 'shuffles' will look as though the deck has been fairly shuffled. I never make a big deal out of shuffling the deck – I just do it!

Revelation 1: Simply turn over the top card remarking how lucky you were to control one card!

Revelation 2: Get a break under the top card (an ace) (as in the diagram below) and transfer that break to the other hand. Cut a block of cards from the bottom of the deck onto the break. Then cut all cards below the break back to the top. In doing this you now have one ace on the bottom and two aces on top of the deck.



To reveal the second ace, simply gain a break under the top card (as above) and cut a block of cards from the bottom **turn them face up** and place them on top of the break. This will reveal the 2nd ace. Before removing it cut at the cards below the break and also **turn these face up**, but replace them under the break. You can now remove the 2nd ace. The deck is now all face up apart from one card which is face down in the middle of the deck.

Revelation 3: Ribbon spread the deck face up to reveal one face down ace. Gather the deck and turn face down. The final ace will now be the top card on the deck

Revelation 4: Perform a double lift **whilst looking at the audience** and gesture to them that of course you have found the 4th and final ace. Look down in surprise. Turn double face down, removing the top card (the ace) and rub (face down on your sleeve), turn over to reveal the 4th and final ace J

AFTERTHOUGHTS

The short card isn't essential. However, I like that fact that you can cleanly cut the cards before the revelations begin, therefore adding to the impossibility of the effect

The first ace could be revealed in many different ways including a slip cut force or classic force – I like the ease and adaptability of this effect.

The second piece I thought I'd share with you is a simple ambitious card routine which can be performed with a borrowed deck requiring no setup. The "ambitious card" is marked, but *not* in the normal way. Here goes...

Two Classics (cont.)

AMBITIOUSLY SIMPLE

The Setup

Go down to your local stationary store and purchase a packet of small coloured stickers. I use Avery 22 x 16mm multipurpose coloured labels. You get 80 stickers per packet. I use these as a way of marking a spectator's chosen card without ruining my deck! Whilst getting ready for the routine, get a spectator to initial/mark a sticker.

The Handling

Bring out a packet of cards and allow a spectator to take them out of the case and give them a shuffle.

N.B. I like allowing a spectator to shuffle a deck, as it allows me to see how he/she/they handle a deck of cards. When performing other effects that require shuffles (normal and false) I try to mimic their handling when ever possible.

Once the deck has been shuffled and returned to the performer, allow the spectator(s) to mark their chosen sticker(s)!

Whilst they are doing this, perform a double lift on the face down deck of cards, revealing the "top" card (actually the 2nd from top). Ask the spectator(s) to peel off their sticker(s) and place them on the card.

N.B. I have found this to be an excellent way for a spectator to mark a 'single card' when in fact it's a double, without looking suspicious/awkward.

Take back the pen and stickers.

Turn the double over, and place the "spectators card" (actually an indifferent card, due to the double lift) into the centre of the deck. With a click of the fingers the spectator's card miraculously jumps back to the top of the deck. Whilst turning over and revealing the top card, get a break under the bottom card. Transfer the deck and the break into the right hand. Swing cut the top half of the deck (inc. the face up card) into the left hand. The left hand thumb now pushes the spectator's card slightly to the right, whilst the pack of cards in the right hand flips it over. The right hand then pushes this card upwards, as to prove its still there. At the same time, the card held under the break is added behind this card, flush with the left hand packet.



Card under the break is added to the packet, as the spectators card is pushed up

Fan the cards in the right hand and push down the spectator's card. Push the top face down card off the left hand packet (which the spectator will think is his/her own) and insert this into the middle of the fan.

The fan is now closed and pushed into the middle of the left hand deck. The spectator's card is now on top!

Two Classics (cont.)



The "spectator's card" being placed into the fan of the right hand. The card should move down the fan from 1 to 2, and then back up to near 3. In this motion, the card will slide into the fan nicely.

The fan being closed and placed into the left hand pack.

N.B. I believe it was Dai Vernon, on one of his 'Revelations' Tapes, that suggested that as a card is placed into a fan, instead of just putting it in, run it down the fan, then reverse the direction. The card will automatically slot in between two cards that form part of the fan. See the arrows on the picture with the fan of cards above.

Perform another double lift and look surprised that the card has not jumped to the top! Perform the **Erdnase Colour Change** to reveal the spectators card. Turn over the double and place the top card (apparently the spectator's card) fairly into the middle of the deck. Gain a break under the top card and cut a block of cards from the bottom, **turn them face up** and place them on top of the break and state the card is not on the bottom. Now cut at the cards below the break and also **turn these face up**, but replace them under the break stating that the card isn't on top (this infact is not the top card at all, but done quickly, it goes without notice). In doing this you have reversed the chosen card alone. The deck is now face up apart from one card which is face down in the middle of the deck, which the spectator can remove (once the deck is spread) to find their card! Remove the sticker, and the effect is over.

I just like the principle of going into this routine and having the card marked. I usually use the same sticker for other effects (both cards and coins). At the end I usually place it onto one of my business cards before handing them out – just seems to make the business card more memorable (i.e. easier to recall the effects I performed).

By Matthew Smith (wiffyboy)

There's No Such Thing as Close-up Magic?

Bowl Views...

...There's No Such Thing as Close-up Magic?

By Will Wood



There's no such thing as close up magic? That was the question on my lips after reading Anthony Owen's ebook "Okay, let's shoot the magician". The ebook itself focuses on magic and magicians on television, but in it Mr Owen makes this very interesting point:

"I do not believe that there is such a thing as 'Close-up magic', or 'Stage Magic', or 'Children's Magic'. I believe that these categories were created by magic dealers to make purchases easier and to increase sales. I believe that something either is or isn't magic.

There's No Such Thing as Close-up Magic (cont.)

As long as the performer doing it communicates the effect they want to achieve to every single person in the audience then it's magic. If they don't, then it isn't."

Anthony Owen, "Okay, let's shoot the magician", 2001

Obviously, this got me thinking. I'd never have considered this concept if I hadn't read Mr Owen's articles. I was quite happy to trundle along, doing my magic and calling myself a close up magician. But recently, I've begun to work on a two man stage show with a good friend of mine and seeing as we both come from a "close-up background" it seemed like a real challenge to move into the stage environment, especially after hearing a prestigious stage magician tell us, during a discussion about stage magic, "any idiot can do close up magic". At first I felt like I had to agree with him simply because of who he was and the experience he had, but then thinking about it I realised that any idiot can do stage magic as well. Close up and stage environments are two completely separate concepts. There are aspects to close up magic that don't transcend onto the stage and visa versa, and if you don't understand that fact you'll end up being just another idiot trying to perform on stage.

However, after worrying about if I could be a stage performer for several weeks, coming across the idea that there is no such thing as stage magic really turned my concerns on their head. I had been worried that my persona was limited to a close up environment, and all the things that I've learnt from performing close up would become redundant as soon as I stepped onto a stage. All the subtlety of performing intimate, emotionally affecting magic would be lost because on stage you are performing to a group of people all the time, rather than a select few, merely inches from where the action is happening. Performing on stage you are detached from your audience in a way that you don't have to worry about when performing close up magic. Also, everything you perform has to be communicated on a much larger scale. For example, an ambitious card routine on stage would be pretty pointless because it's just not practical to show every single person in the audience that the card really has jumped to the top of the pack. However, a cards across routine will work just as well on stage as it would in a more intimate environment. But at the same time, you can be over zealous with stage magic and take to the point where you are climbing into a big extravagant box, carved with intricate designs and painted with bright colours only to reappear in another box, on the other side of the stage. The effect is exactly the same as cards across, only on a much larger scale. What's the point? It's striking the right balance that is the difficult part.

So with these problems in mind I have, until recently, been looking into creating an entirely new repertoire of "stage magic". As a close up magician, this is quite a daunting task. With no prior experience of performing on stage, I have had to try to think like a stage magician and select effects appropriately. Then I read Mr Owen's ebook and my perceptions have changed as a result. I'm no longer trying to be a stage magician, or even a close up magician performing on stage. I now see my challenge simply to be a magician. No matter where I'm performing, that is my primary goal. However, that's still not an easy task, because it means learning a lot of new ideas and rules, and but the point is I'm no longer putting myself into a box; I just want to perform strong magic wherever I'm performing.

So in conclusion, and I suppose the whole point of me writing this is that, I want you to realise that you don't have to be just a "close up magician", or a "stage magician", or even a "children's magician". Just be a magician, and you will open up a whole range of possibility. You can take close up effects and principles and apply them to the stage, or you can do the reverse and use stage effects in a close up environment. Of course, this doesn't mean that you can ignore all the conventions of the different performing environments; there are still, and always will be, completely separate challenges to over come in different situations, but as long as we do our bests to understand our venue and our audience as best we can, and then use that knowledge to communicate the magic we perform as well as we can, then you can do "close up magic" on stage, or "stage magic" for two people, inches from their eyes. The categories that we use to define ourselves are nothing more than sections of a catalogue, and when you think about it like that, it seems pretty ridiculous to limit ourselves in such a way.

By Will Wood

A Professional... am I not?

A Professional...

...am I not?

By Gary Scott



Being a magician is a wonderful vocation. All of you reading this will be at the opposite ends of the scale and everything in-between in regards to your abilities and status as a magician. Some will be just learning the fundamentals whilst others will have been performing professional shows for 20 years or more. One thing which we all have in common is that all of us have a passion for the art of magic... but what makes someone a professional?

I'm a professional...

Oh really? And what makes you think that?

I get paid for what I do...

How many times have you heard this? Do you think this is true? Is being professional really just about being fleeted by the almighty dollar?

Unfortunately, the word professional has been abused by magicians for a long time.

Being a professional or rather, in the right context of use, *Professionalism... is an attitude.*
Not a right of payment.

So, in this very last Top Hat, I will try and define the highlights of professionalism in our art.

PRACTISE AND REHEARSE ALL THE TIME

This will ultimately make you a master of your domain in the routines you wish to present. Treat magic like holding a small bird. Apply enough pressure so it does not escape you, but do not apply so much force that you choke it to death. The practise of magic shows that you respect what you do and respect those that have carried the torch before you. Don't let the art of magic down by sheer laziness.

RESPECT THOSE BEFORE YOU

A lot of the time you will find that knowledge will be freely given by those that are willing to be respected for their time. Don't abuse that trust. Draining your peers of their knowledge is quite unprofessional and shows lack of respect to the art. It's a bit like *leeching* for all you P2P guys and girls out there... all take and no give.

BACKSTAGE ATTITUDE

...which is by all means, the worst case scenario for unprofessional conduct in all of show business. I've mentioned in past Top Hats about the presentation of the physical self, but ultimately you must conduct yourself with an air of civility and grace to receive respect from your peers in those changing rooms.

DON'T DEVELOP AN EGO

Maybe I've touched on this too many times, but it is the most important part of your character that will stick out to fellow performers, if it's in the wrong direction. Keep your ego on an inward plane. Sure it's fine to say to yourself that you deserve success for your hard work or that your magic is good, but ultimately do keep that to yourself. Don't run around saying "Look what I can do" to all and sundry. There will always be someone out there doing it a hell of a lot better.

YOUR CLIENTS

Common sense should prevail here. These are the people that you want to exhibit your skills too and impress them as much as possible. Make sure that you do not fail on any level even before or after the magic. Learn some business aptitude to deal with your clients on the phone and in writing. A good, clear speaking voice and good command of the English language will garner a much better response than stuttering on the phone and shoddily written emails or contracts. Exhibit clean cut social graces whilst you are in their company. No-body will pay a foul-mouthed braggart... and a bad persona around current clients will no doubt give them a

A Professional... am I not? (cont.)

sense of ill about hiring a magician for another occasion. You could sum this up with "Don't bite the hand that feeds you!"

YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Even those close to you, should not bare the burden of carrying any kind of unprofessional act on your part. These are the people that will ultimately tell you the truth, to your face, about who you are and how you project yourself. This is the best way to practise being professional. If you treat your family and friends with the same dignity that you would expect if you were the one with the 'magician in the family', then you are half way to projecting yourself with a professional attitude. In my early days, I was guilty as the next guy for showing everybody I knew everything... over and over again. Yes, it was fun at first but several months later, I was getting spurned and, unknowingly, turning people against me. Remember... YOU love magic. They do not. They are spectators. Seeing the ball appear underneath the cup for the thousandth time is not fun for anybody. These days, I tend to keep my magic to myself and other magicians that I socialise with.

With this closing and this monumental issue of Top Hat, I would like to thank Jon Snoops for his time and effort over the years in putting this together. It has been fun contributing to these very pages. I hope that what I have written now and in the past has been digestible and enjoyable. May you all continue to be successful in your magical pursuits...

Siya all on Magic Bunny

Best wishes
Gary Scott

[Part III >>](#)